

Editorial

Research and Africa's Independence, Transformation and Unity

CODESRIA is now in the second year of a new Programmatic Cycle, 2012-2016, under a new Strategic Plan under the theme "Extending the Frontiers of Social Science Research and Bringing Social Research to Public Issues". The new Strategic Plan was developed after a long consultative process involving successive Executive and Scientific Committees, members of CODESRIA and officials of some of CODESRIA's main funders as pointed out in the editorial to the *CODESRIA Bulletin 3&4*, 2012. Some of the original think pieces from the various meetings at which the directions in which CODESRIA ought to be moving in the coming years were published in that issue. The final thinking is what was synthesized into the new strategic plan. We have, in this issue, the final batch of those original ideas as shared by some colleagues that attended those meetings under the general heading "New Directions and Priorities for Research in Africa: Some Think Pieces".

Amady Aly Dieng thinks that African scholars have neglected two major issues: social stratification and nomadism in Africa. He argues that not much attention was paid to the question of social stratification and this led to problems. The social levers likely to facilitate the achievement of real independence were neglected. He further argues that: "A good knowledge of social stratification in every African country will allow identification of hostile or favourable forces likely to come up in view of projects aimed at achieving genuine independence and true economic and social development." Amady Aly Dieng points out that very few studies have focused on the question of nomadism, especially among African scholars belonging to sedentary communities: "During most of his adventure, man has been shaped by nomadism and he is becoming a traveller again. Nomads, pastoralists and transhumants were penalized by the colonial school system that was designed for sedentary people and especially for city dwellers." He goes on to argue that the importance of nomadism cannot be overemphasized because nomads invented everything; "all basic essentials".

Souleymane Bachir Diagne argues that CODESRIA should pay attention to three issues; first is the issue of African unity and regional integration on the continent; second is religion and the third one is philosophy. The research agenda should focus on a forward-looking reflection and get to understand the meaning of African emancipation. On religion, Bachir Diagne argues that religion has today become "a crucial issue every-where, owing to concerns about modernity, democratization, secularisation, and women's empowerment." He thinks that African philosophy, is an important area to focus on, since it is no longer a confrontation between euro-philosophers and ethno-philosophers. He situates this proposal in the context of "discussions already conducted by CODESRIA ... [and] ... the research on African intellectual history in general and on non-Europhone intellectuals conducted in recent years under the aegis of CODESRIA would perfectly be consistent with this theme."

"Social scientific productions should be self-centred around a social formation", so argues Bernard Founou-Tchuigoua. He

observes that knowledge about society cannot be neutral. He is concerned that without a sense of self-centredness, Africa is in danger of losing its bearing in a highly globalised world. "How is the African anti-globalisation movement to be guided in the choice of new challenges? ... The organized headlong rush for the control of raw materials and oil, and a degree of pollution which endangers the human species itself, a socialist alternative will not be credible unless great autonomous research efforts are made throughout the world."

Fabien Boulaga observes that CODESRIA has done well by leading the way in the production of new knowledge by Africans, in Africa and for Africa. The new direction should be towards consolidating this work and to 'move towards a more comprehensive apprehension of their "common object" and their assessment of its extension and the diversity in those areas, that is, its geographical, historical, economic, political, and cultural experiences.'

Laroussi Amri is concerned about the position Africa occupies in terms of research and science. He proposes that we should develop new ways of thinking. We should stop borrowing theories wholesale without criticality because all theories were created for a reason and were meant to serve specific roles. He says: "Describing the history of a theory, the conditions of its emergence, the purposes it serves, the procedural methods of field research or materials it values, the underlying meanings ... all this, with the intention to determine the extent to which it is consistent or not with the realities of countries of the South, specifically Africa." He is calling for "new ways of thinking that will set us free."

Taladidia Thiombiano, in his piece, is quite clear that CODESRIA and all committed African scholars should not lose sight of Africa's position in the world. He notes that there is a need to focus on policy directions that Africa should consider in a globalised world and proposes that CODESRIA reflects on global strategic challenges given the impact they are likely to have on Africa.

Aminata Diaw thinks that CODESRIA should develop a programme focusing on China's activities in Africa, for this is an area, that should be researched and understood sooner rather than later. Is the China-Africa relationship about cooperation or exploitation? She is also interested in linking this research thematic with the European and North American presence and influence in Africa. The research results would help us understand how Africa can benefit from this new geopolitical and economic situation.

Abdallah Saaf observes that CODESRIA should prioritise a political science perspective in research to reflect on research orientations, and methodological bases and adapt them to contexts. He proposes an assessment of the status of research in Africa today, with particular reference to politics and governance" ... carry out a kind of adjusted stocktaking of the

state of social sciences ... to evaluate accumulations in social-scientific practices throughout the continent. ... The trends observed in the past decade are very instructive. Current local and global challenges cannot be ignored in this thinking."

The debates section of this issue of the *Bulletin* starts with Wole Soyinka's article entitled "A Name is More than the Tyranny of Taste" on Cinema in Africa, which he first presented as a Keynote Address at the CODESRIA - Guild of African Filmmakers FESPACO Workshop on "Pan-Africanism: Adapting African Stories/Histories from Text to Screen", held on 25–26 February 2013, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. By using the example of African naming systems and practices, he argues that creativity should not be constrained by concerns over originality. There are many sources of contents including African mythology "Let it be admitted, however, that all we do is play variations on existing naming templates, not that we strain to be fully original. The same process applies, as stated earlier, to the creative process – styles, themes and even – very often – content."

Demba Moussa Dembélé in "Amilcar Cabral – 40 Years On: Tribute to a Revolutionary Intellectual" observes that "Amilcar Cabral was 'the slave of a cause', that of the Liberation of his people and the peoples of Africa from the yoke of oppression and imperialist domination. ... He sacrificed his life in the defence of that sacred and immortal cause." Cabral was a visionary charismatic leader, staunch pan-Africanist champion and revolutionary intellectual.

Yusuf Bangura in "Building a United and Cohesive Society" comments on the progress that Sierra Leone has so far achieved in its attempts at nation building. This paper was first presented at a conference called to "focus on ways of building a peaceful, tolerant and cohesive nation".

In "First Steps to Creating the "Nilo" Currency for Africa" Yash Tandon argues that the creation of an African currency which he calls the 'Nilo' as a non-convertible African currency to service purely intra-African trade" is an imperative because "no country or region in the world can enjoy real independence without owning and controlling its own money. ... It is the reality of the present (and past) asymmetrical global economic and political systems. It is my view that, in order to advance the cause of pan-Africanism and for Africa to be able to speak effectively in the global fora, it is incumbent that it creates and controls its own currency."

Teboho J. Lebakeng in "Rediscovering Archie Mafeje and How South Africa is Coming to Terms with its Ignored Intellectual Icon: A Rejoinder" argues that Archie Mafeje has not yet be accorded the rightful position he deserves in South African scholarship. He wonders why Mafeje was ignored in spite of his immense contribution to African scholarship. This is a man who has been variously described as "an African intellectual pathfinder", "a pioneering intellectual powerhouse", and "an intellectual giant". Is it possible that he has been ignored because he "was a scholar who spoke the truth, unflinchingly, to power and did not – to use an ambiguous compliment – suffer fools gladly"?

The debates section ends with an article on the deadly Marikana miners' strike in South Africa of August 2012 by Peter Alexander entitled "Marikana Massacre: A Turning Point in South African History?" According to Alexander this confrontation could be a sign of things to come; it is the public expression of the massive anger people have accumulated against the government, and it

seems to signal possibilities for major fragmentation of the ANC. It seems to mark the beginning of "... new political projects ... rising levels of struggles and some convergence of battles involving workers and the poor. All of this has been clarified, sharpened and reinforced by Marikana, an important event, and probably a turning point in South African history."

This issue of the *Bulletin* also pays tribute to Professor Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane who died on 12 April 2013. Jimi O. Adesina reflects on Magubane's well lived life. Adesina tells us: "To understand Magubane and the corpus of his intellectual contribution to South African liberation scholarship on the one hand, and African Sociology on the other, one needs to locate him within the contending forces that defined twentieth century South Africa, the African-American context of the 1960s, and the continental African anti-colonial movements." This is exactly what he proceeds to do in his article: "Professor Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane: An Obituary". We also pay a tribute to the late Hocine Khelifaoui, former editor of JHEA.

In this issue we acknowledge honours that have been bestowed upon some two senior members of the CODESRIA family. Professor Francis B. Nyamnjoh of Cape Town University and former head of the CODESRIA Publications Programme, who has been named the 'Africa Hero of the Year 2013'. He was "honoured in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the advancement of Africa through his scholarship and teaching practice."

Professor N'Dri Assié-Lumumba of African and Diaspora Education at the Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, member of CODESRIA's Scientific Committee, was recently elected Vice President of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) for 2013–14 and will assume its presidency in 2015–16. This election and responsibility is significant, mainly because, it makes her the first African scholar to be elected to lead CIES. We congratulate them both on these very big achievements.

The point that Africa must fight for its independence and strive to achieve true economic and social development is not only made in the proposals for new directions and priorities in research but also in the policy and strategic choices that leaders and politicians on the continent have to make. Yash Tandon sums it up in his view that Africa's liberation is to come through the establishment of an African currency. If "money is war by other means" as he argues, how is Africa going to defeat its enemies when it has no control over its money and money systems?

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU, this comes as a reminder that to sustain the high growth rates to transform our economies and negotiate a highly dignified place for our continent and peoples in the world of the twenty-first century, we need to make the dream of a united Africa a reality. This came out very clearly in the two conferences on "Being pan-African" and "Pan-Africanism and Africa renaissance: Reframing the Narrative" jointly organized by CODESRIA and several other organizations as part of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU, in May.

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*New Directions and Priorities for Research in Africa: More Think Pieces**

Social Stratification and Nomadism in Africa

Here are some reflections on CODESRIA's research priorities and directions. I would just like to address two issues that deserve great attention from CODESRIA and African scholars. I would like to focus on the social stratification of various African countries and the issue of nomadism.

Social stratification of African countries

With the attainment of independence by African countries, the national question emerged as a priority issue for African politicians and scholars. The initial period was especially about building the nation and laying a foundation for the development of these countries. This was also the period of denial of the existence of African social classes and of advocating the establishment of single, unified or dominant parties, as Leopold Sedar Senghor would put it. Reality has shown that, during the struggle for independence, there was a large front which included almost all social categories in favour of national independence. But setting-up that front did not eliminate the existence of conflicting interests in it. There were social forces outside that front and clearly allied with foreign countries.

Even within the social groups making up the united front for independence, some forces began to emerge seeking to ally with social classes or categories linked to the colonial system upon achievement of formal political independence. The main contradiction existing between all African social forces and supporters of the colonial or neo-colonial system had managed to conceal existing secondary contradictions within forces struggling for national independence.

Thus, the study of the social stratification was a completely neglected issue. The social dimension of the national issue was

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hardly considered. There were few studies addressing the existence of social classes and their struggles in various African countries.

This inadequacy contributed to the ignorance of social levers likely to facilitate the achievement of real independence. It was the rule of extreme voluntarism that ended into simple incantations. No one knows about the social forces likely to affect any social project presented to population. A good knowledge of social stratification in every African country will allow identification of hostile or favourable forces likely to come up in view of projects aimed at achieving genuine independence and true economic and social development. It is time to start studies on social classes, their nature, their objectives, the nature of their social agenda, and their strengths and weaknesses. And this should be specifically done for each African country.

Nomadism, the state issue and the national issue

There are few studies on the question of nomadism especially among African scholars belonging to sedentary communities. Nomads, pastoralists and transhumants were penalized by the colonial school system that was designed for sedentary people and especially for city dwellers. Ibn Khaldun's theories which are not favourable for nomads were repeated by some African scholars without any criticality. But there are authors who advisedly conducted comprehensive studies on the relationship between nomadic and sedentary people. This is the

case for Jacques Attali who wrote: 'The entire mankind history can be reread like that of this caravan. Because, all this history is stamped by a sense of nomadism.' (*L'Homme nomade [Nomadic Man]* Fayard 2003). The word is now fashionable, and erroneously used to describe a large variety of people who are not necessarily nomads: they do not always travel with all their properties. But they all share the nomadic ethics and culture: travelling is the essence of their existence.

Sedentariness is only a brief parenthesis in history. During most of his adventure, man has been shaped by nomadism and he is becoming a traveller again. Ten thousand years ago, in the Middle East, with a particularly welcoming climate, hunters learned to re-use seeds, to water lands, and to store reserves. They became farmers and soon villagers. The only survivor among the various lineages of hominids as he was the best of nomadic people, the *Homo sapiens* invented sedentariness. Sedentariness is thus an idea of hunters: agriculture, an invention of sedentary people; pastoralism, a practice of farmers.

The nomads invented the basic essentials: fire, hunting, languages, agriculture, animal husbandry, footwear, clothes, tools, rituals, art, painting, sculpture, music, calculation, the wheel, writing, law, market, ceramics, metallurgy, horse-riding, the rudder, God, democracy. In short, they left to next sedentary people – and first to Rome – only the invention of the state, tax, prison, savings, and the gun and gunpowder.

About a thousand years ago in America and sub-Saharan Africa, which were then almost cut off from the world, travelling stopped and settling processes encouraged nomadism. Many civilizations, mainly sedentary and pedestrian, were created there. Not knowing about the wheel and the horse, they were bound to the status quo and cycles of agriculture. The world revolution came with pastoralists taming

* The titles of some of the Think Pieces were chosen by the editorial team

animals capable of carrying heavy loads, pulling carts and carrying armed people. For the first time, man could travel faster than his steps; carry more than he could. Progress was once more the prerogative of nomadic people. Henceforth, crossing Eurasia, Africa or America was no longer measured in terms of lifetime, but in years, and soon in months.

The isolation of sub-Saharan Africa is just as deep as that of America. Bushmen were dominant there, by 8,000 BC. Xan is the name that was much later given to them by Hottentots who, themselves, appeared around 1,000 BC. The Xan call themselves Khoi-khoi ('men of men') and from them descended the Twa of Rwanda. Further north, on the edge of the Sahara, settled Bantu peoples ('men') including the Hutu. Other peoples came from Nubia, fleeing the desertification of the Sahara, such as the Tutsi who arrived in the Great Lakes region 3,500 years ago. We know little about their evolution. Until the development, from the sixth century, of the first city-states of nomadic origin; the Berber kingdom of Aoudaghost, the current Mauritania; the Tukulor kingdom of Tekrur, on the Senegal River; the Mandingo kingdom in Niger; the Songhai kingdom near Gao and the Mossi kingdom between Senegal and Niger. Then the kingdom of Ouagadougou, becoming later the Ghana Empire, was overthrown in 1077 by the Almoravid, nomadic Berbers. Because of lack technical equipment, Africa and America were thus confined to a very inventive sedentary agricultural or primitive nomadism. For 1,500 more years, everything would be settled on the other side of the Pacific and the Atlantic, and around the Mediterranean.

From the seventeenth century, merchants increasingly needed space to sell their goods, and therefore safer roads; so it was all about helping workers to move and not using the labour force of those who were moving. The first globalization was approaching; and the first global merchant nomadism was beginning. In sub-Saharan Africa, the very last nomadic tribes of the continent were dying (Dinka, Fulani, Masai, Somali, Nuer, etc.).

The controversy between Cheikh Anta Diop and Jean Suret-Canale

Cheikh Anta Diop

Nomads have been ignored by historians who are usually sons of sedentary people, as pointed out by Gilles Deleuze

and Felix Guattari: 'History is written, but it has always been written from the perspective of sedentary people and on behalf of a state apparatus. Nomadism has never been understood by history.' It is important and interesting that African researchers should address the controversy between Cheikh Anta Diop and Jean Suret-Canale.

In his main thesis *Pre-colonial Black Africa* (1960: 166) Cheikh Anta Diop argues that the relative hatred that existed at a time between semi-nomadic Fulani and their sedentary neighbours can be explained by their different ways of life. It is very common seeing the Fulani taking advantage of the lack of farm watching to let their herds graze there. This is allegedly the origin of the evil, because this fact is all but fortuitous, one cannot overstate its importance. 'But the idea of Fulani hegemony in West Africa is a legend; it is not consistent with documents,' Cheikh Anta Diop wrote. He builds on the *Tarih el Fittah* by Kati, translated by Houdas and Delafosse in Paris in 1913, and on *Tarih es Soudan* by Sadi, translated by Houdas in Paris in 1900. Sonni Ali made several expeditions against the Fulani; he virtually destroyed the Sangare (San-Ka-Re) clan to such an extent that survivors could gather in the shade of a single tree.

Following one of those expeditions, Sonni Ali distributed several Fulani women captives as 'concubines' to some scholars in Timbuktu who were friends. Sadi confirmed that one of them was his grandmother. Can Sonni Ali's simple statements serve as irrefutable evidence? There, is a lack of source criticism to which professional historians attach great importance. Cheikh Anta Diop argues that the idea that the nomadic Fulani were feared in pre-colonial black Africa is not also based on facts. It stems from an *a priori* perspective which aimed at justifying pastoral life at all costs, for reasons that are peculiar to authors. It would have been interesting to know such authors.

Cheikh Anta Diop calls for the testimony of Sadi. The latter emphasizes the insignificance of the material and social force of nomadic people who, due to the fact that they move all the time, do not have the possibility or the ability to accumulate power which is dangerous for sedentary people. This point of view does not seem very strong to us and is worth discussing.

Jean Suret-Canale

Let us now turn to Jean Suret-Canale's essay on the social and historical significance of Fulani hegemonies (XVII - XIX centuries). The original version of this paper was published in German in Berlin, in Akademie Verlag in 1960. Jean Suret-Canale attempted to identify the historical significance of the Fulani hegemony; the hegemony of the Denianke who were in power until 1776, the settlement of the Fulani in Macina in the early fifteenth century, the revolution that made Fouta Djallon an aristocratic, military and theocratic state, the constitution of the empire of scholar Ousmane dan Fodio.

Cheikh Anta Diop read the last two publications of Suret-Canale: 'Traditional societies in tropical Africa and the concept of the Asian mode of production' in *La Pensée* n° 117 published in October 1964, and 'Essay on the social and historical significance of Fulani Hegemonies (XVIIth-XIXth centuries), 1964' published in *Cahiers du C.E.R.M.* He simply wrote: 'I do not want to say anything. I would fear being too critical.' (*Antériorité des civilisations nègres. Mythe ou vérité ? [Anteriority of Negro Civilizations. Myth or Reality?]* Presence Africaine, 1964). It is unfortunate that Cheikh Anta Diop remained silent on this critical issue. Jean Suret-Canale addressed the ethnic origin and ethnic characteristics of the Fulani. They are a special race (or racial type). He decided not to speak any more in terms of 'race' and 'racial' to describe those physical types, moreover impossible to define rigorously. The progress in biology in recent years has finally proclaimed the inappropriateness of the term 'human races.'

It is worth noting that Cheikh Anta Diop spoke in 1948 in an article published in the journal *Presence Africaine* of the Valaf race. The term race was used by colonial authorities in place of ethnicity. The scattering of the Fulani is explained by their economic specialization. They are (or were originally) pastoralists, cattle breeders. The area that is best suited to their activity and that is the focus of their settlement is the Sahel. They may face competition from Saharan pastoralists (the Moor and Tuareg).

In the case of West Africa, conflicts between pastoralists and nomads which exist in the world may have an ethnic character. Here, specialization in pastoral

and agricultural activities is done on the basis of ethnicity. Nomadic or semi-nomadic populations like the Fulani, the Moor and the Tuareg, may come into very violent conflicts with sedentary people such as the Wolof, the Soninke, the Bambara, the Songhai, etc.

In pre-colonial Africa, pastoralists were in a position of hegemony, thanks to the mobility of their draught animals (horses, camels, bullocks, etc.). Yet, with colonization, the balance of power changed in favour of sedentary people who benefited from achievements resulting from colonial outputs (schools, health, roads, railways, etc.).

Jean Suret-Canale, who labels himself Marxist, was interested in nomadic people from West Africa out of necessity. In this area, the founders of Marxism did not bring any input to a true knowledge of

nomadic societies. Marx believed that nomadism is a primitive form of society. For him, the nomad did not know writing, or savings or accumulation or class relationships; they appeared only with agriculture and slavery, and developed only in capitalism. For Lenin, the liberation of the balance of power can be achieved only through the implementation of the most sedentary society, where all means of production belong to the state.

Haal Pulaar-born Senegalese historian, Omar Kane, published a book with the evocative title: *La première hégémonie peule [The first Fulani hegemony]* in Editions Karthala. Kane's position seems to contradict Cheikh Anta Diop's theory that hegemony is a legend.

The elements we have tried to collect can help to better reflect on the social and national issue in Africa.

Relations between nomadic and sedentary people are issue-prone in Senegal.

Martin Weicker wrote a pamphlet entitled: *Nomades et sédentaires au Sénégal [Nomadic and Sedentary People in Senegal]* published by Editions Enda in 1993 in Dakar. In Senegal, space for pastoralists is receding. Agriculture is extending beyond pastoral areas. Nomadism appears as opposed to 'development.' Pastoralist populations are now facing multiple anxieties and many uncertainties for the future. Martin Weicker's analysis of the accumulated effects of agricultural extension and the reduced mobility of pastoralists is a valuable input to the reflection on the relationship between pastoralists and farmers in outlying the Ferlo areas. This could serve as a basis and reference for the design of essential tools.

African Unity, Religion, and Philosophy

I would like to consider three critical issues that, I believe CODESRIA should pay more attention to in the upcoming years, or let us say, in the next decade. The first one is African unity and regional integration on the continent; the second relates to religion and the third one is about my discipline, philosophy.

As far as African unity is concerned, first I would like to point out that the context of the 2010s will coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of most of African states access if we consider the year 1960, as it is generally the case, as the year of independences. Accordingly, some events have been slated to mark this anniversary. Then it seems to me that in the next few years, CODESRIA should steer its research agenda to focus on a forward-looking reflection upon the new meaning of African emancipation by asking the following question: 'What is the journey so far with respect to emancipation after fifty years, and what are the new frontiers to confront?' Actually, nowadays there is a broad consensus that Nkrumah's 'Africa must unite' mantra has become the catchphrase for a new pan-Africanism that many refer to by the term 'United States of Africa.' The fact that some African leaders have latched onto this expression and tried to clumsily rush

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things in a context of reluctance of other heads of state does not change the reality that the creation of a true African economic and political environment is not only the continent's most appropriate response to the challenges of globalization, but also the new window of opportunity to be offered to Africa's young people who overwhelmingly cling to the belief that emigrating to the outer world will offer them a brighter future.

Against this backdrop, it is CODESRIA's mission to pave the way and spearhead proposals for decision-makers such as the heads of state, regional authorities and the bodies of the African Union (AU). Of course, regional integration is part of CODESRIA's research topics, but I would like to focus on the need to adopt a real proactive attitude that will practically address the issue of the 'Construction of the United States of Africa'.

The second issue which has become increasingly important in recent years in the world of the social sciences in general is

religion. Religion, until a decade ago, was hardly a topical question for social sciences. Today, it has become a crucial issue everywhere, owing to concerns about modernity, democratization, secularisation, and women's empowerment. I would take just one example to discuss the considerable success of the bulky book by Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, which traces the history of the secularisation in the Western Christian World and which questions the forms of modernity that would not necessarily amount to the replication (or the desire to imitate) of the trajectory of one part of the world. Important meetings were held in the United States and in Europe around this book and the way it allows us to raise issues of our time; in particular the issue of modernity in relation with religions. From a practical and political standpoint, we know that Taylor chaired a committee in charge of advising the Government of Quebec on the content of secularism in a more pluralistic and multicultural Quebec society. Nowadays, such questions have emerged everywhere (in France Baubérot, the sociologist of religion and author of a book on '*Les Laïcités*' played a similar role with the French Government) in the world as a result of the observation made by social sciences which posit that

the Weberian model establishing an identification between modernization, the 'disenchantment' of the world and secularization, has no universal validity. It is certainly important for Africa to embark on the same questioning. When CODESRIA decided to select religion as a subject of reflection, it merely listed it as an ancillary topic under the main thrust 'African Popular cultures'. This is not enough because it does not really delve into the issue. This issue should be captured as a full theme for instance under

themes like 'African public spaces, religion, secularization and women empowerment...'

Third, I think it is really advisable for CODESRIA to initiate and support a reflection on 'African philosophy and intellectual history.' For over a decade now, African philosophy has experienced significant evolutions and has become, in many American universities in particular, a full component of philosophy curricula. *A Companion to African Philosophy*, published by Blackwell under the supervision of Ghanaian Kwesi Wiredu, is in-

deed a major intellectual breakthrough. It actually shows that today the debate on African philosophy, which two decades ago only amounted to a confrontation between euro-philosophers and ethno-philosophers, gave way to other questions that are worth being addressed as part of the discussions conducted by CODESRIA. Moreover, the research on African intellectual history in general and on non-Europhone intellectuals conducted in recent years under the aegis of CODESRIA would perfectly be consistent with this theme.

Africa-centered Research in the Context of the New Industrialization

Scientific production is self-centred around a social formation when it touches on crucial issues by producing within its research institutions knowledge about society and by offering it a worldview chiefly shaped locally.

Sub-regional research institutions such as CODESRIA and the Third World Forum (TWF) emerged from the need to develop an African self-centred research. And this departed from the observation that social sciences have never been and will never be neutral with respect to internal contradictions between societies and between those very sciences. More relevantly, since the nineteenth century, the focus of research is clearly shaped by the ruling classes of the most powerful countries. They expect public and private institutions involved in civil and military research, in the social sciences and humanities, to lay the theoretical and rational foundations for the management of capitalism-imperialism as if it marked the end of History. That is why research managers and selection policies for beneficiaries of academic distinctions, systematically side with the conservatives, as evidenced by the list of the winners of the Nobel Prize in economics. So are we not giving to the concept of *think tank* too obtuse a meaning as we tend to? In this context, as in other areas, the triad has dominion.

But while acknowledging the hegemony of Anglo-Saxon institutions, the states that want to command respect provide the human and financial resources needed to build and develop national or sub-

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regional research in different fields. Actually, the issue is not just economic – attracting capital and talent, having a balance of current accounts in surplus – but it is also strategic as it requires states to have on their territory a scientific community as part of the social formation. And no community can be truly effective and dynamic unless it is self-centred, inasmuch as it operates in a space relying on networks of institutions and researchers who interact and compete. In other words, the development of critical thinking and research on societies and the global system is intertwined with the existence of self-centred institutions in self-centred economies and societies.

To assess the progress made regarding the formation of a relevant scientific community in Africa, it is worth making the distinction between the issue of paradigm shift and that of their implementation. Starting from the critical analysis of social sciences that legitimized slavery and colonialism, Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Samir Amin, Amílcar Cabral, Walter Rodney, Archie Mafeje, Mahmood Mamdani, Ali El Kenz, etc. have shown the importance that African leadership should give to the promotion of self-centred African research that would help take an unapologetic stance

against Eurocentrism. Most of them have rejected culturalism while accepting the paradigm of cultural diversity, but only in the context of the universality of reason and democratic drive. (Part of pan-Africanist research easily fits within this complex conception and produces very interesting works on Africa.)

In practice, the emphasis was placed on self-generated knowledge on African societies. In this area, CODESRIA has done tremendous work, but a significant portion of which should have been conducted by national institutions. In some instances, CODESRIA completed the work and filled the gap in others. In addition, it facilitated the formation of sub-regional research networks. Other institutions such as the TWF have done a lot in the same field.

The recognition of the value of these works by the scientific community based at such research institutions, however, is not to be taken for granted. It is a distressing banality to realise that these works are of unequal value. But the real issue is about their authority. We feel that the African social scientific community itself, let alone the non-African researchers, tend to belittle these works and overrate those of the Bretton Woods institutions and of the OECD member countries. CODESRIA could help fight for proper recognition in this respect.

However, the second component of the self-centred research is taking long to earn the consideration it deserves, even in institutions of regional or continental

scope. The proliferation of publications by NGOs on international relations or, as part of the negotiations on the place of Africa in the global system is illusory because the information they use mainly originates from the countries of the North. In fact no country has built a network of outstanding documentation centres and no sub-regional institution has done so either.

It is desirable that CODESRIA's new research priorities take into account the risk of disempowerment faced by the African people in the current phase of globalization. For us, the major structural factor is the potential third wave of industrial revolution which directly affects about 60 per cent of the world population. The leaders of the so-called emerging countries promise their people to catch up with the level and structure of the per capita consumption in developed countries. The fact that some of the newly industrialized countries are actually trying

to build their capacities to upgrade their production systems to equal those of the North, but also to produce weapons of deterrence, including nuclear weapons, accounts for the uncertainty about the outcome of the current global crisis. So the future of Africa is increasingly dependent on the development of some countries and regions that must be known from an African perspective.

This would include North America and the United States, the European Union (with particular emphasis on the former colonial powers), Germany, Scandinavia, Russia, Eastern Asia with a focus on Vietnam, China and Japan, India, Latin America with a focus on Cuba, Venezuela, Brazil, and Mexico. The likelihood of collusion between the old and new industrial countries for the control of natural resources in Africa should be explored. How is the African anti-globalisation movement to be guided in the choice of new challenges? Although it is

clear that the new industrialization involves the dispossession of farmers of their right to access agricultural land for the production of crops and livestock, the organized headlong rush for the control of raw materials and oil, and a degree of pollution which endangers the human species itself, a socialist alternative will not be credible unless great self-centred research efforts are made throughout the world. From this point of view, self-centred knowledge of the political and potentially social revolutions occurring presently in Latin America would be very helpful.

It is high time CODESRIA and other sub-regional or pan-African institutions of social science research gave priority to the production of knowledge on relevant components of the global system. Against this background, it seems necessary for CODESRIA to raise the awareness of the African scholarly community to place knowledge production at the heart of their advocacy efforts.

Fulfilling the CODESRIA Mandate in a new Context

I would like to turn the search of 'new' priorities for CODESRIA towards updating its own ambitions and key objectives:

Positive Results

There is no doubt that CODESRIA has honourably accomplished its mandate.

i) Because it repatriated African knowledge production to the continent, thus making the latter not only the passive object of knowledge by and for others, but also the active subject of self-knowledge for oneself and others. So, African researchers have met and exchanged farther which reduced their atomization and isolation. They could reconcile their thematic and move towards a more comprehensive apprehension of their 'common object' and their assessment of its extension and the diversity in those areas, that is, its geographical, historical, economic, political, and cultural experiences.

ii) The second most promising result lies in training which enabled promoting young researchers in completing their works and theses, benefiting from orientation or advanced level training on

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theory, practice and writing in the various social science disciplines, receiving publication assistance and awards fostering competition and excellence.

iii) There are many CODESRIA publications that stand out for the most part because of the importance and the relevance of their themes, the quality of their information and rigour of argument. The wide field of social sciences is marked out by books, monographs, working papers and more than ten journals, especially adding to this, the CODESRIA documentation and information Centre (CODICE) resources. In fact, CODICE, 'is in charge of collecting, processing and disseminating social science-related information'. It is not only meant for internal use for documentary and information support to its own programs. CODICE is open to African researchers in general, research and training institutions,

and even to governments and their agencies. It is therefore unnecessary to over emphasise the importance of this large collection of various documents and its database constantly enriched and updated.

Limits/frontiers

Limits as frontiers to conquer are revealed by the dynamics of success itself. It is also at the same time a historical vision of what is occurring on the margins, 'informal areas' more sensitive to effects of domination in the form of ghettoization and theoretical and practical feudalization, of which they are the extreme product sometimes grotesque if not final. The 'extremism' of proposals mirrors or expresses the place where they have been manifested and their peremptory dogmatism is due to the absence of arguments to which it invites and of which it represents provocation, not only for others but first for itself. The alleged 'vision' is or should be an 'interpretation' of conditions and limits of CODESRIA historical productivity genetically considered in its system of constituent relations and its evolution.

i) The initial or founding perspective for a global and pan-African approach, independent and alternative analyses, research and social change purposes was weakened and tarnished after being brilliantly supported by a small group of exceptional and exclusive individuals known for their ideological thoroughness (progressive, pan-African)

ii) The university did not play the expected role of partnership: reduction and registration in public policies of movement. It gave way (for many reasons, including career) to national compartmentalization and ethnic disintegration, thus creating tribal areas for knowledge field limitations in many social science areas, kind of extreme *areas studies*. Then or concomitantly, the university is no longer a place for research, but for ethnic and conservative feudalities, for venality and 'kind' and needy precariousness without the required spare time for research.

iii) The research receiving funding is the one developed by 'donors' in structural adjustment programs, those from multilateral and bilateral organizations dispensing and justifying them, the one addressing new objects they create or revive like civil society, watchwords turned into concepts, into cognitive pseudo-proposals, and into entities imposed to hired investigations. Needless to say that in its training, publications thematics, its 'free and spontaneous' choices, CODESRIA, as in the case of university now operating 'extramuros' was

not spared by conditioning of research. Academic standards were maintained to organize and boost what is all but watchwords and mode effect for social sciences politically disabled for wealthier nations' spare time classes. In this context, the abundance of productions is not necessarily proportionate to its relevance and its importance. There is some great mental confusion to which it's nevertheless vain to oppose some orthodoxy or formerly bright ideas.

What to do as a priority?

I would just like to point out few indications I consider significant strategically. These are simply accentuations of what is already being done as a corrective action within an entity we found positive, considering our difficult environment:

i) We need to reformulate the initial mandate calling for an African and global perspective, advocating independent analyses by way of authentic research and social change. The how is extremely important. As everybody's work, our interactions within common projects, at the appropriate scale, supported by production of presuppositions and common references, making discussion and cooperation possible. Like after Babel, we need to proceed from total 'language' confusion and dispersion and carry out the theory of our practice. Social science without 'Philosophy' is a blind subject and Philosophy (preconceived) outside and without social science practice is void and of no effect;

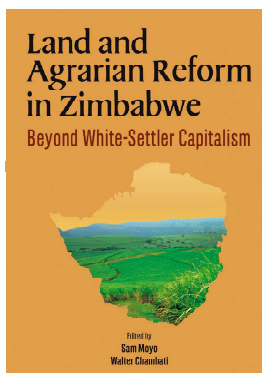
ii) International groups need to be promoted and reorganized in this spirit. We need to give them a preponderant role, and resume together with them the great ambitions of African total knowledge marking the work of those who coveted Africa in its entirety at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century, and who produced inventory and summary works we are still using today;

iii) National Working Groups, as they are, must be subject to evaluation and total revision. They have a tendency to suffer continuous and permanent lack of visibility. The most annoying in that, is the fact they are not the best face of the CODESRIA spirit, activities and productions, a famous place frequented by all those who, at one time or another, needed social science assistance and resort. In fact, they have a tendency to appear, if not be seen as a private and esoteric property of individuals and networks, that do not do much of it, if not personal, client-cantered and sectary use;

iv) Finally, CODESRIA resources in their whole variety need to be accessible. They must be constantly injected into research everywhere, in theses and dissertation production, article writing. CODICE resource materials should be made more accessible to all members. How this is to be done should be discussed in a realistic way but in any case the sooner it is implemented, the better. I would be inclined to make it a top priority.

Land and Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe

Edited by Sam Moyo & Walter Chambati



The Fast Track Land Reform Programme implemented during the 2000s in Zimbabwe represents the only instance of radical redistributive land reforms since the end of the Cold War. It reversed the racially-skewed agrarian structure and discriminatory land tenures inherited from colonial rule. The land reform also radicalised the state towards a nationalist, introverted accumulation strategy, against a broad array of unilateral Western sanctions. Indeed, Zimbabwe's land reform, in its social and political dynamics, must be compared to the leading land reforms of the twentieth century, which include those of Mexico, Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Cuba and Mozambique.

The fact that the Zimbabwe case has not been recognised as vanguard nationalism has much to do with the 'intellectual structural adjustment' which has accompanied neoliberalism and a hostile media campaign. This has entailed dubious theories of 'neopatrimonialism', which reduce African politics and the state to endemic 'corruption', 'patronage', and 'tribalism' while overstating the virtues of neoliberal good governance. Under this racist repertoire, it has been impossible to see class politics, mass mobilisation and resistance, let alone believe that something progressive can occur in Africa.

The Social Foundations of Research and the Need for Institutional Semantic Reforms

Introduction

A key take-home learning one could take from the research proposal below is, *a way of doing*, resulting from my experience as a researcher. It consists in calling into question the notoriously bottom-ranked position we occupy in terms of research and science. Science, let us not be mistaken, is also a market governed by power relations: it is therefore up to us, Africans, to propose new ways of thinking that will set us free. Science, through research, turns out to be the first issue of power in the world; it is the ‘knot of vipers’, the hotbed of local and global issues shaking up the world. The yoke of colonialism hardest to shake off is the one that prevails in scientific relationships, and which still has great resonance today in our interactions—as researchers—with Western research centres that dominate us and often shape our research practices.

The following proposal is broken down into two major parts: one dealing with ‘the social foundations’ composed of labour value¹, which is the bedrock of any society that seeks to offer utmost social and political invulnerability to its citizens, and another one dealing with ‘gestations, institutional and semantic reforms’ that empower it to ensure its own development and the management of its material, natural and human resources [the nucleus of these developments and these gestations revolve around the goals to be defined for labour and horizontal (debate, policy dialogue, communication) and top-down relationships (social class and domination relations regarding the appropriation of labour and its extensions, wealth, social power, etc.)]².

The following proposals, though succinct and to be furthered, fulfil two conditions: *Unemotional stigmatisation* (description of the priority research areas and their objects), but also the passion for Africa, i.e. *Commitment*.

Labour and employment

Today, labour and employment seem to be the area of utmost interest for economic, social and political actors. The ‘financial crisis’, with its spin-off effects

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on the labour market, especially for African societies, widely open to world economy today, is a possible starting point (among others, since the phenomena in question boil down to structural causes beyond the historical and specific context of the current global crisis) for social science reflections on the impact the global crisis has had on the African social fabric. Labour and employment are two categories that must be defined and delineated; thus the need to promote basic research. This work will be entrusted to senior researchers, and it must be circumscribed in terms that are associated with the specific and historical conditions of today’s Africa.

Labour: i.e. the work category as the basics of fundamental research on its value dimension (whether productive or unproductive labour), on the right of the citizen, the self-fulfilment and well-being, on the content of development, on the organizing and structuring meaning of economic and social development. The breakdown of labour, according to anthropological approaches is capable of bringing the working class back to its basic meanings and dusting off all the theoretical dross which have emerged as a result of the effect of marginal theories and ‘post-modernity’ approaches supportive of speculation and unproductive labour instead of productive work, and trust capital as opposed to physical capital.

Employment: i.e. the concrete and historical forms in which work is shaped today, and especially as designated by international companies, capitalist enterprises, its ongoing evolution. Today employment appears in multiple shapes as a result of new market values such as flexibility. Other ancillary and induced values are at play: the multitasking skills to be taught to prospective job seekers, professional bachelor degrees in all the training programmes and the education system at the

expense of basic research and education. A new landscape of education, training and culture is emerging, that of the international division in the functions of universities and educational institutions: on the one hand, students are close to laying the emphasis on reflective and cognitive functions globally, with a *focus*, as appropriate, on the specific features of each country, while on the other hand, other students are shifting their focus on the training programmes leading to basic functions and task supervision roles. Particular heed is paid to contract performance monitoring proposed to link up and match the demands of the labour market (with special emphasis placed on needs of companies) and education content. This training is jointly constructed by universities and companies, which emphasises professional and applied bachelor degrees to the detriment of basic bachelor degree education.

Alternative ways

Emerging alternative ways are steering clear of the mainstream trends underpinning various areas of social life. The dominating trends are governed by three values increasingly considered as intrinsic: the value of the Market, the value of the City, the value of the State and we could even add a fourth value: the value of Written Civilization (and/or now Digital Value, we might say).

These alternative ways, reabsorbing the said three or four dominant values today, consist of two components: reflection on the ‘community’ and reflection on ‘social exchange’ that dominating social sciences have distorted by introducing the phrase ‘Social Bond’ underpinned by an imperialist drive and affected by the *virus of positivist paradigm*.

The aims of basic and applied research are: solidarity-based economy, social economy, mutualism, the establishment of internal mutual-support groups (e.g. trade in goods or services, tontines), exchange among partners, within families or small groups, among neighbours (neighbouring countries, neighbouring tribes, communities governed by good neighbourly

relations), among aliens. The studies of these three levels of networking (parental, territorial, international) for the purpose of achieving economic reforms in African societies and also offering Africa the opportunities to create specific network-based entities anchored on its peculiarities can be best defined by anthropology and ethnology.

Training Institute: Epistemology of social sciences

The concepts, theories (critical theory, etc.), schools (Chicago School, Frankfurt School, etc.), paradigms (functionalist, Marxist, etc.) and all the research protocols that surround the practice of researcher, including books and abstract data but also field practice (research process, survey procedures, methodologies, techniques) should be put in the spatio-temporal contexts of their production and examined in terms of criticism and evaluation, so as to exert a relationship of equality with research centres that operate on Western bases of established priorities under the pretext that the level of approach is international and universal. Describing the history of a theory, the conditions of its emergence, the purposes it serves, the procedural methods of field research or materials it values, the underlying meanings, the relativism the mark of which it bears, its punctual and specific character; all this, with the intention to determine the extent to which it is consistent or not with the realities of countries of the South, specifically Africa.

It is, for example, interesting to study the content of notions, categories and concepts widely used in the social sciences, such as 'formal' versus 'informal' (applied to the market for example), to analyze the normative content of concepts such as 'traditional' versus 'modern' (applied to sectors), 'civilized' versus 'primitive' (applied to societies), 'underdeveloped' versus 'developed', 'old' versus 'modern', 'conservative' versus 'liberal', 'terrorist' versus 'peaceful citizen', and many other pairs (but also process and procedures, implicit or explicit) marking out the researcher spirit that can be identified for inclusion in an educational program for young researchers in Africa.

Civil society and political society

Studies based on two concepts: civil society and political society, proved fruitful for countries of the South. They

have undoubtedly established a clear distinction between both societies and showed that for the southern hemisphere the civil society is often against the political society, in the anthropological dimensions of such concepts. Pierre Clastres studies (1974), or those of E. Evans-Pritchard (1968), can be read and put to use for an emancipatory interpretation of African societies against imported political categories, including the state (1992). It is not to stick only to Gramscian concepts, but they are a starting point for reflection to develop and update on such critical concepts to introduce reflection tools relevant in the areas of political dialogue, public debate and citizen management of society.

Development

Stigmatization of patterns, prediction, anticipation and sociological imagination (and more generally of social sciences)

Conventional social sciences are used to describing the relationship between societies in the North and those in the South in terms of gap to bridge and delay to catch up. Several criticisms have been made against this approach that conceals a linear conception of the development of societies. Obviously, this conception is simplistic: it reduces the specificities of southern countries to what is termed as the universal merit of northern societies, often treated as historical societies while those in the South are often seen as societies that are 'blocked', in formation, underdeveloped, 'backward' and 'primitive'.

The challenge of African societies is to perceive development issues not in terms of delay to catch up, with a gap to bridge, but in terms of anticipation and foresight. The salvation of Africa lies more in an attitude of detachment and disengagement with locomotives leading the world (industrialized countries), concomitant with an attitude of founding its own evolution mechanisms. This will only be possible if research on the chances of this detachment, in order to ensure autonomy of evolution, is conducted. This research will be firstly aimed at showing the current ways and patterns of the world evolution, in its dominant regions (the West in particular), with their sprawling expansion on the rest of the world. Secondly, it will be necessary

to conduct a prospective assessment with impact studies on the African continent (and comparison with similar regions, such as Latin America and Asia). Thirdly, we must anticipate evolution scenarios and alternative ways to such dominant patterns.

In the USA, there is an institute in Boston which is responsible for recording strategic developments in several areas, predicting, and if possible, advising US policymakers on the ways to follow in the sense of US interest. A similar body, the identity of which we will examine (institute, watchdog, etc.) should be considered. Areas may be those of biology, evolution of diseases and health issues, up to military policies, through the analysis of societies using the merits of social sciences.

Local Development

It is the content that will be, more than any other research area, the most technical possible, the least related to state policies, the most entrenched with people in their localism as well as their close relationships with lands and their fields; but also the most diverse in categories: age, or socio-professional stratification, search for economic niches and income-generating activities to meet their physiological and basic needs. In other words, conducting research that anchor development themes within civil society more than in political society.

Development is to be articulated here to include the pursuit of economic and therefore social autonomy of social groups. This starting point is called local development and contrasts with top-down development. This direction does not preclude development studies in terms of growth and positive increase of GDP and ratios of socio-collective equipment by inhabitant. CODESRIA research directions should be characterized by an articulation of economic development and social balance (or what was called in the 1960s 'social progress', a phrase which is not always fortunate because of the positivist content of the word 'progress').

Basic research on management of violence

The management of violence in society; sociology of crime: the mechanisms of sanction, punishment and repression through the criminal and repressive system of state apparatuses in particular (stu-

dies of legal and jurisprudential levels, at the level of institutions of stigmatization of the conflict or collection of materials of offence or crime, police, investigating magistrates, police investigation, etc.); sociogenesis (research on the social causes of the occurrence of violence in a criminal form, such as the low rate of social integration). The best known forms of crime are those that occur against property, people, and public goods. Forms of reconstruction of the social fabric are to be identified, in addition to the role played by the family community alongside civil society and political society: Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior in particular, *as restoration of order of values and standards*, and the subject of social consensus, which is also the crowning of the public debate. The target populations of such studies are at three levels of crime (*real* and actual, or *apparent* as reflected in police reports, and *legal* as seen through courts records, i.e. the one which has suffered a legal sanction). Other types of violence that will need attention are those of an *economic* type (infringing others people's property), those of a *sexual* nature; and those involving *physical integrity*.

Issues of the management of violence which is the responsibility any social group, restricted or extended, on tribal and clan scale or national and international scale, anticipate the forms of social and political systems. The social system understood as integration capacity of individuals and groups; while the political system is a set of institutions that regulate the outbreak of violence, its sociogenesis, through alternative mechanisms: dialogue, pluralism of expression, communication techniques, conflict mediation, the sublimation of violence by channeling it to the arts, creation and sound performance (games and sports). It is no more a matter of 'democracy' as it appeared historically in the West (from Athens to the Treaty of Maastricht), but rather of exploring the assumptions of the communicative power of African sociality groups across the continent and in various forms that must be identified and restored, beyond the distorting tradition - modernity pair.

Consequences

The first consequence is internal. It involves the highlighting of social mechanisms of management of violence and their effectiveness. The social system

would be examined in what it offers as alternative solutions to the violence generated by the social body: solutions residing in the geniuses of communication and mediation when violence occurs. The importance of this focus is to show the futility of state apparatuses in the field of management of violence once society takes care of it and finds full scope to intervene and mediate between the belligerents, on the basis of laws and regulations and also traditions and custom relating to conflict management. This is the first consequence.

The second consequence is external; it is at international level and allows comparison of the most diverse political systems by focusing on the futility of political systems based on the principles of democracy as it appeared historically. Criticism of 'democracy' deemed to be the 'least bad' system and the proposal of alternatives from African realities and possibilities of intellectual conversion, thanks to thinkers who reflect on alternative potentialities, through a wide range of solutions, and the contribution of southern countries to the development of a political system not dominated by historical democracy that is currently prevailing.

Conclusion

The basic content of this research lies in translation³ that consists in considering the general theme of justice as a priority over the theme of freedom, without excluding it though. Basic research that could follow (and often reinforce) the establishment of the system of Western domination over Southern countries, the work of northern thinkers especially, have focused on a centuries-old undertaking on the theme of freedom, considered as a supreme value, the top value, even supplanting, in most cases, the value of justice.

The translation which Southern countries are expected to operate to ensure a kind of *scientific coup* is their only way to emancipate themselves against today's domination. I believe that only a pan-African research body can handle such a basic research program. No African national institution can ensure it. It is, therefore, the priority area for CODESRIA. Priority, indeed through exclusion of another remedy, or priority in the negative sense, but also priority in the positive sense: these are the tasks required by the need for emancipation of African societies which are largely dominated today.

Notes

1. Western societies have grounded social values on two concurrent values: labour (which value is related to 'real economy') and speculation on labour (stock markets, transactions, business communities based on the financial component of the economy), so much so that the speculation value has superseded the labour value. By choosing to single out labour as nearly the most exclusive foundation of the social structure, we steer clear of European and Western societies and underscore the choice of African societies in this very respect. This is our theoretical bias.
2. Thus we establish our conception and methodology for the definition and development of a research programme in social sciences. The point is not about listing out research areas in a 'catalogue' format. For the sake of relevance, it is important to demonstrate consistency in the presentation of these areas and themes, and in so doing, by defining often covert guidelines and a roadmap that require a critical analysis to be unveiled. Since the ultimate goal of a research programme is primarily a vision, the beginnings of a social project, a scientific bias, i.e. based on the experience and knowledge, the researcher as an actor intervenes within the community to which they belong, viz. Africa. We draw on Jurgen Habermas' methodological approach to designing social science research. This is how our proposals are buttressed by a scientific tradition and bedrock. See J. Habermas, *Connaissance et intérêt* [Knowledge and Interest], Gallimard, 1976 (First Edition, 1968, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main), Jean René Admiral 'Le programme épistémologique de J.H. [J.H. Epistemological Programme] by J.H.' pp. 7-27.
3. In the Middle Ages, the translation of the relics of a saint, was a major event in the lives of urban and rural communities and was the starting or inflection point of a cult.

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Africa in a Highly Globalized World

I welcome the initiative of the Executive Secretariat which will help to conduct a mini review of CODESRIA and especially to lay new foundations.

To map out the main priorities of CODESRIA over the next few years, it is important to think first of the major changes that will take place in the world and particularly in Africa over the next decade. In this regard, we have first the political problems in the world and the new economic policies that will result from the financial crisis.

The evolution of the socio-political situation in the world

Over the next few years, globally, we will observe a redeal of cards, so to speak. In fact, with the arrival of Barack Obama, who will implement a less warlike policy than his predecessor, we observe new alliances. The issue of the Middle East remains a central and its resolution will lower tensions in the world. If this comes to pass, there may be greater security so that the focus can be laid on economic and environmental issues.

In another sense, we will see the emergence of Russia, China, Brazil, India, and South Africa as competing powers, internationally. These countries will weigh more in major international decisions. Pressures will be made on the role of the United Nations and its Security Council. The UN will have to find a place for these countries in its Security Council as well as Germany and Japan. There will be a review of the role of the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF, World Bank) with a greater role given to emerging countries. In the same vein, the dollar can no longer have the place it has kept for decades. Finally, the supremacy of the United States will be reduced.

Moreover, with the new French policy of Euro-Mediterranean alliance, an alliance that includes part of North Africa, what impact can be expected for the building of an African Union?

From this point of view, CODESRIA should focus on the following topics:

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- (i) The new strategic challenges in the world and the impact on Africa;
- (ii) The impact of the Euro-Mediterranean alliance on the future of Africa;
- (iii) The new policy directions of Africa in a globalized world.

Evolution of the World Economy

The current international financial and economic crisis will continue at least until 2010, and the recovery can truly begin only in late 2010 at the earliest. Africa will experience, with some delay, the effects of the crisis and its persistence will last longer. From this perspective, CODESRIA can study the socio-political and economic implications of the crisis in the world, including:

- (i) The impact of the crisis on African economies;
- (ii) The financial crisis and agricultural policy in Africa;
- (iii) The current integration policies in Africa.

Retrospective on CODESRIA and new directions

CODESRIA has over thirty years of existence and has structures for social science research and training in Africa. It has overcome many difficulties and has managed to maintain its independence despite all the turmoil globally and in Africa. It has also gained the confidence of donors. It has conducted research relevant in most social science areas and has produced many publications. However, in many areas, CODESRIA has failed to carry out prospective studies to anticipate situations in Africa. It has not yet managed to find a place with policy makers in order to influence their decisions. The new directions should be on the following priority areas.

Influence with decision makers

One of the strategies of CODESRIA should be to have a technical role within continental and sub-regional organizations: African Union, sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS, SADC, etc. For this purpose, it must be able to conduct discussions on topics such as:

- (a) Economic issues and the new directions of economic policies worldwide;
- (b) Prospects for the construction of a United States of Africa: myth or reality;
- (c) The ways to the construction of the United States of Africa.

In the current context, we see that democracy in Africa seems to be a myth. There is even a tendency to challenge some republican gains. What role should CODESRIA play? The following should be conducted in the political and legal areas:

- (a) The state of democracy in Africa;
- (b) The causes of the violations of constitutions and the resurgence of coups;
- (c) The trend towards constitutional monarchies.

The relationship between Africa and the rest of the world

With global geopolitics, it is obviously important to understand the changing world and its impact on the continent. Thus, research can be considered on the following:

- (a) The new relationships of Africa with former colonizers;
- (b) Africa and Europe;
- (c) Africa and emerging countries: China, Russia, India and Brazil. In this case, each emerging country must be the subject of a specific study related to the strategy that must be developed by the African continent.

Internal solutions within CODERIA

The mobilization of intellectuals

In the current situation, CODESRIA has made a sizeable mobilization of African

researchers for many years. However, it is worth conducting a qualitative and quantitative assessment on the following:

- (a) Geographical and country coverage;
- (b) Linguistic mobilization;
- (c) Disciplinary representativeness;
- (d) Gender.

The type of research over the last twenty years

There was a major effort in terms of diversification of research areas. But it can be noted that prospective research remained very low. Moreover, this research could not fundamentally influence policy makers on the continent. This means that, perhaps, it remained too academic or its dissemination was too low with policy makers; hence the need to consider, as we mentioned above, themes that may influence decision-makers and then develop a more effective strategy for communication and dissemination of research results.

We must reflect on the role that National Working Groups have played in the development strategies of national policies. We can also reflect on how multinational groups have contributed to

the mobilization of young researchers and in what areas of the disciplinary research?

Dissemination of research results

CODESRIA has for thirty years published many works in the form of books, journals, monographs, etc. Despite this intense publication, we note that in some areas there is a little dissemination. What new policy should be implemented by the executive body for this dissemination to be as broad as possible and help influence policy makers? In the field of textbooks, so far, there have been few publications by CODESRIA which proved to be reference books. Yet, this is one way to make the institution more influential and known to young intellectuals. Dissemination has for long been a weak point for CODESRIA it should be addressed urgently.

The place of private universities and research centres

When CODESRIA was founded, there were very few private universities. However, we note that this trend should be reversed and there will be a time when public universities will be outnumbered by private universities. Under such conditions, will the current research directions respond to this new situation? It is worth reflecting in this question so as not to be caught in an unpredictable

situation. The following themes could be considered:

- (a) The role of private university in training and research in Africa;
- (b) Private university and the development strategy of CODESRIA.

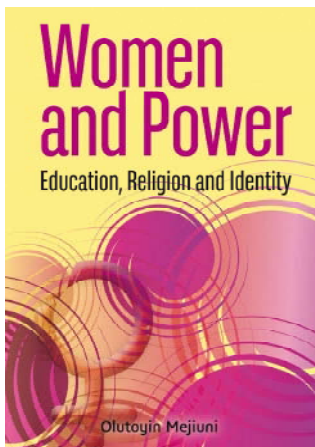
The role of the African Diaspora in financial investment on the continent

In other parts of the world (Israel, Ireland, etc.), migrants have spearheaded the development of these nations through investment. However, Africa has increasingly has many valuable people in the Diaspora (intellectuals, businessmen) capable of investing in Africa. These men and women also have valuable expertise. CODESRIA could consider working on:

- (a) The place of the African Diaspora in the development of the continent;

Institutional reforms

It is necessary to conduct a true diagnosis of the current operations of CODESRIA. Consider the number of activities and in the context where the number of researchers is increasing. We henceforth would like the institution to position itself as a partner in terms of political and economic policies in Africa. Will the current structures be operationalized to meet such new requirements?



Women and Power: Education, Religion and Identity

Olutoyin Mejiuni

Education is an important tool for the development of human potential. Organizations and individuals interested in development consider knowledge, skills and attitudes, obtained through formal, non-formal and incidental learning, as invaluable assets. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on fundamental elements that shape the process through which education is attained: How do people learn, and what are the conditions that facilitate effective learning? Answers to these questions demonstrate that no education can be politically neutral, because there is no value-free education.

The traditional or indigenous education systems in Nigeria, which covered (and still cover) physical training, development of character, respect for elders and peers, development of intellectual skills, specific vocational trainings, developing a sense of belonging and participation in community affairs, and understanding, appreciating and promoting the cultural heritage of the community were, and are, not value-free. In other words, the goals and purpose of education, the content, the entire process and the procedures chosen for evaluation in education are all value-laden.

This book attempts to show that the teaching-learning process in higher education, and religion, taught and learned through non-formal and informal education (or the hidden curriculum), and other socialization processes within and outside the formal school system, all interface to determine the persons that women become. This education enhances or limits women's capabilities, whether in the civic-political sphere or in their attempts to resist violence. Hence, education and religion have ways of empowering or disempowering women.

China-Africa Relations: Cooperation or Exploitation?

The increasingly pronounced presence of China on the African continent and the new global geopolitics cannot fail to interest the African scientific community. Clearly, Africa holds an important or even central place in this new strategy, whose direction seems to have been taken since the liberalization of the Chinese economy. This presence is indicative of the ambition and overall strategic vision aimed at making this country, in a short or medium term, the undisputed world leader, by combining political authoritarianism and economic pragmatism.

The idea is to go beyond China's desire to access African resources that it actually needs to sustain its economic development and reflect on wider implications of this engagement. It should be noted that trade between Africa and China increased by 45 per cent between 2007 and 2008 due to the mineral and energy resources. This trend should not be encouraged because it is certainly unsustainable and dangerous, the overexploitation of resources is detrimental to Africa's future generations.

China-Africa cooperation versus cooperation with the European Union

President Kohler's comments, in response to President Museveni on a visit to Germany, which were reported by *The New Vision* newspaper (18 June 2009), are instructive: 'We need a meeting with a few African Presidents to discuss the implementation of this new cooperation. We do not want to make the same mistakes Europe made during the colonial period.' By investing heavily in infrastructure, is China redirecting cooperation with Africa? How will the European Union and North America preserve their presence and influence in Africa and the world in light of China's engagement? How can Africa benefit from this new geopolitical and economic situation by emphasizing

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infrastructure financing? How should Africa regard itself in the world?

It is probably at this level that an alternative vision should be found. If there is any change in global leadership with the emergence of new powers such as China, Africa needs to reposition itself and abandon lack of awareness of the potential it represents. Africa needs a new quality of political leadership with a clear awareness of the challenges of the future. What does China's behaviour demonstrated through bypassing Africa's structures such as the African Union mean? Is it banking on Africa's known weaknesses essentially its fragmentation or lack of unity? How should African countries respond to this approach that is likely to play one country against the other?

The impact of China on governance in Africa

Do cooperation agreements that underpin and provide a framework for the presence of China in Africa contribute to good governance, transparency and accountability? Does China's aggressive presence rely on a lack of transparency in contracts that favours foreign interests to the detriment of national interests as evidenced by the case of Assane Diouf stadium in Dakar, Senegal? Should we see in this new order the danger to weaken the African civil society organizations, embolden bad governance, disconnect the political and state powers from populations, from their interests, and simply from the national interest? Is there a possible danger to the democratization process since what were generally thought to be conventional conditionalities from the West (respect for human rights,

democracy) does not seem to be an obstacle to China?

Who benefits from cooperation with China?

The impact on political governance is not unrelated to economic governance. Will the opening of African markets to Chinese power, in a short or medium term, be accompanied by a disintegration of African economies, hampered by the inability to sustain the competition? Will the craft sector, small and medium enterprises be able to cope in the face of the Asian giant that sells what poor people in Africa can purchase? How do relations between China and Africa include or exclude the private sector? What kind of relationship exists between the state and the private sector against China? What kind of economic intelligence is developed by African states in the face of such a situation? How is the reality of the fragmentation of Africa's national interest by the presence of China to be mitigated?

A lesson to learn: The role of the State

However, the Chinese experience includes a lesson: the market cannot substitute for the State to ensure the development of a country. This lesson is reinforced by the consequences of the global financial crisis which put states on the front line to save national economies. The visible and front line actor in Africa seems to be the Chinese government, which is unfolding its strategic plan for effective leadership! What can we learn from the Chinese experience? How can we document it and use it to Africa's advantage?

Such issues are crucial for the future of the continent and the place of Africa in the world, because they involve in one way or another the quality of leadership, governance, the ability of our societies to cope with constraints, to adjust and to project over time. CODESRIA should help to tackle such issues.

Africa's Research Priorities from a Political Science Perspective

Africa's research priorities, from a political science perspective cannot be isolated from the state of the discipline in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, issues, research orientations, and methodological bases show the need to adopt orientations and methods relevant to particular contexts. This is evident while thinking about the key issues research on Africa should consider in the next few years. The trends observed in the past decade are very instructive. Current local and global challenges cannot be ignored in this thinking.

The objective here is to identify research areas, training patterns, and political dialogue programs that could be explored, invested into and developed in the next phase of CODESRIA journey. It may be necessary to reconsider current patterns in light of new realities and the followed are issues to consider.

First of all, it is important to make an assessment of status of social science research in Africa today, with particular reference to politics and governance. The need to carry out a kind of adjusted stocktaking of the state of social sciences in Africa becomes necessary, to evaluate from accumulations in social-scientific practices throughout the continent. The task itself seems to be a key challenge concerning approaches by social science researchers in multidisciplinary areas.

Even in a multidisciplinary perspective, the African political science approach calls for numerous reformulations, new presentations, and redeployment of methodology. This goes beyond the updating perspective.

The search for democracy, democratization and democratic transition

Research on African politics is likely to experience some evolution even though the study by political scientists on the continent has focused mainly on democratization. The question of the study of democracy and democratic practice is still essential, from the perspective of achievements and failures of the last decade also. Indeed, this still covers classical dimensions of the

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relationships between law, politics, and society. Today, there are topical issues such as political pluralism and its content, diversity management, the study of both institutions and practices of transitional justice, gender in democracy and development, local democracy, decentralization, and regionalization.

Return of the State

The old thematic of the weakness of the state, its role in the identity and role in political violence issues has been seen competing with denationalization, deregulation, privatization, and the planned marginalisation of the state in the previous phase. We know, in this connection, that the African social science research and the public sector have in the past, present and future, to what extent been compromised by official agendas of international organizations, government policies, hegemonic political actors and economic operators. It is therefore necessary today than ever, in view of new realities, to get back to these issues through a more critical approach. Today, it is essential to get back to the new place and the new role of the state in current African realities, a topic of study which has been neglected for far too long for the benefit of different perspectives (market, civil society, social movements that need to be placed at this time, contextualized in the general economy of a new balance particularly marked by a return of the state). This research redirection, restoring the state cannot stop the exploration of topical issues such as political parties, election processes, characteristics of civil associations and missions, relationships between civil societies and politicians, trade-unionism, the fate of community leaders, client-oriented and kinship networks.

Public policy studies

The agenda should also include public policy studies with a focus on the following:

- Development policies in Africa;
- Social policies (poverty, health, education, employment, housing, gender, migrations...) in a context of social and community capital;
- Management of African natural resources;
- Urban-rural dynamic management policies;
- Water policies;
- Environmental policies, etc.

Security issues

Among the core topics in the study of African politics today, should include security issues, standard security and security in its new dimensions especially the one currently referred to as 'human security', in various aspects expressed in new types of violence, in the Sahel and elsewhere, inter-ethnic and/or religious conflicts, post-conflict reconstructions; human security dimensions structured around human rights and democratic issues, access to resources, environment, and issues of refugees.

Africa and the world today

Political research has its place in the current international configuration, particularly in terms of prediction for new power realignments and the impact it is likely to have on Africa. This configuration has been defined and marked by the on-going economic and financial crisis. This also has to be seen in the context of consequences of previous phases, the repositioning of other power contenders, trajectories of unipolar power schemes, impulses of multipolar deployment: in such conditions how does the encounter of Africa with the global system work? How do we decipher Africa's regionalist upsurge? How would interstate and regional reconstructions develop?

Identity issues

Another important perspective of interest is that of identity, culture, regional distinctiveness, universalism, and art today. It is not without calling for political analysis; there is need to understand the nature of cultural and structural bottlenecks (corruption, patrimonialism, ethnicity, citizen socialization, traditionalism, etc.)

Debates

A Name is More than the Tyranny of Taste*

First, permit me to unburden myself. A little bit of carping is essential for mental balance and, the Arts are no exception to this principle of psychological release. Indeed, that is an understatement. I should have said: the Arts especially are the supreme example of that truism. We all know that there is no other human preoccupation that so readily provokes either suppressed or exploding feelings than this singular expression of the human imagination and inventiveness that we call the Arts. Within the prolific field on which we are gathered here today – the cinema – there is a word that has become current, one that I still find difficult to utter. It sets my teeth on edge, this hideous child of lackluster imagination. And yet, it appears to be a source of pride to the practitioners it implicates. What one would have regarded as a singular aberration, a regrettable moment of a verbal infelicity, has developed into a child of competitive adoption, sustained by a number of would-be surrogate parents. One shudders to imagine how many other variations can be squeezed out of the original banality, as each nation evolves a cinema industry and strains to force the original horror into the tube of its own nominal identity – again, with pride!

Do I speak objectively? Of course not. I readily confess my subjectivity in these matters. Acknowledging this in advance makes it easier for me to wear the badge of verbal fundamentalism without the slightest embarrassment. Having conceded that much, I also have to state, on my own behalf, that it has not been for want of trying that I have failed to reconcile my tongue with each new offspring of a nomenclatural misalliance. My main trading commodity, as you all know, is largely in words, so it is not surprising that there are some sounds that I find difficult to mouth – not simply in their own being, but on account of their histories, their association and their limitless capacity to proliferate and people the world of words with new infant monstrosities. This is said matter-of-factly. In addition however, I do propose that words are allied to images.

Wole Soyinka

Nobel Laureate in Literature, 1986

Now, I wouldn't go as far as Richard Ford, the American writer who, in declaring himself a dyslexic, adds that he actually sees words as images. No, I wouldn't make such a far-out claim. However, I do subscribe to the view that words have shapes, which are in turn evocative of more than the mere sound of them or their literal meaning. Indeed, one can claim that some images become eventually attached to words with such intimacy that they can no longer be prised apart – hm, I appear to be getting closer and closer to Richard Ford. All right, let us simply try and sum it up thus: the power of suggestion goes beyond mere suggestion. A word can distort the palpable reality that your own senses have already determined. Where such a word is deployed as values and summation, as a category of phenomena, even as a loose umbrella for a family of products, it can distort other entities under that umbrella completely, influencing their apprehension in our minds. Where we are concerned with creative activity, the word can contract the scope, or reduce the quality within the overall undertaking. In short, a word can inhibit or expand imagination. It can prove a curse or a blessing.

Regarding the creative process, let it be understood that I am not necessarily speaking of originality. I have read critiques of artistic works that appear to make originality the benchmark of creativity, blithely dismissing such a work on the grounds that it is not 'original'. Some masterful works – in all genres – have been produced that are based on deliberate imitativeness; or plagiarism. There are different kinds of plagiarism: some can actually emerge as a new product of its kind, a kind of creative provocation, or a commentary on the original, sometimes a sleight of expectations or attribution – what is sometimes called signification –

especially in American literary discourse. So, we are not speaking here of originality.

We all share – with variations – a basic culture, and that culture places a heavy premium on – for instance – child naming. 'The child is father of the man', as the poet William Wordsworth reminds us. We can add, however that, for African societies, 'the name is father to the child' – such careful thought, sense of history, hopes and expectations ride on the name we decide to give a new human entity we have brought into the world. Child naming, on this continent, is itself a creative act. Only this last Friday, February 22, the following observation appeared in the Nigerian journal, *The NATION*, on the back page weekly column, Comment and Debate, an impeccably timed contribution to this address:

Naming in Africa, especially in Yorubaland, is special gift that the ancestors as progenitors of the nation bestowed on the elders. Names have meaning, and – as they would have us believe – names push their bearers to actualize their encoded meanings. *Oruko a maa ro omo*, literally meaning 'The name may mould the child'. So you don't find any Yoruba parent giving to their babies names that embed evil meanings.

Let it be admitted, however, that all we do is play variations on existing naming templates, not that we strain to be fully original. The same process applies, as stated earlier, to the creative process – styles, themes and even – very often – content. Actually, this merely provides me an excuse to veer off and comment on a recent cinema controversy – the subject and directorial approach – but one that does concern us here most intimately.

I am sure you have all heard of this film; it seems destined to become what is sometimes known as a 'cult film', and largely because it so successfully plays variations on established genres. I am speaking of *DJANGO UNCHAINED*, starring the actor Jamie Foxx, with a superlative, though underrated performance in the role of the revolting, Uncle Toming race

traitor by Samuel Jackson. Its theme is Slavery, a subject that touches the historic sensibilities of virtually all of us. Now, just as an aside – one cannot ignore certain other aspects of the controversy it has stirred up. Slavery is a very serious, even solemn subject. Such a weight of history, of race recollection rests upon it that one cannot think of any aspect of that traumatic passage that lends itself to humour. AMISTAD, even The Birth of a Nation with its open derogation of black slaves, etc. – these films conform to the expected treatment of that subject – heroic, tragic, indicting, inciting, racist, etc. – certainly not mock-heroic. One’s instinctive response to the subject is that it would be indecent and insensitive to extract any shred of humour from slavery, except perhaps what is known as gallows humour. Long before DJANGO, there was the stage play Purlie Victorious, later made into a film, starring Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. The same complaints made about Purlie Victorious are what I have read during the past few months – that is, at least four decades later – by some black critics, among them, Spike Lee, a leading black American cineaste. This is a trivialization of my history, complained Spike Lee.

That commentary leads us conveniently back to the thread of our main theme – that criticism was based on a misconception – the director of that film was in fact doing what we have identified as ‘signifying’. He was signifying on a number of cinematic genres, familiar clichés, not least of which was the Western, the Cowboy film. Beneath the spoof, there was serious thematic business. Even the sinister Ku Klux Klan was spoofed, and everyone knows that there was never anything remotely amusing about those Knight Templars of the trilogy of Lynch, Castrate, and Dehumanize.

By my reckoning, the film is most intelligently crafted, very much in the manner of Mel Brooks’ BLAZING SADDLES, only, this time, our film is set in a slave plantation with opulent trimmings, generous close-up helpings of blood and gore, and flying flesh. The ‘n’ word, that contempt ridden version of the neutral word ‘negro’, was also in over-abundant usage, a feature that also offended some sensibilities. I found this complaint rather strange, since it indicated a refusal to take into account, not only the fact that the word was historically accurate, but that its

proliferation in the film was deliberate, tripping glibly off the tongues of the blacks themselves than off the white masters’. If excessive application has ever been claimed to take the sting out of the offensive, DJANGO was a definite proof of this.

So, we are speaking of an original work of art that is anything but original, filled with borrowings from so many genres. My complaint therefore is not against borrowings and adaptations as a principle, but against the lack of originality that translates as plain, unmediated imitation, or a tawdry, unenhanced borrowing that is conceived and delivered on the very edge of the pit of banality, and out of which it has no wish to clamber, once it has fallen in. It indicates a pre-set mind, a basically unadventurous mind dressed up in cast-off clothing, of which nothing can be expected except as a breeding ground, a reproductive automatism of its own kind – especially in taste. We move closer to the substance of my complaint – that of another unspeakable ‘n’ word that has taken such a hold on our home-bred imagination. This ‘n’ word constitutes a mutative explosion that I consider most unfair to others in the same creative field – the cinematic – more especially as there have been predecessors who impacted on our cinema world without burdening themselves with such a verbal albatross. Again, I must hold you in suspense for just a little longer while I skirt around the subject, although I know that a number of you have guessed by now where I am headed.

I still recall the first Negro Arts Festival in Dakar, which marked the formal outing of contemporary African cinema, even as a rudimentary exploration of the genre. Yes, some of the products were amateurish, but they already bore the stamp of genuine exploratory minds at work, interrogating the new medium. Even the clumsiest was refreshing and, of course, the more skilled were inspiring. If my memory were not so clotted, I would reel off new names. I recall the young Djibril Diop however, and – I think – Oumar Sissoko from Mali. What remain fresh in my minds are snippets of scenes – such as the satiric use of the *tro-tro*, the passenger lorry, to ridicule the pretensions of a figure of the Europeanized black sophisticate – that species that is known in Nigeria as Johnny Just Come, or *Ajebota* (Weaned-on-butter). This figure of fun considered

himself unfortunate to be compelled to ride in the same conveyance as peasants, workers and other ‘uneducated’ beings. It was a simple but hilarious film, I recall, that introduced the viewer to the makeshift existence of semi-urbanised life, a picaresque work filled with incidents along a journey that covered the gamut of daily survival and challenges, inducing the passengers of the *tro-tro* transportation into a transient community. Our principal, played by the young Diop himself, was reduced, coat-tails and all in that suffocating Sahelian heat, to push the *tro-tro* when it broke down.

Don’t ask me why I recall that scene so vividly after so many decades, but I wish that the young aspirants to the cinema trade would have the opportunity to watch such films, if only as a basic lesson of extracting a film nearly out of nothing, on what must have been a shoe-string budget, bringing reality to life without the ponderous injection of excess craftiness. Beginnings can be very instructive, especially beginnings that are deceptively artless. They strike at recognizable truths without the cluttering of over-laboured techniques. Perhaps, at the back of my mind was recollection of one of my all-time favourites – Fellini’s *La Strada* – with the unforgettable performance of Giulietta Massina in the archetypal role of the tragic clown. I am not making the same claims of accomplishment for both – by no means. They are both variations on the same theme – the many faces of *The Road*, my own favourite foraging ground, admittedly – and there the comparison ends. That touch of creative innocence however, is perhaps what sticks so charmingly to the mind.

And then of course, there was the already socially dedicated hand of Ousmane Sembene who grew in self-assurance as he tackled increasingly demanding historical, and contemporary social themes – one and all were gathered in Dakar, brimming with confidence in multiple disciplines, a churning magma of artistic forces of a post-independence generation. It is evidently too late now, to appeal to those who have embraced – yes, we come close to the ‘n’ word, I am gearing myself to utter it – yes, those nationals who have fallen for the hackneyed short cut to their own naming ceremonies. Even more thankless than preaching to the converted is preaching against the converted. When so much time has passed and a habit has become

deeply engrained, what forces of persuasion can one muster to undo that mind? As we say in Yoruba – *t'ewe ba pe l'ara ose, oun na a d'ose* (If the leaf wrapping of soap sticks too long stays too long to the soap, that leaf also turns to soap). So, peace unto all upon whose sensibilities I have certainly intruded! This drawn out exposition is not really addressed to them; rather, it is a simple entreaty to those who have not yet succumbed to the lure of the soap and leaf. To you, I plead: Imagine if the then putative film venture that made its organized debut in Dakar 1966 had been lumbered with the name – Dollywood? Every ensuing product is already doomed in the mind with its associated baggage of infantilism, even before its exposure. Just imagine the announcement of – A Dollywood film festival; or perhaps, 'Sellywood' for Senegal? Nothing could be sillier.

If only it stopped at subjective revulsion? However, there are more provocative questions, such as: Does the branding influence the product? If you give a product a deleterious name, does it affect, in advance, the consciousness of future producers? If, on the other hand, a propulsive, challenging name, one that even intimates more than it presently is, would that provoke in the artiste a tendency towards adventurousness, experimentation and originality? Or are we merely indulging in self-flagellation? If the pioneers of 1966 had grouped themselves around the formulation – Dollywood – would we have produced today's Suleyman Cisse, Ola Balogun, Kola Olaniyan, Bello, and the rising generation of cineastes? Consider this: following the mentality at the base of this, FESPACO, because based in Burkina, would be Bullywood. Or perhaps, since that is so close to Bollywood – Bellywood. Try and think – just one more! – of anything more ghastly, more ghoulish than the contribution from Ghana – Ghollywood! Well, you know where it all started. However, do the emerging Nigerian new breed still deserves to be associated with that commencing second-hand clothes market tag, or with an evolving designer cut production, catering, not for the lowest common denominator in taste but for more discerning audiences, and/or raising – and surprising – expectations in their limited scope. Even a casual study of

current film making indicates that the Nigerian film occupation is rapidly bypassing the stage of such retarded infantilism. So, why should the films of such artistes continue to be classified under that unprepossessing monstrosity of a verbal shroud known as – here it comes at last! – Nollywood?

How do we extricate – both for internal and external references, including potential markets and consumers – the grain from the chaff, the silkworm from the congealment of the pupae? See what the Indian film industry has churned out so prodigiously since it succumbed to the perverse name of Bollywood. Thousands of films emerged, mired in that same bollywood mush. It took a Satiyajit Ray to plot a truly original path through the morass with his masterful *Pather Panchali*, the first of a trilogy of ordinary lives that opened the eyes of viewers to the vast world of mundane rhythms, East and West Africa. See what toll this has taken in the conditioning of audience tastes, expanding to southern and West Africa. We must point out, however, that there may be a correlation between the product and the environment that brought it to life in the first place. Each phenomenon of naming is not unrelated to the social space of that naming ceremony. The social, political, business, religious... indeed the entire interactive environment of Nigeria, birthland of Nollywood – unpredictable, raucous, egotistical, callous, sentimental, irrational and pugnacious (all at the same time) – the manifestations that make up Nigerian reality are so grossly improbable that it sometimes appears to me that all you have to do is set up a camera in an office, in a market, in the motor park or indeed any street corner, go away for lunch, and return several hours later and – *voila!* – a film has already been shot, ready for only a little editing here and there, but virtually ready for release as a truthful reflection of Nigerian life. This, by the way, is not entirely speculative. Some Nollywood products have been made that way.

Indeed, the very material raunchiness of Nigerian life does create a tendency to reach out towards improbabilities. Nigerian social actualities are of such a nature that the film-maker's creative mind feels a compulsion to top it with excess in order satisfy the demands of novelty. In other words, life around the contemporary film-maker, where the grossest excesses

take place every day but are treated as the norm, forces imagination to reach outside and beyond reality to convince itself that it is at work, that it is not merely imitating reality. Everything is oversized in the birthplace of Nollywood – oversized consumption, oversized class distinctions, oversized exhibitionism, oversized egos, oversized superstition, oversized dehumanization, oversized corruption, oversized inflation (both human and economic), oversized national real estate, oversized pugnacity, oversized garbage heaps, oversized decay, oversized media, oversized foreign investments, oversized churches and oversized mosques, oversized consumerism by an oversized elite, even oversized First Ladies with oversized vulgarity, oversized rapacity, avariciousness and 'over-reechiousness'. You will not find that last word in the dictionary, but I happen to come from the land of Nollywood, where, if an expression is outside your non-existent vocabulary, you have the licence to make up your own.

As a dramatist, I think I can sympathize with the artistic representation that goes after the grossest aspects of the environment with a sheer oversized productivity at the expense of quality. After all, when I wanted to capture the sheer brutishness of existence under one of our most notorious dictators, did I not reach for the Theatre of the Absurd – in Alfred Jarry's *UBU ROI*? I proceeded, quite deliberately, to try and top the already grotesque excesses of Jarry's adaptation in my creation of *King Baabu*. Reality could no longer suffice. The same creative process probably affected those early video lords. The Nigerian creative mind opens his newspaper day after day, and what lurid headlines confront him?: *Ritualist caught with fresh human heads; body of one month old baby with missing vital organs – mother in custody; kidnappers invade church, abduct officiating priest; Boko Haram kills seven health AIDF workers; Boko Haram abducts seven construction workers; twenty-seven bodies washed ashore on the banks of River Benue; Prophet arrested with five human skulls and a baby fetus ...* and so on. These are not made-up headlines. Is it any wonder that the film-maker goes for the horror genre where the staple news is that the local chief is cooking up his subjects piecemeal, in order to make millions or win a local government election?

An inclination towards accommodating foreign models of the sensational then follows, faced with such gargantuan proportions of societal reality begging for expression – and where is this to be found but in the ready-made formulae of cheap Hollywood? Cheapness calls unto cheapness. Where what are generally valued as social assets – and that includes human life itself – are held so cheaply, the artiste may consider it beneath him or her to expend more than the cheapest representational responses. The precedence is not lacking. The early contemporary African-American black directors rode to cinematic prominence on the shoulders – in case we have all forgotten – of what came to be known and early described as BLAXPLOITATION Movies, films that exploited Blackness, albeit in a stereotypical and imitative genre, substituting black actors for Grade B white actors, black environment for white, but catering equally for what was considered low taste – Richard Rowntree in the SHAFT movies, and even BLACKULA, instead of that classic horror genre of limitless exploitative potential – DRACULA, all blood and gore, only black blood this time, albeit red. What is the difference between Blackula's fangs fastened on the jugular of a prostrate black victim and, the fangs of the insensate ruler fastened on the life-blood of a prostrate generation?

All that conceded, the objective of art does not exclude transformation, and by that I do not mean, simply, societal transformation. Indeed, you may have observed that I do not say 'the objective of art is to transform society'. No, I deplore that familiar, ideological but dictatorial demand of art. The objective of art is also, among other purposes, Revelation. Whether revelation leads to transformation or not, is a different issue. The primary objective of Art is to constantly transform itself, its own modes of expression and representation. The objective of Art is also to be chameleonic and protean – that is, to change shape and colour at will, to supersede both reality and expectations. Yes indeed, the goal of transformation is not only desirable, it is an integrated element of what art does. We do not want us to get bogged down with that ancient, ragged discourse based on a one-track, reductionist relationship of art to society, what the artiste's obligation is, etc. Writers

have put themselves through this wringer, especially during the phase of ideological self-bashings that all societies undergo, and in particular societies that have been victims of imperialism and colonization, including cultural degradation from external forces. Film makers should please understand that that discourse is daily overtaken by events, and we should now primarily interest ourselves in how the cineaste, as artist, transforms the material at his or her disposal. What applies to the writer, painter, musician, sculptor, even architect, is just as pertinent to the film-maker.

Nonetheless, we must acknowledge that there is a kind of imagic immediacy that is more applicable to the cinema than to other forms of expression, including even theatre. Cinema is a powerful tool for transformation, no question about that. However, just as in literature, the cinema can easily become a medium of crude propaganda that is totally devoid of artistic solace, blaring out an ideological line as a substitute for creative rigour. Art is its own rigorous master; it makes demands, and the primary responsibility of the artist is to fulfill those demands. This, for instance, is what makes Sembene Ousmane a cineaste of great versatility, one of the most consistent that the continent has ever produced – his ability to embed a social message in a work without sacrificing its artistic vision. I have singled out Sembene Ousmane because the same kind of artistic integrity is apparent in his writings – *God's Bits of Wood*, for instance – as in his films – CEDDO or XALA.

Must films carry a message? My answer to that is: Does Harry Potter carry a message? All we know is that those films – like the book itself – carry a wallop and generate envy in the minds of most film makers. There's nothing wrong with envy, by the way. Indeed, envy can actually be a good motivator. Even the Vatican is not free from it. About four or five years ago, the Vatican issued a condemnation of the film series as a dangerous endorsement of Satanism. Well, my reaction was 'oh-oh, here comes the green-eyed monster eyeing the greenbacks flowing into the box office'. After all, has the Church, ever since its mammoth success with the bible, ever come up with another literary success story? To 'rub pepper in the wound', each time some lavish, money-spinning production from the scriptures takes place

– like The Ten Commandments, with the over-muscled Charleston Heston in command – the Church gets no royalties whatsoever. I think we should simply dismiss the Church's demonizing encyclicals. Fantasy is a different matter. Each time I see news coverage of mile-long queues winding round a cinema theatre where a new Harry Potter book is being launched, and the same endless queues when the next Potter film is due to open – grandparents, parents, children of all ages – I fantasize about meeting Madame Multi-billionaire Rowlings in a dark alley where there are no witnesses. As that opportunity became less and less likely, I began to think seriously of matching skills against hers, but based on our own African mythological resources. Needless to say, the very first step of the creative idea is always the easiest part – which is to think to oneself – 'hn-hn, that seems to be an interesting idea'. Then, the second step forward is – 'hn-hjn-hn, that is a very good idea'. Then the third, which is of course – 'wait a minute, that really is a brilliant, creative idea'. After that, other distractions intervene, and a dead-end looms in view. I know I shall never even succeed in setting down even the mere film treatment of a Harry Potter success. Others can, however, and should. Why should a Bambara equivalent of the Potter series not also take the world by storm? If anyone here has a new idea on the subject – but without the Nollywood stamp – let me announce right here that I am open to propositions. But don't even bother to get any ideas on the subject unless you have the preliminary, capital idea – which is how to raise the capital.

Motivation is a question that any serious artiste must face – and do note that I use that expression 'serious artiste' deliberately. Artistic seriousness is not a contradiction of material success – all it requires is honesty, the courage to come to terms with the question: Why am I in this occupation? Why did I choose to go into it? If it is to make money, then you must study the consumerist trends, and apply yourself to them. But then, if you are also a serious artist, you decide whether you wish to indulge that taste by remaining on that same level, or take it to a higher state, however slight, even though your starting blocks are set firmly on that track known as 'popular appeal'. Creativity lies in advancing the level of one's artistic choices. Yes, the practical

question of even 'breaking even' is not to be pushed aside – whether we like it or not, no serious film artist can blithely ignore the economics of taste – and there lies the tyranny. Taste in itself is a very ambiguous, indeed vexatious issue. Taste, one has to acknowledge, can be a snob affectation, or elitist consciousness. How does one define good and bad taste? Is minority taste necessarily the most refined, while the majority is despised as the fodder of the masses? Taste? The pulp video producer would probably sneer. Taste? The only taste I know is the taste of food and anything that puts food in my mouth – that's good taste!

Yes, Taste. The often intolerable weightiness, yet lightness of taste! Even censorship, ever opportunistic, cashes in on Taste – 'this or that is in bad taste because it goes against African – or increasingly, religious – culture', as if culture is static, not dynamic and evolving.

This is what many advocates of culture fail to understand. The extreme policy choice of outright and extreme censorship in the name of cultural purity – most notable in societies that are infected by the virus of religious fundamentalism – banning or controlling the means of reception, such as video cassettes, satellite dishes and, even, books, are of course futile and retrogressive. The incursion of the negative or dubious alien cultures, values and tendencies, is best countered by the strengthening and exposure of indigenous cultures, ideally in innovative ways, not by creating a hermetic society, closed to all external development. Even *BIG BROTHER AFRICA*, a series I thoroughly detest – suitably overhauled – is not, as a format, without cultural and transformative possibilities. To be able to watch, for instance, a group of young people – christian, moslem, buddhist, traditional believers such as the *aborisa* – interacting as normal beings, worshipping in their own way day in day out, indifferent to the frenzy of religious extremists, within an intimate environment – now that may speak meaningfully to viewers regarding one of the most devastating crises of cohabitation that currently confronts us – the crisis of the aggression of faith, now ravaging swathes of our continent.

Images are the most powerful ambassadors of the cultural exchange; and thus,

the cinema and video can affect modes of thinking, perception and, most pertinently, human regard. The temptation for the African film-maker is to attempt to be a Stephen Spielberg when it is possible to make a small classic of memorable dimensions. Such gems exist, manifestations of the claim: Small is beautiful. Having served on quite a handful of film juries since the sixties – African, Asian, Latin American, Eastern European and others, I do confidently assert this. It should not suffice to display only new films on occasions such as this. There are some modest but inspired works that require to be made more accessible, films that were made when Africa had greater leisure, when internecine wars had not worn out the creative resources of the younger generation, driven into exile, lodged in dungeons for expressing dissident views through their art, turned into child soldiers or driven underground by the rampaging virus of bigotry, and vulgar, murderous religious fundamentalism. Courage is constantly on call.

Try and recall the number of film-makers – in company of writers, painters and other creative individuals – whose lives have been snuffed out for attempting to actualize their vision of humanity; and I am not simply speaking of cases that made international headlines, such as the Dutch film maker, Van Gogh, who was gunned down in the streets of Holland for a film that denounced the oppression of women under narrow, twisted, chauvinistic interpretations of scriptural texts. Before van Gogh, film-makers had been routinely cut down in their prime during the fundamentalist upsurge of Algeria; in some cases, sent into exile. I recall the case of one film-maker who resisted all efforts by concerned friends and colleagues to make him relocate to Europe for his own safety. He however made a habit of spending at least two months a year away from the Algeria of that time, as a therapeutic regimen, simply to decompress, to ease off the tension of daily survival in his homeland. These are themes that you will confront sooner or later. You will be confronted with life-impacting choices. The video cassettes, DVD, CD-Rom, etc., are our allies. They are handy weapons in the battle for creative freedom; let us not hesitate to use them. It is only a matter of time – if it is not happening already – when we shall be able to download entire films via

satellite onto hand-held phones, escape into a transformed vista of humanistic possibilities, uncensored, snatching hours of refuge from the agents of mind-closure, from criminal minds masquerading under religious fervour.

Let us not mealy-mouth about, or underestimate the enemies of creative life – they are in reality no more than brutal, unconscionable replacements for the old order of political repression by alien imperators, from which our nationalist pioneers have laboured and sacrificed to extricate our humanity. If you made a film today about paedophilia in Nigeria, and the plight of girl children who, victims of so-called religious permissiveness, end up as pathological wrecks of vestico-vaginal fistula, be sure that you will incur the ire of those perverts who, exposed as confirmed, serial paedophiliacs, actually sit at the apex of your law-making structures – as in my own Nigeria. They will team up with the homicidal deviants of the religious mandate and attempt to snuff out your existence, be they called Boko Haram or whatever else.

We are all living on the edge or daily survival – if you are still in the exemption zone, if you think you are immune, take it from me, you soon will discover different. It is a virulent contagion. And so, you must not only make up your mind; but also make your choice. In the early days of this now notorious insurgency, a television newscaster was deliberately shot and killed by one such group. Deliberately, I said, with murder aforethought, since the killers sent a message afterwards that this was a collective punishment for journalists who, in their view, had distorted accounts of their activities – as if it was possible to distort a pattern of activities already more bestial than anything the Nigerian people had encountered in post-colonial times. So, just think what the risks are when you confront such retrograde interests with stark, realistic moving images of their anti-humanist mission. The creative founts are being shut off every day, and the mere business of survival is driving potential talent off the abundant terrain for the flowering of their genius. Reminders of what was produced in African film immediately before, and during the continent's early energized burst of creativity – that inspirational surge from the flush of independence – should always be made available as yardsticks

of the possible, and the relevant. This is what guarantees continuity, and continuity in the Arts is as essential as the DNA spiral is to human evolution.

Themes change, as does fashion, but art is constant. If you asked me what is the pressing theme of this moment for us on the African continent – for those who feel compelled to be socially relevant, who do not feel artistically comfortable or fulfilled unless their lenses are directed inwards into the anomalies of society – permit me to isolate that perennial theme that weighs us down on this continent. It is an answer you should have discerned from the foregoing, but let me spell it out even more succinctly by calling your attention to events that are undoubtedly very fresh in your minds.

The literary treasures of Timbuktoo are invaluable. As a writer, I experienced days, weeks of anguish when the neo-barbarians of our times invaded Mali, with the avowed mission, already brutally executed in other places, such as Somalia and Northern Nigeria, of resuming an age of censorship that one thought the world had repudiated at least a full millennium before. Valuable as these manuscripts are however, perhaps filled with hitherto unheard-of narratives for the jaded film-maker seeking to break new grounds – but never mind even if they are devoid of such – they mainly serve as a solid, prideful foundation, as heritage. They are monuments to the past, the measure of a people's creative, and potentially transformative signposts of the future. That tangible future however, is what we read in the products of the contemporary artistes, and most especially those artists who employ the most contemporary medium of expression – the cinema.

Then, ask this question: What is the social condition of such artistes? What would have been their fate if the zealots had been permitted to retain and consolidate their asphyxiation of culture in Mali? There is no need to speculate. Simply demand of the Suleyman Cisses, the Oumar Sissokos of that nation, ask them from which direction they encountered the greatest obstacles in the practice of their trade – directly or indirectly – over the past decades of cinematic engagement. I am speaking of those entrenched censors constantly spreading their shadows over creativity. Enquire what themes, so pertinent to the

present and the cause of full artistic expression, have raised the hackles of the religious irredentists of society, to the extent that governments have often been obliged to ban the screening of such films, in order to appease such atavists.

Yes, indeed, if you seek the iconic images of our time, you will find them in the plight of women who are being lashed publicly for showing off an inch or two of bare flesh above their ankles. They are to be found in the disfigurement of individuals whose hands have been amputated, equally on account of stealing a loaf of bread as for shaking hands with a human being of the opposite sex. You will find them in those blood-drenched pits where women have been buried to the neck and stoned to death by a public for the crime of giving their bodies to whomsoever they please. They proliferate in images of men awaiting execution for yielding to the impulses of that biological make-up that responds only to others of the same sex and result in homosexual relationship. You will find them in the ruins of the heritage of the past as well as the rubble of the centres of leisure and enlightenment – the theatres, the artiste clubs and the cinema houses. We cannot all, and for much longer, evade the call of re-constructed images of nine female health workers, shot in cold blood for the incredible 'crime' of inoculating our youth against the polio scourge that fills our streets with human millipedes crawling in between vehicle wheels in traffic, eternal beggars from the leftovers of our indifferent elite. Yes, you, our front-line film makers from West to Southern Africa, who have used these very images of the cripple, the blind, the amputees, the stunted, the twisted and mangled from birth to press your message of responsibility on society, or even simply – as in Ghollywood, Nollywood, Bellywood, etc. – to pander to the thrill of the grotesque in voyeuristic audiences, maybe it is time to delineate a cause-and-effect between the prevalence of those unfortunates on our streets, and the brain infection that leads to the deaths of nine health workers, women who are dedicated to preventing the very ailments that produce such malformed humanity. Or the three foreign doctors from North Korea whose throats were slit for no other crime than that of ministering to the ailments that must beset a people with a grossly deficient proportion of medical practitioners per populace.

Yes, these are impositions from the hands of the latest in the line of internal neo-colonialists, and their backers, the external imperators. And such pressing issues of our post-colonial times, alas, are obscuring the battle against corruption, camouflaged dictatorship, social marginalization, hunger, lack of shelter, and the brutal alienation of political practice – that urgent issue is easily summed up as bigotry, intolerance, the degradation of our own very humanity in the name of antique interpretations of sectional scriptures. The prime issue of our time, however, remains painfully the same, the ultimate battleground, as ancient as it is eternal: that battle is one between Power and Freedom. Power as exerted, not this time by the state but by quasi-states, without boundaries, and without the responsibilities of governance. History demonstrates, however, that Power is transient, while Freedom is eternal. Let our film practitioners engage in this battle – but only if battle is in their blood. If not, do not despair or burden yourself with guilt: simply, make – films.

But films need capital. They require subsidy. For the younger generation, a fraction of what governments waste, what politicians steal, what civil servants divert, the total value of the holdings of two or three indicted or fugitive governors from Nigeria or elsewhere on the continent, stored in offshore businesses with their mattresses stuffed with cash in place of cotton or kapok, the sum of offshore properties, of which more and more are being confiscated – thanks to a slowly evolving conscience of some European nations – and occasionally restored to national ownership ... a fraction of all this is more than enough to turn the African continent into – do excuse yet another neologism – the Fespascene – or perhaps the Fespacity of the world; or whatever. A veritable film Valhalla, if you prefer, only anything but, absolutely not yet another exocentric, dumbing down, brain-dead cliché such as – Africa's – Allywood!

* The original text of this piece from the Nobel Literature Laureate was first delivered as the Keynote Address at the CODESRIA-Guild of African Filmmakers-FESPACO Workshop on 'Pan-Africanism: Adapting African Stories/Histories from Text to Screen', held on 25 – 26 February 2013, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Amilcar Cabral – 40 Years on: Tribute to a Revolutionary Intellectual

“We are nothing on earth if we are not in the first place the slaves of a cause, the cause of the peoples, the cause of justice and liberty”. Frantz Fanon

Like Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral was ‘the slave of a cause’, that of the Liberation of his people and the peoples of Africa from the yoke of oppression and imperialist domination. Like Fanon, he sacrificed his life in the defence of that sacred and immortal cause. January 20, 2013 marks the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Amilcar Cabral, the founder and leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC). In his country and around the world, activities were organized to honour the memory of this visionary charismatic leader, staunch pan-Africanist champion and revolutionary intellectual.

Birth of a revolutionary consciousness

Amilcar Cabral was born and spent his adolescence years in a colonized country where he witnessed racism, daily humiliations and horrendous abuses of all kinds perpetrated against his fellow citizens by the Portuguese colonial government. Such humiliations and miserable living conditions of the majority of the population, especially farmers, were the major factors that shaped his awareness. Between 1941 and 1948, a series of deadly famine caused the death of tens of thousands of farmers. It seems that these tragedies played a decisive role in Cabral’s choice to embrace studies at the University of Agricultural Sciences.

He later on went to Lisbon, the capital-city of the former colonial power, to further his university education. This stay contributed to strengthen his revolutionary consciousness. In the Portuguese city, he met those who were to become the future leaders of the liberation movements in other Portuguese colonies, such as Agostinho Neto from Angola and Eduardo Mondlane from Mozambique, among others.

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During his stay in Lisbon and until his return to his home country, Cabral was influenced by echoes of the emancipation struggles waged by the peoples under domination and by the progressive ideas and revolutionary struggles such as pan-Africanism or Marxism. Since the 1945-Pan-African Congress in Manchester, the pan-Africanist ideology gradually gained ground among the progressive and nationalist African and Diasporic intellectuals. Ghana’s independence in 1957, under the leadership of President Kwame Nkrumah, one of the leading figureheads of pan-Africanism, gave Cabral and other leaders of the national liberation movements in Africa more exposure to the doctrine. In addition, Nkrumah and the main leaders of pan-Africanism were maverick Marxists. Among them, were the outstanding William E. B. Dubois, the greatest African-American intellectual of his time, and the Trinidadian C.L.R. James, the revolutionary thinker and writer. James is best known as the author of the book *The Black Jacobins* (1938), in which, in an eloquent and poetic style, he analyzed the historical significance of the Haitian Revolution led by Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

The influence of these figures of pan-Africanism and the support of the socialist countries to the liberation movements of colonized peoples led Cabral to naturally adhere to Marxism, as many progressive intellectuals of the colonized countries were Marxists or sympathisers of Marxism.

Amilcar Cabral was also influenced by anticolonialism literature. And as such, there is no doubt that Cabral had heard of

Aimé Césaire, a foremost figure and fiery intellectual of the ‘negritude’ movement and author of the most devastating anticolonialism book entitled *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950). Both this book and Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) which helped expose the immoral, dehumanizing, barbaric and tyrannical nature of the colonial system, thus dispelling the so-called ‘civilizing mission’ of colonialism, were deeply reflected in the thought and action of anti colonial intellectuals such as Cabral.

The founding of the PAIGC and the outbreak of the armed struggle

After his studies in Lisbon, Cabral returned to Bissau in 1952 where he worked for some time before going to Angola in 1955. Once there, he resumed contact with the Angolan nationalists and participated in the foundation of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Back in Guinea, he founded the PAIGC which decided to utilise urban settings as hotbeds where to spearhead the fight against colonialism. But in 1959, the Portuguese colonial government quashed a workers’ strike in bloodshed, with nearly 50 dead and over 300 injured.

The bloody repression had two major consequences for Cabral and his comrades. The first was that, in reprisal for the horrendousness of the colonial repression, the freedom fighters became bound to use violence. The second consequence was that Cabral was forced to recraft PAIGC’s strategy by giving priority to broad mobilisation of peasant masses from the countryside.

Cabral was strengthened in his contention that violence was a necessary way for the liberation of his country as demonstrated by the Algerian War of Independence waged against the French colonial power and the latter’s defeat against the Vietnamese people. These two examples

and others definitely bolstered his optimism about the possibility of overthrowing the Portuguese colonial power through armed struggle.

The armed struggle broke out in 1963 and quickly recorded significant military and diplomatic successes. To rally international support for the fight and further isolate the Portuguese colonial power, Cabral multiplied travels worldwide. It was during these trips that he made most of his major speeches which are key theoretical and political inputs to the analysis of issues related to the struggle for national liberation.

Cabral's theoretical legacy

In a series of speeches, Cabral outlined the contours of his political thought and stated its stances on the great ideological debates of his time. He addressed topics including the revolutionary strategy, imperialist domination, the theory of history and the driving force of history, the role of the petty bourgeoisie in the liberation struggle, the importance of culture, both as an instrument of domination and a weapon of resistance. His major addresses include his famous speech in Havana, Cuba, in 1966 at the first tricontinental meeting of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the eulogy to President Kwame Nkrumah and the tribute he paid to Eduardo Mondlane, during a visit to the United States.

These texts and many others were compiled under the supervision of Mario de Andrade and published under the title *The Weapon of Theory* published by Maspero in Paris in 1975.

Cabral attached great importance to the theoretical component of the struggle for Liberation, because he deemed it to be a mighty weapon in the fight against the enemy. As a faithful disciple of Lenin who said that 'there is no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory,' Cabral declared that: 'although we acknowledge that a revolution with a perfectly-designed theoretical background may fail, so far no one has ever led a successful re-volution without a revolutionary theory.'

Therefore, for him, a true revolutionary movement must necessarily be upheld by a well-entrenched revolutionary theory, or otherwise, it is doomed to fail.

But Cabral was far from being dogmatic. He was a genuine self-reliant theoretician. He believed that, 'revolutions are not exportable', despite the similarity of the situations and the fact that oppressed people were facing a common foe: imperialism. Every revolution is dependent on the historical, political, social and cultural context of the country in which it takes place. Therefore, theories, even if they have the same ideological grounds, must adapt to the context of each country and each society. In addition, for Cabral, it is essential not to lose sight of the necessity to combine theory and practice, in such a way that theory is used to inform practice which must in turn confirm or contradict that very theory.

Like Frantz Fanon, Cabral had understood the importance of culture in the strategy of colonial conquest. In a speech in memory of Eduardo Mondlane, delivered at Syracuse University in New York, entitled 'National Liberation and Culture,' Cabral stressed that history has taught that alien domination of a people cannot survive unless the dominating power systematically quells the culture of the dominated people to impose its own culture and values. In fact, 'History teaches us that, in certain circumstances, it is easy for outsiders to impose their domination ... But history also teaches us that it can only be maintained through constant and organized monitoring of the cultural life of the dominated people ...', he said.

However, culture can also be used as a weapon of resistance in the struggle to end the domination. This is why Cabral gave a critical importance to culture in the overall strategy for national Liberation movement. It is only by reclaiming their own culture that the colonized people can effectively fight against their alienation and challenge the foreign values imposed on them, and thus to better stand against foreign domination.

Cabral's political legacy

From the political standpoint, Amílcar Cabral made lasting contributions to leadership, the construction of the revolutionary movement, the resolution of contradictions within leadership and to many other issues related to the struggle for national Liberation.

One of Cabral's major political legacies is probably his call on the revolutionary intellectuals to 'suicide'. 'The revolutionary petty bourgeoisie must be able to 'commit suicide' as a class in order to resurrect as revolutionary workers fully in line with the deep aspirations of the people to whom they belong'.

This is the way forward: Committing 'suicide' to get rid of bourgeois tendencies that constantly threaten the petty bourgeoisie and which eventually lead them to betray or confiscate the revolution once it becomes successful. This call to 'suicide' launched to the petty bourgeoisie is a crucial aspect of Cabral's political thought. For him, 'suicide' is the precondition for the fusion of the leadership and the masses, its ability to meet the key fundamentals that guide the movement of Liberation.

Cabral did not merely theorize about the 'suicide' of the petty bourgeoisie. Like Eduardo Mondlane he so admired, he was able to 'kill' himself to fully embrace the views and aspirations of the masses. He managed to transform himself to align with the working class and peasant masses and to reach down to the lower classes. This explains, among other things, the immense respect he earned both inside and outside the country and the success achieved by the liberation struggle which in less than a decade, enabled to liberate three quarters of the country, despite the ferocity of the repression perpetrated by the Portuguese colonial power.

Alas! Intellectuals of Cabral's calibre are rare gemstones. This is why the call to the 'suicide' of African intellectuals had little echo, as shown by the experience of over 50 years of 'independence.' The political havoc that has occurred and which is still on in Guinea-Bissau shows that Cabral's call has not been heard by many of his own comrades or heirs. What about the behaviour of many so-called intellectual 'revolutionaries' who, once in power, turn their backs on the people and become obedient executors of policies dictated by international financial institutions and their Western 'partners'? In most cases, once in power, they often maintained the status quo and turn their rule into an all-out battle for privileges and a rat race at the expense of the struggle for the decolonization of mentalities and the transformation of

economic and social structures inherited from colonization.

Conclusion

Forty years after his assassination, Cabral's ideas and example are more relevant than ever. His untimely death has deprived the African revolutionary movement of one of its most prominent and original theorists. Cabral was a leader who was closely related to the masses. He was deeply infused with the core values of his people. He was a visionary and a staunch Pan-Africanist. He symbolized the kind of leadership that is sorely lacking in Africa at a moment

marked by growing neo-colonial threats against the continent. Indeed, the current events in Mali and those in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 had officially exposed Africa's impotence and the lack of strategic vision of the leaders of the continent, some of whom are nothing more than cheap lackeys in the service of the imperialist powers.

Thus, in this time of deep disillusionment with the 'independence' and the role of the African political and intellectual 'elite', it is essential to remember that the continent has produced a great thinker and revolutionary leader of the stature of

Amilcar Cabral. This fundamental revolutionary thinker deserves to be celebrated and recognized as such by all true African patriots. African political organizations and social movements fighting for the advent of a new, independent, sovereign, united, democratic, standing and prosperous Africa, must reclaim Cabral's ideas and work, as well as those of other martyrs and heroes of the African Revolution. Their lives and works must be taught in African schools and universities. This is an essential condition that would definitely remove the fetters from the minds and help us reclaim our own history.

Building a United and Cohesive Society*

I would first like to thank the organizers, The National Commission for Democracy, for inviting me to chair the opening session of this important conference.

Institutions such as the NCD are essential in the consolidation and expansion of democracy. Such institutions can be effective and credible when they enjoy relative autonomy and are run by competent professionals with a commitment to the public good. I commend the Chairman and staff of the NCD for raising the profile of the organization, especially in the run-up to the 2012 general elections.

This conference, which will focus on ways of building a peaceful, tolerant and cohesive nation, could not have been organized at a better time. Sierra Leone has just conducted national elections, which, like previous elections, especially those of 1967, 1996 and 2007, revealed a highly divided electorate and lack of trust between the main political parties. However, I should emphasize that despite our enormous problems, we have made important strides in consolidating our young democracy.

- The guns are silent and have, to a very large extent, been destroyed;
- The press enjoys remarkable freedom despite its abrasiveness and serious shortcomings in the quality of reporting;
- There are no political prisoners; and
- Some of the core institutions of governance are beginning to enjoy

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the trust of the people despite the challenges.

It is important that the search for institutions and policies that can make us a tolerant and inclusive nation is taking place within a democratic setting. Democracy offers opportunities to identify, debate and rectify problems without resorting to violence. The best period to solve problems that require constitutional change is usually after a general election when passions have cooled and the issues that cause division, intolerance and exclusion are still fresh in the minds of voters.

I believe that this conference is part of a wider conversation that has been inspired by the President's post-elections speech to parliament in which he called for a review of the constitution to make Sierra Leone a more inclusive and tolerant polity.

Sources of intolerance

Intolerance thrives in divided or non-cohesive societies. It has many sources and dimensions, and can express itself at various levels of society. It may be attributed to relations of domination, which may have a long historical trajectory, in the spheres of race, ethnicity, gender and class. These may breed feelings of superiority among dominant groups as in apar-

theid South Africa; the effects of slavery on White-Black relations in the USA; male superiority over women spanning centuries or millennia; and peasant and working class subordination by property owners in feudal and industrial societies.

Intolerance can also occur even when relations of domination are not clearly defined or established. This may happen because of unregulated competition over scarce resources and positions in government and the private sector.

Individuals and groups may develop a sense of entitlement or exclusion, depending on their relations with the power structure, and may perceive politics as a zero-sum game in which losers are excluded from key resources and offices and winners take everything. Again, such intolerance may assume racial, ethnic, gender or class dimensions.

From the programme, it is clear that the organizers are mainly interested in the ethnic dimensions of the problem. We should however not lose sight of these other dimensions as they may be inseparable from ethnicity. In some contexts, progress in building united and cohesive societies and overcoming intolerance in the ethnic domain may require equal attention to these other cleavages.

The ethnic problem

The first task for the policy analyst in devising mechanisms for inclusion and tolerance is to identify the key cleavage or cleavages that policy should address.

If the focus is on the ethnic cleavage, then some understanding of the distribution of ethnic groups and their interconnections is important:

- Is one group overwhelmingly dominant numerically?
- Is the society made up of only two or three ethnic groups?
- Do two or three groups dominate in a multiethnic setting?
- Is the ethnic structure fragmented in such a way that it is difficult for any group to dominate politics or form regional coalitions?

Research suggests that countries with fragmented cleavages are much easier to manage than those that are polarized. Unfortunately, Sierra Leone's ethnic structure tends to be polarized:

- Two dominant groups, which are roughly equal in size, account for about 60 per cent of the population;
- The two groups are also geographically separated, making it possible for smaller groups in regions where each group is dominant to coalesce around the dominant group;
- The two main political parties and voting patterns tend to reflect this ethno-regional bipolarity.

One of the dangers of bipolarity is that voters may be less flexible in relating to parties that are perceived to derive their core support from other regions. This may lead to multiple publics. Groups that lie outside of a ruling party's stronghold may dismiss government initiatives even if the public good is served by such initiatives. Similarly, a ruling party's voters may discredit everything that opposition parties from other regions do. Multiple publics may encourage non-cooperation between parties, and may plunge societies into conflict. However, despite Sierra Leone's bipolar ethnic structure, we do score very well in many other dimensions that measure tolerance:

- There is a high level of inter-ethnic marriage;
- We rank highly on religious tolerance, perhaps unsurpassed by no other country;
- There are no large scale ethnic settlements or ghettos in the capital city;
- A lingua franca, Krio, helps to depoliticize language, which is an important marker of identity and a source of conflict in other countries;

- Our schools are not ethnically segregated;
- Food, dress and music preferences tend to be uniform across ethnicities; and
- Our professional organizations are highly multi-ethnic.
- It is at the political level that intolerance tends to manifest itself. However, if political intolerance is not well managed, it can easily affect other facets of society and poison relations between people in their everyday lives.

Solutions

How can united, tolerant and cohesive societies be built? There are a variety of policy and institutional mechanisms that address issues of intolerance and exclusion. They focus on two issues: inequality reduction and recognition of cultural differences.

Recognition deals with issues of language rights, religion and cultural traditions. Fortunately, we have a lingua franca, and groups do not fight over language rights as in other countries, such as Sri Lanka, Latvia and Belgium. And the holidays of our two major religions are equally observed.

The major challenge is in inequality reduction, which focuses on incomes; employment; asset ownership, such as land; and access to services; as well as the way cabinets, the civil service and law enforcement agencies, such as the military and police, are constituted.

- How representative are these institutions?
- Do groups feel excluded?
- Are the institutions inclusive enough?
- Institutions and policies
- There are a number of rules that can promote inclusion in public institutions.

These include:

- Electoral rules, such as proportional representation; the alternative vote; the two round system; primaries; threshold rules, such as our 55% rule in determining whether there should be a run-off in presidential elections, and requiring winners in presidential elections to score a certain percentage of the votes in all states or districts as in Nigeria and Kenya;
- Affirmative action or positive discrimination can also be used for disadvantaged groups if inequalities

are durable; if the inequalities are not sharp and deep-seated, the principle of proportionality can be used in constituting public bodies;

- Constitutional provisions can also be devised to ensure that political parties are substantially multi-ethnic.

We will have the opportunity to address these issues in the substantive sessions of this conference. Having said this, I would like to emphasize that all policies and institutions that seek to promote tolerance and inclusion should pass an accountability and development test. Not all policies that promote inclusion are effective in promoting accountability and development.

Let me give two examples. The first is the argument over power sharing and winner-takes-all systems. Donors have been in the habit of recommending power-sharing systems to countries at war or that have experienced protracted conflict. This often involves distributing cabinet posts to the contending or warring parties, with the belief that a share of power will kill the appetite for war or conflict.

However, while power-sharing has helped to minimize conflict or end wars, it has not been a good instrument for promoting accountability and development.

- Those who are given power may take it as a right and not something that should be exercised on behalf of the people;
- There is often no incentive to perform, since a share of power will be guaranteed to all parties even if they lose elections;
- Voters may find it difficult to punish poor performers; and
- The country may be denied the advantages of an effective opposition that can hold the government to account.

I believe that a winner-takes-all system with constitutional guarantees for the representation of major groups or districts in the cabinet is preferable to power-sharing systems in young democracies that are grappling with the problems of development. In Nigeria, which practices a winner-takes-all system, the constitution stipulates that each of the 36 states should have a cabinet minister.

The second example is the choice between the list-system of proportional representation and constituency-based

electoral systems. There is no doubt that the proportional representation system promotes more diversity than first-past-the post constituency systems, as it makes it possible for smaller parties that may defend the interests of small ethnic groups to organize and gain representation in the power structure.

However, the list-PR system scores poorly on accountability.

- It gives enormous powers to party leaders, who may decide how individuals are placed on party lists.
- Besides, voters may find it difficult to throw out non-performing MPs.

They can only withdraw their support from the party, but not from individual MPs. Thus, non-performing MPs that enjoy the support of the party hierarchy will be shielded from the wrath of voters.

- The system can also be abused by party leaders. This happened in 1996-7 in our parliament when the leader of the United National People's Party expelled more than 80 per cent of the party's MPs and attempted to replace them with other party members on the List. It is important to note that by-elections are not held in list-based proportional representation systems.

I will end my opening remarks by stressing two points: First, institution-building is a long-term project; it involves compromises and experimentation; and can be messy. There are no magic bullets. Second, people make institutions work. The best institutions will fail if people do not believe in them or are ready to subvert them without fear of the consequences. Leaders' commitment to the rules of the game matters a lot.

* This paper was first presented as part of the opening remarks at 'National Consultative Conference' on Sierra Leone, organized by the National Commission for Democracy (20-22 March 2012, Bank Complex, Kingtom).

First Steps to Creating the 'Nilo' Currency for Africa*

The Basic Argument

In June 2009, Cheikh Anta Diop University invited me to write a paper for a Symposium on the 'United States of Africa'. In the paper entitled 'Reclaiming Africa's Self-Reliance: Federalism, Economic Development, Science and Technology', I had suggested the creation of an African currency called the 'Nilo' (after the River Nile) as a non-convertible African currency to service purely intra-African trade.¹ I am not an expert on currency or monetary issues, nor is this a technical paper showing how to create the 'Nilo' or whatever an African continental currency might be named. I write as a 'generalist interested in Pan-African development towards, ultimately, an economic and political union of Africa.

In the paper, I argue that there is no country or region in the world that can enjoy real independence without owning and controlling its own money. Put it in this 'hard' language, the proposition sounds dogmatic. But it is not. It is the reality of the present (and past) asymmetrical global economic and political systems. It is my view that, in order to advance the cause of Pan-Africanism and for Africa to be able to speak effectively in the global fora, it is incumbent that it creates and controls its own currency. There are good economic reasons for this. But more significant than the economic are reasons connected with Africa's security and political independence in the present turbulent

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world of generalised warfare that might last beyond the present generation. This article seeks to elaborate on this thesis.

Is the 'Nilo' too Fanciful an Idea?

The suggestion is not a mere fantasy as it might appear at first sight. In my above cited paper, I gave the example of a common 'trading currency' called the Unit of Account for PTA (UAPTA). It was created some 25 years ago, in August 1988, by the Preferential Trade Area of Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) – now renamed COMESA.² The UAPTA was a mechanism for minimizing the use of hard currencies, such as the US dollar and pound sterling. It also enabled citizens of member states to travel within the region without having to use foreign currency (the UAPTA was then equivalent to one Special Drawing Right of the IMF). The PTA had set up its own bank with a capitalization of US\$360 million, including a US\$130 million reserve fund to support the operations of the UAPTA Clearing House.

However, within nine years, in June 1997, the UAPTA was discontinued. Why? The reasons are far from simple, for they are political as well as economic, external

to Africa (including the World Bank-IMF imposed neo-liberal policies), as well as internal (contradictions within the member countries). I cite UAPTA only because I know it at first hand (having used it myself), but there have been several such attempts (some failed, some successful) to create currencies in other parts of Africa with potential for evolving into an African 'Nilo'. So the idea of an African continental or regional currency is not as outlandish or bizarre as it might sound. It is a doable project, even if it is, admittedly, a challenging one.

Limits

Before I go further, I need to define the limits of our discussion in this article. Here, I do not go into the very exciting and innovative discussion about 'alternative currencies'. Alternative mediums of exchange have always existed through civilizations; and they exist today too in many communities around the world. These are currencies that do not depend on 'money' as a medium of exchange, such as for example, exchange in the form of 'labour vouchers' – exchange of labour services of equivalent (or roughly equivalent) values – and e-currencies that do not use the banking or traditional currencies for personal or business transactions. I do not go into these. However, there might be another time or venue where we have a discussion on 'alternative currencies'. Here, we focus on the conventional definition of

'currency' as fiduciary money, money that has the authority of the State to realize its value as a medium of exchange or as a store of value.

The Thrust of the Argument

My argument develops along the following three lines.

1. I first examine why Africa needs its own currency. I rate the political-strategic-security consideration as higher than the economic (though this is important, too) as the principal reason for Africa to create its own currency.
2. Then, I argue that the present global financial/economic crisis has opened up an opportunity for Africa to take serious first steps to launch its own currency. However, the present neoliberal and neo-Keynesian policies to reform the global system are doomed to fail. Therefore, it is argued, Africa needs to take a far more radical approach.
3. Following this, I make some tentative suggestions on the first steps in the long journey to create an African currency that it owns and controls.

Why Africa Needs its Own Currency

There are two main reasons why Africa needs to create and control its own currency – one, in the strategic-security-political domain, and the other in the economic domain. The discussion in most academic and policy circles has revolved around the economic. This is not surprising. Money, credit, foreign exchange, market, currency, etc., are quintessentially 'economic' categories. But, it is important to understand that economics is a blind academic discipline; it does not see, or at best it obfuscates, the political reality behind it. Dig deeper into this pseudo-science and you will find, hidden behind its categories and assumptions, political strategies and tactics of the old game of conquest and exploitation. Economics is politics. The only reason I treat these as separate in this article and draw out narrowly defined 'economic' arguments is in order to engage those who deal with economic matters in the government ministries of trade and finance and in the academic discipline called 'economics'. And so, while I end this paper by suggesting certain measures ('first steps') that appear to be economic, it must be understood

that behind my proposals lies a sound political argument, a critical argument for the times we live in.

There is another reason for going into the politics of economics. And this is ideology. For the last nearly three-and-half decades (since about the mid-1970s), the world has been served a heavy dose of neoliberal ideology. It became even more imposing in claiming the status of 'science' after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the Soviet alternative model. After 1989, the only game in town was neoliberal economics whose policy prescriptions were presented as 'axiomatic', indeed as 'second nature' to humanity's future growth and development. The walls of this ideology are finally falling asunder, following the financial (economic) crisis which was lurking for over the last thirty years, but which broke surface in 2007-08, triggered by the sub-prime housing scandal in the United States and, following it, the virtual collapse of the global banking system.

Of course, the old horse (neoliberalism) is still delivering solid kicks that still hurt the poor nations and the poor in all nations. Nevertheless, even as it is dying a slow death, its demise is now a historical certainty. This has opened the door to another ideology. Suddenly, as if from nowhere, its place is now taken by 'neo-Keynesian' economics (almost forgotten for thirty years) with its putative claim to a 'social-democratic' alternative to neoliberalism. This article will not go into the sterile debate between the neoliberals and the neo-Keynesians. I mention this only in order to alert readers not to get caught up in this debate. What Africa needs is a much more radical approach, one that recognizes that all economics is, at base, politics by other means.

The Political-Strategic-Security Reasons for Creating the 'Nilo'

A critical argument of this article is that the post-9/11 world has triggered a new era of generalized warfare. We are living through a prolonged war that could last through and beyond the present generation. In this evolving scenario whose future is far from clear, it behooves Africa to have its own currency in order to maintain a measure of independence and in order not to be dragged into other peoples' wars through, above all, monetary and currency manipulations.

Two questions arise: one, what kind of war is it? And two, what has war to do with having an independent currency? I will not dwell on the first question. It has complex physical, ideological-cum-religious and social-psychological dimensions. All I can say is that it is not like the two major wars of the last century (World War I and World War II), nor like the 'cold war' (World War III) that lasted for nearly 50 years from the end of WW II to the end of the last century. We are living through another kind of war (World War IV) in a profoundly different situation – including a new kind of global awakening, a new kind of resistance to the old power structures; a new kind of challenges to received dogmas and ideologies. ... But let me stop here; this is a subject for another discourse.

The second question is more relevant to the subject in hand. Why should this war (whatever its character) be linked with the issue of Africa owning its own currency, its own 'Nilo'? What has one got to do with the other? This, too, is a complex matter, but its main outlines can be identified without too much difficulty.

All things change; everything is in flux. Nonetheless, there are certain things that change in content and form, but not in essence. Money is such a thing. Money has existed through times immemorial, but in different forms and content in different times. Though it has changed in form and content, what has not changed in essence, is the use of money in war (as also in peace). Money is essentially a weapon of war both in peace and war times.

We know how money and currency played a critical role in the colonial conquest of the Americas (the US and South America), Asia and Africa. Nathan Rothschild who virtually controlled the Bank of England famously said that 'he who controlled Britain's money supply also controlled the British Empire'. European Imperial-Colonial countries (Holland, Portugal, Spain, England, France and Belgium) kept coinage out of the control of the colonies to prevent them from trading with one another. From Africa's own history, we know that the expansion of money and capital from the 1880s led first to the colonial conquest of Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, and later to inter-imperial rivalry and the two world wars. Money played a critical role in wars and colonization. As we all know, one of the

first things the new colonial masters did in the African colonies was to introduce the monopoly of their own currency systems (this hold over Africa of imperial currencies exists to this day; and Africa needs to break out of it. But we shall return to this later).

What have the Punic Wars to Teach Africa?

Let us take a couple of examples from history first, for history is full of evidence of the connection between money and war. The role that money played in the three Punic Wars fought between Rome and Carthage between 264 and 146 BC (including the 'Battle of Tunis' on the African soil) is well documented in history books. Rome used 'money' as a weapon of war, but ironically, the ultimate destruction of Rome's money system in the final years of the Punic wars was one of the most critical factors that led finally to its own demise.

What has the American War of Independence to Teach Africa?

The experience of the English colonies of America (now the USA) is worth recalling for African readers. Pennsylvania (in the colonial period) had created its own paper money in 1723 to assert its independence from the Empire and, interestingly, it was the only colony that managed to prevent inflation that had ravaged the rest of the colonies that were dependent on the English currency.³

In 1764, however, England passed the Currency Act, to curb issuance of colonial money. In 1766, Benjamin Franklin went to London to petition against it but he lost; his petition was rejected by the imperial-colonial government.⁴ However, at the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia in May 1775, the revolutionary colonies decided to create their own currency called the 'Continental Currency'. During the war of American independence, the English tried to undermine the Continental Currency through massive counterfeiting as a weapon of war.⁵ The Americans liberation warriors, despite English efforts to sabotage their currency, managed to finance the liberation war, and in 1776 at the Declaration of Independence, the colonies legalized their new currency. Thus the US finally – and once and for all time – broke away from the imperial currency system. And this is what Africa needs to do.

This story has its own double irony, however. The same USA, by an ironical twist of history, is lording over the rest of the world today with its dollar power. Earlier, I observed that Rome used money as a weapon of war, but ironically, the ultimate destruction of Rome's money system in the final years of the Punic wars was one of the most critical factors that led finally to its own demise. This is the (inevitable) fate of the American Empire too. That is why the US cannot allow a counter global currency, or a loss of its control over, for example, the IMF and its military wing, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

What has the Present Crisis in Europe to Teach Africa?

In our own times, we have the experience of Greece struggling in recent times to reclaim its sovereignty. Little did its people realize (indeed, they were never meaningfully consulted) that by replacing its currency (the drachma) with the euro, it would lose its ability to define and control its own economic policies, that it would lose its sovereignty. Now, Greece is at the mercy of its EU 'partners', the European Development Bank and the IMF.

Of course, it might be argued that Greece is unique, that this is not the experience of countries such as Germany, France or Sweden – these, too, have also abandoned their independent currency in favour of the euro without facing the kind of crisis faced by Greece. This is partly true. But this argument has two sides to it. One is national and the other regional. Nationally, Germany, France and Sweden (the 'northern' countries) have strong economies relative to, for example, Greece, Portugal, Spain and even Italy (the Mediterranean countries). The ancient wisdom that the strong tend to rule the weak is being played out in Europe between the 'Northerners' and the 'Mediterraneans'. Regionally, what the Maastricht Treaty had hoped to create is a strong, united, Europe that could match the strength of the US and Japan. But a strong Europe, in turn, required that countries in the region surrender part of their sovereignty to the will of the collective in order to reap the long-term benefits of the collective strength that comes from unity. There is need to sacrifice a bit of sovereignty nationally so as to gain more out of regional unity. There are thus two sides of the same coin – national and regional.

How does this analogy apply to Africa? It applies both in its 'national' and 'regional' contexts. There is no gainsaying that if African countries want to be able to talk with the rest of the world with a strong, united voice, each of them needs to surrender part of its sovereignty to the collective will of Africa. And here lies the real challenge. No African country is willing to do this – at least in the foreseeable future. But here is the irony. The irony is that what African countries are not prepared to do in the African context, they have done so already in the global context. Presently, African countries have their sovereignty compromised (not only in terms of economic but also in terms of political and security policies) by a historically imposed domination of the Empire over the continent.

A side argument – a distractive argument which we must deal with – is that the Empire does not exist; that Africa is now 'independent' and Africans must not continue to lay blame on 'neo-colonialism' for all their ills. The second part of the above statement is partly true – African leaders too often hide behind the imperial skirts of their erstwhile masters to cover up their own weaknesses and frailties. But the first part – the point about the Empire – is a reality that no amount of linguistic subterfuge can hide. The imperial reality is extant. It has changed its character from the days of direct colonialism, but it is present in all its force and vigour.

Europe is part of that Empire (I may add, parenthetically, that such countries as Sweden, Norway and Finland are also part of the Empire – may be more 'benign'; but there should be no illusion on this score). Africa, on the other hand, is not yet independent. Africa in this sense is different from Europe. It is true that Europe too compromises its sovereignty on, for example, matters of security in Iraq, or Afghanistan, or Syria to the will of the United States – the most dominant player in NATO. But Europe does that for its own strategic and security interests. Also, Europe enjoys relative independence in matters related to, for example, trade, investment and environmental policies that could be the envy of Africa. It is not without reason that, in the face of the global economic crisis, the Europeans are trying their best to preserve their independent currency (the euro), even at the cost of bringing weaker countries like Greece, Ireland and Portugal to toe the 'European line'.

Summing Up the Political-strategic-security Argument for the 'Nilo'

The Roman and American examples from the past, and the example of Greece and Europe in our own times, lead to three important conclusions:

1. They show the link between the money system and the war system. Money is war by other means from antiquity to the present times.
2. They underscore the fact that Africa is not yet independent. Its independence and sovereignty are compromised by the historically imposed will of the Empire over Africa. This imperial will is exercised through many channels – political, military, ideological, economic; through the so-called 'development aid'; and, above all, through the control over Africa's money system.
3. Africa can learn from the experience of the thirteen American colonies in the 1760s – break away from imperial currencies, and create their own. Africa must also learn from Europe's determination to hold on to the euro. The leading nations of Europe are not taking chances on the future; they do not want to mortgage their future to the US dollar either in the economic domain or in the political-strategic-security domain.

The post 9/11 world has triggered a new era of generalized warfare, which is still in its early stages, whose evolution is still in the future. Money is playing an extremely important role in triggering and fuelling the wars in the Arab world. Syria is inundated with money from, for example, the US, Europe and their allies in the oil rich Gulf countries. Also, in the case of Iran, one of the objectives of the NATO coalition is to weaken Iran's currency through massive embargo on its oil exports and escalated sanctions. Currencies are weapons of war, just like scud missiles and the drones. Africa must create an independent currency. This is a strategic objective whose importance cannot be exaggerated.

The Economic Reasons for Creating the 'Nilo'

Earlier, I argued that economics is political-economy masquerading as pseudo-science, or what Benjamin Franklin called 'Economyths'. The best examples of this are the 'neoliberal' and the 'neo-

Keynesian' economics. I have also no doubt that whilst the Marxist method of dialectic materialism provides a better tool for analysis than the neoliberal or neo-Keynesian epistemologies, there is no such thing as 'Marxist economics' or 'neo-Marxist economics'. These are reductionist economic distortions of what Marx wrote and fought for.

But let us not get into this ideological discourse. The 'economic' argument for the 'Nilo' is made in order, as I said earlier, to engage and to connect with people involved in academic and policy issues in Africa. I will keep this brief because the argument does not require much labouring. We all agree that Africa has abundant natural and human resources, and that it needs to use these to get out of poverty and underdevelopment. Our disagreements or confusion is on the question of where we get investment capital to develop these resources. And this begs the question: Why is it that Africa creates a lot of added value in production but it still needs capital from outside?

This is a question that has been with us since the colonial times to this day. Let me say that part of our confusion (indeed, most of it) has been created by mirrors and magic lanterns created by the Empire; these distort realities and turn them upside down. Let me illustrate this from the experience of my country – Uganda. Dani W. Nabudere, in his *Imperialism and Revolution in Uganda*, has shown how during the colonial times, the surplus from Uganda, extracted out of peasant commodity production, became so large that a substantial part of it was exported to Britain.⁶ In 1958, for example, of the £17.5 million deposited in Uganda banks £11.6 million was used in Uganda and the rest was sent to Britain. He quotes the colonial economic historian, Walter Newlyn who wrote:

The outstanding characteristic of this phase of their development (of the banks) was that they soon became able to collect deposits locally in excess to what they were able to utilise in the East African countries and these surplus funds they invested in London. The result was that for a long period of their history, these banks were actually involved in the process of exporting capital from the underdeveloped countries of East Africa for use in a developed country.⁷

In essence, nothing has changed from those days. Africa is still the net exporter of capital to the Empire. Africa has got its political independence, but the system of production, trading and currencies remain more or less the same, except that the separate bilateral colonial rules (British, French, etc.) have been replaced by multilateral rule under the overall direction of the World Bank and the IMF. These institutions of global economic governance, fifty years since their creation, are still stubbornly controlled by the US-led Empire. Under this multilateralised imperial regime, there is a net outflow of both resources and money-capital from Africa (and other parts of the third world, including China), and figures bear this out. Africa pays out more than it gets. There is an enormous value added in production in Africa, especially in commodities, and yet Africa retains an insignificant share of this value. Again, figures even from sources within the IMF and the World Bank bear this out.

Why this is so should surprise nobody. It is not a result of something insidious (although this too, as later explained); it is largely because this is how the system works globally. There is no automatic leveling down (or 'trickle down') process at the international (or for that matter at the national) level. Asymmetries are built into the workings of the system. Power and wealth concentrations are inherent to the system. Those who have accumulated wealth through various forms of 'rent seeking' acquire more of what they have, thus spiraling the rich-poor gap both within and between nations. Over time, however, some 'insidious' practices have indeed become part of the system, such as speculation in commodities and in the foreign exchange and derivatives 'markets', much of which are openly fraudulent, and enjoying a large measure of impunity.

Oiling this vast system of what amounts to theft is the money system. It is for this reason that many writers have given a specific name to this era of capitalism – namely a system of 'financialised' capitalism – a system where making money out of money is rewarding speculators and bankers more than those involved in actual production; where 'stocks' are floated onto the 'money market' and leveraged through derivatives that have no relation to the value of hard, tangible, assets; where

governments (mainly in the US and Europe) are engaged in printing money (confusingly called by the technically beguiling phrase ‘Quantitative Easing’ or QE to fool the masses). This is actually to enable their banks to balance their books which have fake (what in the official language is called ‘toxic’) assets. This is the real world of present-day capitalism.

Why the Neo-Keynesian Reformist ‘Solution’ is an Illusion

The demise or near-demise of the neoliberal paradigm has opened the door to several reformist ‘solutions’ – some still within the same paradigm, some outside of it. One of the latter is the neo-Keynesian reformist ‘solution’, named after the English economist, John Maynard Keynes, a brilliant bureaucrat who showed one possible way out of the depression of the 1930s. Keynes was also engaged on the British side in the negotiations leading to the creation of the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and the IMF), except that he lost out to the more powerful Americans. The British were already in post-war decline. Nonetheless, Keynesian economics flourished in some social-democratic milieu until buried under the avalanche of neoliberalism in the 1970s. More recently it has resurrected itself in some ‘left’ reformist circles.

I shall not go into this theory. What concerns us here is the application of neo-Keynesian economics to the present financial-economic crisis. One of its most brilliant contemporary advocates is the American Nobel Laureate, Joseph Stiglitz, who headed the ‘Commission of Experts’ set up in September 2009 by the United Nations General Assembly, to study the financial crisis in depth and make recommendations. I have summarised the findings and recommendations of the Stiglitz Commission elsewhere.⁸ The Report came out in September 2009, with some of the best ideas that money can buy on how to reform the international financial architecture to prevent future occurrences of the crises.

The point to underscore is that nothing is heard of the report any more. Not a single of its ten major recommendations has been followed up. Why not? A quick answer, without getting into sordid details, is that the ruling classes – and the entire paraphernalia of the capitalist system controlled by an un-regulateable ‘ma-

fia’ of bankocrats, kleptocrats, speculators, and state bureaucrats – have absolutely no interest in reforming a system of which they are the principal beneficiaries.

The Crisis of the Dominant System is an Opportunity for Africa

The struggle for liberation from the hold of the Empire is a long struggle. Much of what is happening in the Arab world is part of that scenario. Africa too is embroiled in several wars within the continent whose causes are deeply rooted in its colonial past, with lingering ethnic-religious-class and political-economic dynamics of power and resource distribution at the heart of these wars.

Nonetheless, at the political-economic level, the failure of the neoliberal and reformist ‘solutions’ to the global multiple crises does open the door for more innovative, more radical, thinking on the part of African activist intellectuals and grass roots social movements.

I have also floated some ideas along these lines, especially during my tenure as Executive Director of the Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI), 1997–2004; and then as Executive Director of the South Centre, 2005-2009. I have argued, like Samir Amin, Dani Nabudere and others before me, that it is imperative that Africa and the countries of the South ‘decouple’ – or ‘delink’ – themselves from the crisis-prone system of the North. A serious debate is urgently needed in Africa between its political leaders, its academic and intellectual community, and its civil society; and above all, between all of these and the movements of the people on the ground who are at the receiving end of all ill-conceived policies done in their name. This is the democratic transparency that is needed, not the top-down financial and banking ‘transparency’ of the G8, the G20, the IMF, the World Bank, the European Union and the OECD. This is not to underestimate the gravity of the problems that face Africa and the South in trying to work out an alternative model of a monetary and financial system. But whoever has thought of starting a long journey without taking the first step?

Putting the Issue of ‘Nilo’ in the Broader Context of a 10-point Strategic Program of Action

Africa is not alone in venturing on this long struggle. Efforts are afoot also in

other parts of the South. Among such efforts, I would cite the work of the Ecuadorian political-economist, Pedro Páez, as offering some of the best ideas on the subject of money systems and currencies. I have summarized his ideas too in the above cited paper.

So here in points form are some of the critical steps that might be taken – in parallel or sequentially, depending on the circumstances – to undertake a radical reform not only of the financial and currency system but broadly of Africa’s general orientation to the rest of the world. Obviously, the 10-point programme of action suggested below is not a one-day affair, and certainly not something that can be carried out by a single African country on its own. It can be done at the continental level by, for example, the African Union (AU), or the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); and/or (simultaneously or in sequence) at the regional level, involving regional organizations like COMESA and ECOWAS.

1. Break trade barriers between African countries and create customs unions, and encourage those that are already doing this to expedite their efforts, for example, ECOWAS and the Eastern African Community;
2. Create regional monetary arrangements (RMAs), including flexible regional bloc exchange rate regimes (ERR), and the creation of regional currencies. It is not necessary at this stage to create fully-fledged regional currencies – like the euro, for example. What is immediately doable is the creation of regional ‘trading currencies’ such as the Uapta. Indeed, the Uapta can be given a new lease of life along revised format and structures, but retaining its potential to evolve into a regional currency;
3. Create regional banks and community banks funded entirely out of savings generated within Africa and therefore independent of aid or capital from outside;
4. Aim, in the long run, to turn banks into post offices. Money should be owed by people and handed over to Post Offices to manage issuance of credit and servicing loans for a fee. The Grameen Bank idea in Bangladesh started out well, for it was based on the above principle, but it got corrupted along the way on account of infiltration by the

dominant money system and the World Bank;

5. Review all the donor driven agreements (for example, those with the IMF, the World Bank, USAID and the European Commission). Some of these agreements need to be scrapped and others fundamentally changed or re-negotiated, if at all. This might require a certain level of expertise in evaluating the economic, political and legal dimensions of these agreements, as well as some financial resources;
6. Of critical significance are, especially, 'development aid' agreements, the Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs), and the Free Trade Agreements, such as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), now being negotiated under extreme pressure from the European Union. There should be an immediate embargo on further negotiations of the EPAs, in order to buy time for Africa to consider its options;
7. African political and grassroots leaders should, as early as possible, link up with countries in other parts of the South (for example, the Alba counties in Latin America and the ASEAN countries) in order to exchange ideas and methodology of working out a government-to-government and people-to-people South-South strategy for a more radical approach to the financial and economic crises than what is offered by the neo-liberal and neo-Keynesian reformists;
8. At the global level, Africa (and the global South) is better placed to work through the G77 group, rather than through the G20, which has been co-opted into an apparatus set up and dominated by the G7 Countries;
9. The global financial system remains extremely fragile. And so, whilst working towards an alternative system, Africa (and the South) might create a co-coordinating mechanism to monitor the volatility of the financial system, and to create 'fire-walls' to 'de-couple' from its effects. The use of national currencies (as between China and Iran and some African countries) is an example of de-coupling, but there are other firewall mechanisms that might be put in place.
10. Above all, African leaders should be careful not to allow big powers to fight their proxy wars in Africa as

happened during the Cold War. We are already in a situation of World War IV (the 'cold war' was World War III). Therefore, the African Union and African leaders should put their maximum efforts to defuse the situations in, for example, Somalia and Mali. Insulate these situations from infiltration by external big power interests, and seek peaceful solutions that are wholly African.

Conclusion

There is no country or region in the world that can enjoy real independence without owning and controlling its own money. A country or region that has no control of its money is never going to be independent.

Africa is not yet independent. Its independence and sovereignty are compromised by the historically imposed will of the Empire over Africa. This imperial will is exercised through many channels – political, military, ideological and economic; through the so-called 'development aid'; and, above all, through the control over Africa's money and currency system.

This broad historical and ontological landscape of Africa forms the context in which the question of the continent's response to the 'financial' crisis must be addressed. There is a widely shared consensus that the financial crisis is systemic, and an outcome of present phase of financialised capitalism, a phase where unproductive financial and speculative capital has stumped productive capital. For over three decades (since mid-1980s), the countries of the South have been subjected to austerity economics and financial 'bail outs' by the IMF and the 'donors'. As it turns out, and as the Greek experience further demonstrates, the 'bail outs' were for the globalised banking system and not for the people of the South. The IMF's stabilisation project was always a fraud a 'Mission IMF-ossible'.

This is the 'economic' reason for Africa to seek its own path to recovery from the present crisis, and the best way is for it to decouple itself from the crisis-ridden and crisis-perpetuating Empire-dominated economic system, and create the 'Nilo' (i.e. a continental money) that it owns and controls.

But deeper than the economic reason are the political-strategic-security reasons. A

new kind of war has begun after 9/11. This war (World War IV) could go on and evolve in unpredictable ways in the generations to come. Africa needs peace for another two or three generations to get out of its poverty and underdevelopment, and an independent globally non-tradable currency would be one of the major ingredients of this peace.

Notes

* This article was first presented as a paper at the International Conference on the Future of the Franc Zone, organized by CODESRIA and ARCADE in Dakar, Senegal, October 11-13, 2012

1. Throughout the paper I use the term 'Nilo' as a short substitute for 'African or continental currency', which of course could be called by any other name.
2. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) consists mostly of countries of Eastern and Southern Africa but it also includes Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the DRC, Libya and Sudan – with a population of about 400 million, and total GDP of estimated 360 billion US dollars.
3. An interesting aside is that in order to protect its independent currency, Pennsylvania inflicted heavy penalties on those engaged in counterfeiting, including cutting off of both ears on first offence and both limbs on later offences. This aside should not be interpreted to mean an implied encouragement to the present-day Sharia law, which is a domain outside my competence.
4. Franklin had criticised the Austrian School of Economics – what Franklin ridiculed as the 'Austrian School of Economyths' associated with Ludwig Von Mises – for their ignorance of monetary issues.
5. They were out of the reach of Pennsylvania's 'ear-cutters'. Actually, the English set up printing presses aboard British ships in New York to flood the American money system with counterfeits.
6. Dani W. Nabudere, *Imperialism and Revolution in Uganda*, Onyx Press, 1980
7. Quoted by Nabudere, *Ibid*, p.65, citing Newlyn W.T. (1972), *Money in an African Context*, Oxford, p.43
8. Yash Tandon, 'Economic Policies response to the financial crisis: a view from the South', for the conference on 'Sustainable Development Alternatives: How to Change the Social Paradigm Focused on Human Being and Nature', Quito, June, 2012.

Rediscovering Archie Mafeje and How South Africa is Coming to Terms with its Ignored Intellectual Icon: A Rejoinder

Towards Atonement

A month before Professor Archibald Boyce Monwabisi Mafeje passed away, I published a short article as a tribute to his immense contribution to African scholarship (Lebakeng 2007). The article was meant to pay my intellectual debt to Professor Mafeje as an erstwhile mentor during my undergraduate studies in sociology at the American University in Cairo (AUC), Egypt. More importantly, it was a lament on how South Africa was failing to recognise a shining intellectual star in their mist. Mafeje was literally and dishearteningly ignored in South African institutions of higher learning before and since his coming back from exile. A month after this publication, the man posthumously referred to as ‘an African intellectual pathfinder’, ‘a pioneering intellectual powerhouse’, and ‘an intellectual giant’ passed away.

Naturally, it was with despair that many of us who knew him learnt of his passing. Personally, I thought that, as a country, we had missed a glorious opportunity as we lost a bright light in the cause for intellectual and cultural liberation, cognitive justice and critical pedagogy. After all, in the lofty battle against epistemicide and alterity, Professor Mafeje was a worthy representative of a country that predictably failed to acknowledge, celebrate and affirm his profound contributions while he was still alive. He displayed rare instances of genuine brilliance that one does not often come across. That, as a country, we ignored such an intellectual treasure was scandalous at best.

Various reasons can explain this thoroughly miserable reception, ranging from the fact that (1) when Professor Mafeje left South Africa at the age of twenty-eight, he had not yet established a national presence in the country intellectually; (2) he came back at retirement age and modern South Africa is proving not to be socially kind to retirees and (3) there was always a cabal of intellectual elite within the South African Communist Party in exile, in concert with

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the political elite of the liberation movement that was not comfortable with his intellectual and philosophical pronouncements. In addition, Professor Mafeje was a scholar who spoke the truth, unflinchingly, to power and did not – to use an ambiguous compliment – suffer fools gladly.

It is now six years since Professor Mafeje passed away. In death though, we have observed a flurry of concerted efforts from government officials, think-tanks, institutions of higher learning and interested individuals in South Africa, aimed at atonement for the way the late Professor Mafeje was treated in his country of birth. Such post-humous tributes are a case of better late than never for an individual who was a source of immeasurable intellectual delight and a consequential intellectual critic of our time.

In this regard, he spoke truth not only to friends and foes alike, but more importantly, to power. Throughout his exile years, he was distrusted by the political elite of the liberation movement. Many young South Africans were warned not to associate with him. They even imputed evil motives on him. This was not an indictment of Professor Mafeje but a testimony to our long-standing intolerance of all those who hold different views or dare to propose intellectually and politically non-conforming views. Politically and intellectually, this unfortunate tendency has resulted in major assaults on honest and highly needed debates in our democratising society.

Among these efforts could be mentioned the following: The University of South Africa (UNISA) established the Archie Mafeje Institute for Applied Social Policy Research. The policy research institute, known in short as the Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI), is based at

University of South Africa. It is dedicated to promoting the legacy of Professor Mafeje in terms of innovative knowledge production for applied social policy, in pursuit of progressive change in African society through the provision of fresh thinking and novel policy ideas for the fight against poverty, inequality, social disintegration, lack of social justice, weak citizenship, collapse of institutions of community and family and other societal ills. AMRI conducts research and facilitates scholarly and policy debates based on a rigorous understanding of African social formations and a clear definition of societal transformation aimed at social justice and poverty eradication in Africa. In particular, AMRI is concerned with change that results from knowledge garnered from the experiences and thought patterns of ordinary Africans. This is critical since Professor Mafeje was dedicated to truly decolonizing the social sciences and humanities from Eurocentric biases and theories that deny Africans agency such as modernist paradigms.

Acknowledging the role he played, I will quote in extensor from the UNISA website: ‘As a result of his passion for alternative and trans-disciplinary discourses on the African condition, Prof. Mafeje dedicated his life to promoting endogenous knowledge that would inform solutions to African social problems and to building an epistemic community of African scholars dedicated to creative thinking about critical African policy challenges. For this reason, AMRI aims to provide a platform for African scholars and analysts to become thought-leaders for social transformation on the continent’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012).

The second example is the creation of the Archie Mafeje Fellowship Programme by the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) to celebrate the intellectual and inspirational impact which he had. This is part of AISA’s attempt to build a solid community of social science scholars in Africa. The organization found it vital that it pays tribute to the pathfinders, the icons and the frontrunners in order to demonstrate its appreciation for the

contributions of such individuals. Therefore, the Fellowship provides an opportunity for African scholars to conduct critical and cutting-edge research in line with the Mafeje tradition, and to contribute to AISA's research programmes. In keeping with Professor Mafeje's pan-Africanist involvement, scholars from all over the continent are specifically targeted to apply and will be based in Pretoria, South Africa (<http://www.ai.org.za>).

Professor Mafeje Celebrated and Honoured

Also, the Walter Sisulu University (WSU) and AISA hosted a Memorial Lecture in honour of Professor Mafeje on Wednesday, 9 March 2011 in Umtata. The lecture was delivered by Professor Jimi Adesina, then Professor of Sociology at Rhodes University (now with the University of Western Cape), who was also a friend to Professor Mafeje. By all accounts, Professor Adesina, who has provided interesting insight into Professor Mafeje thought (Adesina 2008a; 2008b), left an indelible impression, as the audience sought ideas as to how to move forward with Professor Mafeje's ideas.

Guest speakers, Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza from the Department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town and Professor Mbulelo Mzamane, Director, Centre for African Literary Studies, Pietermaritzburg, stressed the importance of learning from Mafeje's works. The speakers also expressed their sadness that South Africa could not honour this illustrious son of the soil whilst he was still alive but commended WSU and AISA for their efforts in trying to remedy that great tragedy.

Earlier in 2010, WSU had honoured Professor Mafeje with an honorary degree of Doctor of Literature and Philosophy, posthumously, in recognition of his distinguished contribution to the growth of scientific knowledge through teaching, research and publications as well as his path-breaking work on the land and agrarian question in Africa.

Another instance is illustrated by the nostalgia demonstrated by former students of the UCT who, in August 2008 gathered to pay tribute to a student protest that shook the campus over 40 years earlier, after Professor Mafeje was

prevented from taking up a post there during colonial-apartheid. Despite rejecting Professor Mafeje for the second when he applied for another post, UCT has now, belatedly, apologised for the way he was treated. His family formally accepted the apology and the university awarded Professor Mafeje a posthumous honorary doctorate. A scholarship is to be inaugurated in his name and his works published (and the whole world is eagerly waiting for this). The room in which the university Council meets, and which was occupied during the protest those years ago, has been renamed in his honour.

In October 2010, there was an exhibition which travelled to 3 South African universities and which will eventually be housed at Walter Sisulu University. It is an exhibition about Archie Mafeje as a young man. The exhibitionist is a history professor who has written a rather controversial book about Professor Mafeje as a young anthropologist (see Bank 2010; Nyoka 2011).

Who was Archie Mafeje?

A great deal has been written about Professor Mafeje since he passed away. A special tribute issue of this bulletin contained contributions from Professor Mafeje's peers and colleagues, former students and family members, covering various spectrums of his life (*Codesria Bulletin* 2008, Nos 3 & 4). As Professor Nabudere points out, 'the tributes demonstrate the high regard of Mafeje held by those who knew him and had worked with him (Nabudere 2011). It is clear from such tributes that South Africa's loss was Africa's (and the world's) gain. In essence, Professor Mafeje was a pan-Africanist academic giant who broke barriers as he was a visible presence on the continent's intellectual landscape. Although Professor Mafeje used to introduce himself as 'a South African by birth, a Dutch by citizenship and an Egyptian by domicile,' one could not but admire his dedication to his country of birth and the liberation of the African continent.

Professor Mafeje was born in the highly remote and rural village of Gubenxe, Engcobo on 30 March 1936. When he passed away on the 28th March 2007, he had had a professional career spanning four decades. After completing high school at Healdtown, he enrolled for tertiary education at Fort Hare University

where he studied Zoology for one year before being expelled for political activities. In 1957, he enrolled with the UCT and in 1963 he completed his master's degree cum laude at the same institution. He was granted a British Council scholarship in 1964 to pursue his doctoral studies at Cambridge University. His university research on commercial farmers in Uganda began a lifelong engagement with agrarian issues and the ethnography of East Africa. It culminated in his 1991 book, *The Theory and Ethnography of African Social Formations: The Case of the Interlacustrine Kingdoms*.

According to Professor Mafeje, his visa expired while he was still studying and the colonial-apartheid South African consulate advised him to go back to South Africa to renew it. Sensing that he might not be allowed back into England to complete his studies, he ignored the suggestion because he could not understand why the consulate could not do it.

In May 1968, the UCT Council unanimously approved his appointment as a senior lecturer in Social Anthropology. He was eminently suitable, having graduated from the university with an MA in the subject, cum laude, three years earlier. Moreover, at the time of his appointment, he was about to complete his doctorate at the Cambridge University [see citation read by Wilson, 2008]. A month later, after pressure from the apartheid government, the same Council withdrew the appointment. This ignited students' anger in August 1968, during which an estimated number of 600 students began a nine-day occupation of the Bremner Building, demanding the reinstatement of Professor Mafeje by the UCT Council. Instead of acceding to the demand, the institution established an Academic Freedom Research Award in honour of Mafeje. UCT then put up a disclaimer, saying that the government had taken away its right to appoint lecturers. That decision marked the beginning of Mafeje's exile and a journey that eventually led to one of the most outstanding academic careers. The Mafeje affair was a turning point for UCT, which bowed to pressure from the apartheid government, rather than standing up for the values essential to an authentic and thriving intellectual community. The events exposed the pretension of liberalism at the institution

and it is noteworthy that, since then, UCT did not make any black academic appointment until the 1980s.

Since he could not go back to South Africa because the South African consulate refused to renew his passport, the Cambridge University created a special lectureship post for him. Soon thereafter, in November 1968, the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, Netherlands invited him to take up a position as a senior lecturer. Not being satisfied with being away from the continent and eager to deal with issues that were close to his heart, such as researching African settings, he applied to several African universities in Ghana, Zambia, Uganda and Tanzania. Professor Mafeje pointed out that his short stay at the ISS seemed to decouple him from continental developments. It is noteworthy that during the period 1967–1973, internationally, there was an upsurge of revolutionary activities all over the world, including the Civil Rights Movement in the US, the May French student uprisings, the Vietnam liberation war and the liberation struggles in Africa (Shivji 1993).

Finally, he settled for the then hub of intellectual activity, the haven of global intellectuals and beehive of ideological and intellectual fervor, namely, the University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, where he became head of the Department of Sociology. That the university was characterized by intense intellectual ferment and ideological debates is illustrated by the fact that staff around that time included the likes of Walter Rodney, Dan Nabudere, Mahmood Mamdani, Ibbo Mandaza, John Saul and Yash Tandon. Visiting lecturers or speakers included CLR James, Abdulreham Babu and Ali Mazrui (who later mocked this unabashed attraction to Tanzania as Tanzaphilia), while students included Issa Shivji and Yoweri Museveni (current president of Uganda).

It was during this period at the University of Dar-es-Salaam that he published his classic and often quoted article on 'The Ideology of Tribalism'. Unfortunately, his stay there, from 1969 to 1971, was cut short as a result of a 31 January 1971 horrific accident which, through the help of what he referred to as 'a Good Samaritan', saw him having to endure eleven – very expensive – operations for facial reconstruction in Denmark (personal conversations

with Professor Mafeje in Pretoria, 2006). Following his recuperation, the ISS invited him as a visiting researcher and he spent the period 1972–1975 at the Institute. According to Professor Mafeje, lack of facilities in Tanzania at the time made him accept the gracious invitation (personal conversations with Professor Mafeje in Cairo, Egypt, 1986). In 1973, at the age of 34, the ISS appointed him Professor of Anthropology and Sociology of Development (and Chairman of the Rural Development, Urban Development and Labour Studies Program) by an Act of Parliament and with the approval of all the Dutch universities. Professor Mafeje therefore became one of the only two African scholars to be so distinguished in The Netherlands. That appointment bestowed on him the honour of being a Queen Juliana Professor and one of her Lords. His name appears in the prestigious blue pages of the Dutch National Library. He also received Dutch citizenship and the key to The Hague. It was during his time at the ISS that he met his wife and life-long companion, the Egyptian scholar and activist, Dr Shahida El Baz.

As Professor of Anthropology and Sociology of Development in The Hague, he worked on African systems of land tenure and on agricultural and rural development. Between 1976 and 1978, Professor Mafeje worked as a full-time consultant at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Italy, Rome and he continued to work on these issues. He subsequently joined the AUC, as Professor of Sociology and Anthropology but retained strong research and teaching links with the ISS. He returned to southern Africa in 1991 after another four-year stint at the FAO. He took up the post of Professor of Sociology and Anthropology and Director of the Multidisciplinary Research Centre at the University of Namibia from 1992 to 1994. After colonial-apartheid collapsed in 1994, the UCT offered Professor Mafeje a research post, but he declined it. When he finally applied for a chair at the university, he was once more rejected as being unsuitable for the position.

At the retirement age of 65, several years after the end of apartheid, Professor Mafeje returned to South Africa. He was appointed a Research Fellow by the National Research Foundation (NRF) working at the African Renaissance Centre

at UNISA. In 2001, Professor Mafeje became a member of the Scientific Committee of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and in 2003 was awarded the Honorary Life Membership of the Council. In 2005, Professor Mafeje was appointed a CODESRIA Distinguished Fellow in conjunction with the Africa Institute of South Africa, in Pretoria.

His Contributions and Intellectual Legacy

Professor Mafeje's oeuvre provides a rich canvass for his intellectual portrait. His personal reverence, political principle and theoretical acumen have combined into a formidable intellectual in the true sense of the word. Professor Mafeje was a gentle but revolutionary intellectual giant who lent his intelligence, grace and imagination to the deconstruction of western historiography and ethnography on Africa.

He held that European colonisation brought with it certain ways of reconstructing the African reality. Therefore, his analytical point of departure was that the European enslavement and colonisation of Africa was also about the control of knowledge about Africa. In this respect, he provided a counter-narrative to the dominant tradition of Western scholarship which presented conquest, dispossession and exploitation as a civilising mission. He was an anti-alterity scholar in that he opposed the images of Africa as presented by Western scholars. These images were of a pathological continent which desperately needed therapeutic treatment from outside. Moreover, he held that development paradigms on and about Africa were heavily Western-oriented as they were fundamentally steeped in the concept of assimilation and integration. For him, the missing link was culture. In this regard, he left behind his trademark of critical and engaged scholarship in support of progressive agendas. Throughout his academic life, he inspired the wider community of African scholars to pursue independent and critical approaches to knowledge production, to contribute towards Africa's renewal agenda and global peace. However, as a scholar, he was neither an ideologue nor a demagogue.

Professor Mafeje began to doubt the validity of colonial anthropology categorisations when he was doing fieldwork in the urban and rural areas of South Africa in the mid-sixties. This doubt was further heightened when he went to Uganda (1965 – 1967) and to Tanzania (1969 – 1971) when he realised that the ideology of tribalism was pervasive in colonial as well as post-colonial Africa. By the time he reached Tanzania at the end of the 1960s, his work had become more thematic, less ethnographic and consciously deconstructive. From then, he embarked on a long deconstructionist journey with respect to colonial anthropology. Herein lies Professor Mafeje's most striking and enduring legacy (see Mafeje 2001a).

His seminal paper on the subject of tribalism which was published in 1971 led to a turn-around in the thinking of African social scientists about the bogey of tribalism. This article, hailed as a conceptual *tour-de-force* that unlocked our understanding of the concept of tribalism, was essentially an Africanist reaction to Western cultural and intellectual imperialism. It was a frontal attack on European ethnocentrism and a spontaneous call for indigenisation of social scientific concepts. Professor Mafeje was not an essentialist and, as such, did not object to Western influence on African social science, but rather, to its assumed intellectual hegemony.

Professor Mafeje also ventured into more theoretical and methodological fields, such as state capitalism and primitive accumulation, science and ideology, technology and development, sociology of sociology, the fallacy of dual economies, demography and economy, historical explanation, philosophical representations. Familiarity with Professor Mafeje's work points to some of these publications being simply intellectual explorations and were not necessarily sustained. He concedes as such in his written testimony about what he considers to be his intellectual legacy (Mafeje 2001a).

The subject matter of his writings was closely tied to the political struggles taking place in Africa in general, and Southern Africa in particular. As such, his search for indigenisation was not a mere academic rebellion but a political, ideological and philosophical affirmation of Africanness. It is noteworthy that the

impact of Professor Mafeje's writings does not lie in the volume of his work but in its quality. His courage, insatiable curiosity, caring and keen intellect contextualized and revolutionized the thinking of generations of scholars. Historically, Professor Mafeje did not blaze the path of deconstructing alterity and affirming African identity. Many scholars had done that before him. What he did was to do so more eloquently, elegantly, convincingly, excitingly, exceptionally and authentically without being burdened by political affiliations and being ordained by political organisations. It is, therefore, bewildering that there was so much deafening silence on this legendary social scientist's works in South African institutions of higher learning. This has been a travesty of intellectual justice and violence of memory as such untenable situation continued to deny South African scholars and students of an appreciation of the contributions and legacy of this internationally acclaimed scholar.

I once asked him why he did not, for purposes of broader readership, contribute to newspapers to stimulate and respond to the discourse on various issues. His response was that he did not want to take liberties not appropriate for a scholar. Notwithstanding this, Professor Mafeje considered the role of African intellectuals to be creation, through critical intellect, of socially and politically relevant ideas. His analytical work was consistently aimed at this, as seen in his characteristic forthrightness, unsparing candour and intellectual intensity when dealing with friends and foes alike – hence the major bruising intellectual encounters he was involved in.

The shame is that, internationally, he was recognised as both iconic and a giant. To that extend, during the 30th anniversary celebrations of CODESRIA held in Dakar, Senegal in 2003, a plenary session was held to honour his enduring contributions and legacy to the social sciences and humanities.

The Continued Relevance of Professor Mafeje in South Africa

While with the ISS, Prof. Mafeje published a totalising critique of the social sciences and humanities (Mafeje 1976). It is clear that he did not find takers from South Africa regarding the problems of the social sciences and humanities. As recent

as 2011, two reports by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) and the Charter for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CHCC) respectively, were released on the decline of the social sciences and humanities in South Africa. The two reports, appearing within a month of each other, pointed to a crisis in the disciplines and alarming declining rates of student numbers in these subjects.

In essence, the ASSAf report worryingly expressed concern about the 'intellectual stagnation' in the social sciences and humanities over the last fifteen years, posing the single most important threat to the growth of intellectual vibrant scholarship in the social sciences and humanities. The CHCC report noted extremely worrying signs of decline that need to be arrested and reversed as a matter of urgency, given the important role the social sciences and humanities have to play in our society. These disciplines, as taught in the South African universities, are thereby becoming liabilities rather than assets.

Clearly, the academic landscape in the social sciences and humanities need an infusion of relevance, conceived as a function of how these disciplines respond to the national concerns and global imperatives. As such, the crisis in the disciplines presents an opportunity to engage with Professor Mafeje's insightful works. To commemorate, to celebrate, to give honor to the legacy of this bona fide intellectual giant, South Africans need to explore his legacy and acknowledge his work rather than ignore and marginalise it. The challenge for universities in South Africa is to begin to introduce learners to his works. Anything less is a travesty of and a dishonor to scholarship in the context of the knowledge struggles raging on in the South African academia.

In a country lacking in a contemporary pool of credible cadre of intellectual role models, recent efforts to acknowledge Professor Mafeje is a welcome and encouraging step. As alluded to earlier, before passing away, Professor Mafeje had already compiled a testimony of what he considers to have been his contribution to the social sciences in general, and the subject of anthropology in particular. What emerges is that unless we indigenise the social sciences and humanities, these disciplines will always be in crisis as informers of social policy.

The two reports mentioned should, willy-nilly, return us South African social scientists to indigenisation fundamentals as Professor Mafeje tirelessly advocated.

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Marikana Massacre: A Turning Point in South African History?*

Introduction

On 16 August 2012, the South African police killed 34 strikers employed by Lonmin, a British multinational, at its Marikana mines. Arrests, torture, trauma and hunger followed, but the strike continued and the workers eventually achieved significant gains in pay. Since then, a wave of militant strikes has spread from industry to industry, and this is set to continue. At the same time, South Africa has been downgraded by rating agencies and the value of the Rand has declined substantially. One political scientist captured the position in as follows:

From my own experience, I sense that there is a virtual consensus among overseas opinion-makers (including strategic investors) that our local 'miracle' is scarred beyond redemption under a basically leaderless, corrupt and unreformable government. Events at Marikana made a mockery of our claims to democratic governance, and we remain one of the most unequal countries in the world.¹

This paper examines the Marikana Massacre by using and developing William Sewell's notion of an 'event'.

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'Historical events should be understood', says Sewell, 'as happenings that transform structures'. For him, 'events constitute what historians call "turning points"'. In order to specify the nature and extent of this transformation it is necessary to investigate the preceding structures. Thus, historians must sometimes break from narrative to, as he puts it, 'analyze ... relationships that define the nature and the potentialities of the objects and persons about which a story may be told.'² Here, one can add a significant methodological point. The value of an 'event' to a researcher is that it exposes structures that might otherwise remain unseen, or at least reveals which structures, or aspects of structures, are historically important.³ In this way, an event provides a link between agency and structure. It is a seismic episode that produces new faults from existing tectonic stress. While historians have the benefit

of knowing what comes next, and, so, confidently identify their turning points, the contemporary writer is unlikely to know if a second, larger quake will follow the first, so must temper their judgments with words of caution.

Sewell makes the further point that 'details matter: contingent, transient, or seemingly trivial particularities of the situation can have major and lasting effects on subsequent history'.⁴ In this brief account I start with details about the event, the massacre, that seem important; then move to salient structural considerations; and, finally, offer conclusions related to the theme of the conference. All this is done in a manner that, because of space constraints, is inevitably sketchy.

The massacre⁵

On Friday 10 August 2012 rock drill operators at Lonmin went on strike for decent pay. That night they were joined by other workers. Their action was not supported by their union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), and the next day, 3000 of the workers marched to the offices of NUM in an attempt to secure its backing. To their amazement, some

NUM activists guarding the offices shot at the protesters, badly injuring two of them. Exemplifying the importance of 'seemingly trivial particularities', the strikers believed that these two men had been killed. In fear of further attacks, they retreated to the so-called 'mountain' (actually an igneous mound that South African's call a koppie) and some armed themselves with traditional weapons, including spears and machettes. The day after, the 12th, the strikers marched to the NUM office again, this time armed, and although they did not reach their intended destination they killed two security guards in a confrontation along the way. The next day, Monday 13 August, a flying picket of just over a hundred strikers was ambushed by a large contingent of police, who demanded that the workers lay down the weapons. The workers said they would hand these over once they got back to the mountain, but feared they might be attacked by NUM if they gave them in then. At this point the police announced they would count to ten, after which they would shoot at the workers. After the workers began to leave, singing and in tight formation, the police opened fire, killing three men. In the melee two police were hacked to death.⁶

Following failed negotiations, on Thursday 16 August a small army of police attacked the workers as they came down from the mountain. They used barbed wire, rubber bullets, tear gas, stun grenades, water cannon, galloping horses, fast-moving armoured vehicles, helicopters, and, most importantly, sharp ammunition fired by automatic weapons. TV viewers around the world watched the slaughter of some of these men. Twenty workers were killed in a few minutes. However, the media failed to provide the workers' account of what happened and the police's version prevailed. On Monday 20 August I returned to Marikana with two fieldworkers. Interviewing miners we learned that there had been a second site of killings, about three hundred meters from what came to be known as 'Site One'. This was a low koppie that we named the Killing Koppie and the Marikana Inquiry called Site Two. Here workers had been surrounded and 14 were shot dead.⁷

Culpability

The police killed all 34 of the people who died in the massacre, and no police were injured in the process. The police claim that they acted self-defence. Even if there

were an element of truth in this, it would not, in my view, justify the disproportionate use of force or the permission that was given to shoot at the workers. It certainly does not explain the killings at Site Two, where workers were fleeing from the bloodshed at Site One, nor the fact that many workers were shot in the back and others had multiple bullet wounds. Had the police wanted, they could have dispersed the gathering with few or no fatalities by using rubber bullets, tear gas and water canon fired from the safety of armoured vehicles or helicopters. This is a fairly common approach to public order policing in South Africa. Events could have been filmed and arrests made later. But rather than use public order police, special para-military units were deployed, and it was these that were responsible for the deaths. The decision to use this task force armed with automatic weapons and to mobilize police from around the country was taken at a very high level, and it is highly possible that at least one cabinet member was involved. A judicial inquiry on the massacre has revealed that police tampered with evidence by placing traditional weapons beside dead bodies; that the police has failed to provide video footage of key events; and that a written instruction signed by the national chief of police was doctored, possibly to protect the Minister of Police. In all of this it is worth keeping in mind the words of Ronnie Kasrills, a former post-apartheid Minister of Intelligence:

These people were hardly occupying some strategic point, some vital highway, a key city square. They were not holding hostages. They were not even occupying mining property. Why risk such a manoeuvre other than to drive the strikers back to work at all costs on behalf of the bosses who were anxious to resume profit making operations.⁸

The police operation would not have been necessary if Lonmin had been willing to talk with its workers. The company attempted to deny any responsibility for the massacre by claiming that the conflict was about inter-union rivalry between the established union, NUM, which had majority membership, and the smaller Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). But the strike and the occupation of the mountain united members from both unions. Moreover, the company had only recently agreed a pay increase for RDOs, which it

negotiated with a non-union workers' committee, rather than with NUM (as dictated by collective bargaining procedures), so it had no reason in principle for not negotiating again with the unofficial committee that was leading the new action. The pay increase agreed with RDOs was introduced because Lonmin, the third largest platinum producer, was losing RDOs to its larger neighbours, Angloplats and Impala. But it was worried that if it acceded to the large increase demanded by the August strikers this would undermine its position relative to these competitors. That is, it was inter-company rivalry rather than inter-union rivalry that sparked the tinder leading onto the massacre. In practice, the company provided wide-ranging logistical support to the police, including an operations room and base camp, transport, access to its own intelligence, information from cameras positioned around the mine (there were well over two-hundred of these apparently), back-up from mine security, a helicopter, ambulances and medical support, and a detention centre for arrested strikers.

While NUM was not directly involved in the massacre, unlike Lonmin, its role must be questioned. Many workers we interviewed complained bitterly about the union, which they said was corrupt, a claim justified by other evidence. Leading shop stewards were paid at a level three times that of ordinary workers, and their accompanying perks and life styles distanced them from ordinary workers. It was subsequently revealed that top union leaders receive salaries from the mining companies.⁹ Most of the RDOs were members of NUM, but on 10 August local leaders of the union attempted to get workers to break the strike and return to work.¹⁰ They claimed the stoppage was in breach of collective bargaining and was not protected in law, and they saw this as more important than accountability to their members. The next day, when NUM activists fired on strikers, some of those attacked were their own members. On Sunday 12 August, the NUM President spoke with the Minister of Police, demanding that he take tough action against the strikers, and the following day the union's general secretary put out a statement appealing for 'the deployment of the Special Task Force or the South African Defence Force as a matter of urgency.' On 16 August ten of the 34 people killed were members of NUM, but

the union has never condemned the police responsible for this murder.

Structural considerations

Underlying the dispute is a huge economic and cultural gap between Lonmin and its workforce. For the employers, pay rises could only be justified if they were linked to increased production, or inflation, or staff retention or, perhaps higher profits. The workers we interviewed saw things differently. Some were aware that senior executives could be paid more than two hundred times as much as ordinary workers and that high profits had been invested in new fixed capital, hence increased production, rather than in rewards for those whose labour made this expansion possible. For others, injustice was quite parochial – it was about unequal treatment of different RDOs. The inflation experienced by workers - who spent high proportions of their income on food, transport and medicines - was not reflected in official statistics. Moreover, pay took no account of workers, most of whom were migrants, having two wives and two families, one in the rural areas from which they came and one in the area where they worked. Both spaces experienced exceptionally high unemployment for women, higher than in most urban areas, so the workers' pay was stretched a long way. Further, the workers, RDOs specifically, were not rewarded for the extremely arduous and dangerous work they undertook. However, pay acted as a lightning rod, an issue around which workers could mobilize, but it was not their only gripe. They also complained about daily humiliation by supervisors and managers, and

much of this was racialized: most of the senior executives were white and all, or virtually all, the manual workers were black.

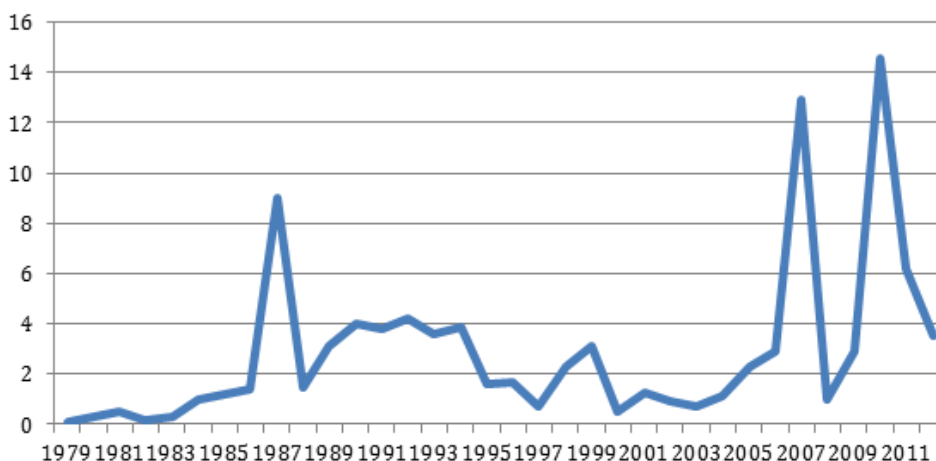
These rifts are similar on other mines and exist to some extent elsewhere in South African life. The massacre revealed how little things have changed in the post-apartheid years, and sometimes they have changed for the worse. The gini co-efficient for income is higher than in 1994, as is the official rate of unemployment. The labour utilization rate stands at about 40 percent, meaning that six out of ten adults of working age are not employed to any degree, and among the rest roughly a third are not regularly employed. Failure to make improvements has been underpinned by neo-liberal economic policies that still, to a large extent, prevail in South Africa. Indeed with the end of apartheid, the state withdrew from some sectors of the economy. Continuities with the past exist elsewhere. For instance, the massacre has revealed that many of the most senior police have held positions since the war in the townships in the 1980s.

The gulf between union leaders and members is especially profound in the case of NUM, but it exists elsewhere too. A *Workers Survey* commissioned by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the main union federation, which was published in 2012, provided figures for corruption. It showed that 43 per cent of the NUM members surveyed knew examples of corruption in their union, and that 20 per cent had first-hand experience. For the COSATU unions as a whole, the figures were 34 per cent and 13 per cent. In other unions, too, top leaders

are paid high salaries and some receive extra income from their employers. One is reminded of *The History of Trade Unionism* by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, first published in 1894, where the authors describe union leaders moving to a villa in a pleasant suburb, where they mix with the middle-classes, including some employers. But workers are increasingly dissatisfied with their unions. In the past two weeks I have spoken to leaders of two left-wing unions who both, without prodding, said they were now under pressure from their members. They were not hostile to this, but they were slightly troubled by the new mood. In one instance, there had been a national bargaining conference where workers had spoken openly about doing a 'Marikana' if necessary. That is, rather than demoralizing workers, the massacre has become a watchword for defiance.

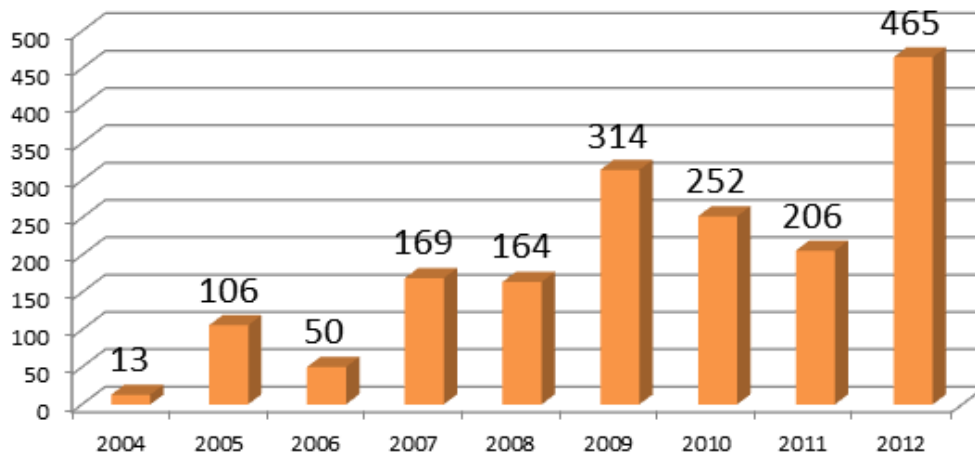
Working-class unrest has been developing for some years, and this is reflected in the graph below, which shows days lost through strike for the years since 1979. 1987, the year of a great miners' strike, had been the record year, but it was eclipsed in 2007 and again in 2011. In both years there were massive public sector workers strikes, with according to a student, Claire Ceruti, who has investigated both actions, a much higher level of grass roots activism in the second stoppage.¹¹ 2011 saw the fourth most strike days on record, and analysts expect that 2013 will be higher, especially if it includes, as seems likely, a protected strike in the mining industry. Since 2005, South Africa has almost certainly experienced a higher level of strike action than any other country in the world.

Strike days per year (million), 1979-2012



Data source: Andrew Levy Employment Publications cc

Community protests per year, 2004-2012



Source: Rebellion of the Poor project, University of Johannesburg

But militancy is not confined to the workplace. Since about 2004, there has been a veritable Rebellion of the Poor, manifested mainly in numerous community protests. I have suggested that South Africa is the protest capital of the world, with, very possibly, more protests per capita than anywhere else.¹² Some of these actions involve less than a hundred people blocking a major highway for a few hours, but some are local insurrections with over 10,000 participants and barricades that exclude the police from working-class neighbourhoods for two or more days. Most of the protests are over issues related to service delivery but, as with strikes over pay, this can be a focus for wider dissatisfaction. Unemployed youth are in the forefront of many protests and unemployment is clearly a major issue. The police have recorded over one thousand illegal gatherings per year in recent years, but do not provide the details. Together with a small team, I have been collecting press reports of protests and we have produced the graph above. For each protest we know the place and date it occurred and often much more than this. The graph reveals a growing number of protests. Moreover, our data shows that the proportion of these protests that are peaceful has now been overtaken by those in our other two categories: violent protests (meaning violence against people or property) and disruptive protests (using burning tyres and so on).¹³ Again people are aware of Marikana, and defiance is reflected in the fact that we now

know of four new informal settlements where residents have called their village 'Marikana'.

There is still a high measure of separation between workers/strikes and the poor/community protests. But, as I have argued elsewhere, this is not a class difference – workers and the unemployed are found in the same households and neighbourhoods – rather it is about 'different relationships to the means and ends of protest'.¹⁴ However, there are a growing number of examples of community participation in strikes. This has been the case in some of the platinum battles, with farm labourers in the Western Cape, and, most recently, road blockages in support of workers who clean toilets in the informal settlements around Cape Town. The *Workers Survey*, mentioned earlier, showed that 25 per cent of COSATU's members had participated in a community protest during the preceding four years. This included 30 per cent of the members of the municipal workers' union and 27 per cent of NUM's membership.

The political question and democratic struggle

So far, the main response of the African National Congress, the governing party, has been to tighten control over politics, threatening force if necessary. In this, they have worked closely with their ally the South African Congress Party (SACP), whose leaders are government ministers. Recently Cyril Ramaphosa, now deputy president of the ANC (but formerly a

general-secretary of NUM and, until Marikana, a director of Lonmin), said that Rustenburg, the area in which the platinum mines are located, should be 'reclaimed' by the ANC and NUM.¹⁵ Given that NUM has been marginalized on the platinum mines following Marikana, this can be read as some kind of threat. Soon after, Blade Nzimande, general-secretary of the SACP, told a large gathering of NUM shop stewards that AMCU was not a union, it was a group of 'vigilantes and liars' – hardly language designed to further the development of peace on the mines.¹⁶

This approach has led to rifts. Significantly, the leader of the ANC Youth League, Julius Malema, was expelled from the party at its recent conference. Malema, a left populist, was hugely popular among young people, the unemployed in particular, and this constituency has now been disenfranchised. The final nail in Malema's coffin came with Marikana. On 18 August 2012, he addressed a rally of about 12,000 strikers and their families, lambasting capitalism and Zuma, the president, in terms that were often witty and always powerful. In a memorial meeting soon afterwards, he was the keynote speaker when four ministers were chased out of the hall.¹⁷ Then, at the invitation of workers, he went from mine to mine, encouraging workers to strike for their rights. Zwelenzima Vavi, general secretary of COSATU, is another target of the Zuma loyalists, and specifically SACP aligned union leaders (including

NUM's). Vavi has also made strong statements, this time criticizing the gap between unions and their members, union corruption, Zuma, and his opponents in the COSATU leadership. It is possible that he will be removed from the leadership of the federation at the upcoming meeting of its Central Executive Committee. If this does happen it may presage a split in COSATU.

In these circumstances one might expect a growth of the Marxist left in South Africa. This has happened to some degree, but that degree is small. The main organization is the Democratic Left Front, which combines activists with backgrounds in the SACP, various Trotskyist organizations and environmentalist movements. Its main support comes from local social movements, many of which have been involved in the community protests. It also includes the leader of the Marikana Solidarity Campaign and has gained some support among members of the workers' committees on the platinum mines.

However, because of the size of the SACP, with a membership counted in tens of thousands, it is difficult for a small Marxist party to make headway. It is unlikely to make much impact in the general election, scheduled for May 2014. Support for the ANC is definitely declining, especially among young people, but the beneficiaries will probably be the main opposition party, the bourgeois white-led Democratic Alliance, and various other well-established organizations, including the United Democratic Movement, which is based in the Eastern Cape, where many Marikana workers have their rural home. The other development will probably be an increase in the number of abstentions, especially among the youth. This is hardly an optimistic ending, but the trend is clear. There is massive anger against the government, possibilities for major fragments from the ANC – such as the Malema and Vavi supporters – developing new political projects, majority disaffection from the ANC among the youth, a relatively united Marxist alternative, the existence of old black consciousness and pan-Africanist organizations, and most

importantly rising levels of struggles and some convergence of battles involving workers and the poor. All of this has been clarified, sharpened and reinforced by Marikana, an important event, and probably a turning point in South African history.

Notes

* This paper was first presented at a conference on 'Return of the Political Question: Crisis of Representation and Democratic Struggle in Africa', Dakar, 22-24 May 2013.

1. Philip Frankel (2013), 'Perpetuating a vile pattern of violence: abnormal is normal on SA mines', *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 19 May, p. 11.
2. William H. Sewell Jr (2005), *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, especially pp. 218-9.
3. 'Events' vary in scale and reveal more or less of underlying structures. Likewise, our understanding of 'turning points' needs to be circumscribed. There are turning points in the histories of families, of institutions etc. and the kind of events that mark these moments will be different from those that concern Sewell.
4. Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 219.
5. Most details in this section are taken from Peter Alexander et al (2013), *Marikana: A View from the Mountain and a Case to Answer*, revised edition, Johannesburg: Jacana Media. The first edition of this book was published by Jacana in 2012 and by Bookmarks (London) in 2013. The second edition will be co-published by Ohio University Press (Athens), and is being translated into German and French.
6. In addition to the killings mentioned, in the days before the massacre a further three workers, NUM members, were killed. Little is known about their deaths.
7. Reported in *Socialist Worker*, 21 August 2013.
8. *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 26 August 2013.
9. Greg Marinovich, 'Conflict of interest, inc.: Mining unions' leaders were representing

their members while corporations' pay', *Daily Maverick*, 13 May 2013.

10. The Marikana Inquiry heard that 52% were NUM, 35% were AMCU and 13% were no union.
11. See Claire Ceruti (2012), 'Unfolding Contradictions on the 'Zuma Movement': The Alliance and the Public Sector Strikes of 2007 and 2010'. In Marcelle C. Dawson & Luke Sinwell, *Contesting Transformation: Popular Resistance in Twenty-first-century South Africa*. London: Pluto Press.
12. Peter Alexander (2012), 'A massive rebellion of the poor.' *Mail & Guardian*, 13 April, p. 34.
13. Carin Runciman, Trevor Ngwane and Peter Alexander (2012), 'Developing a Protest Event Analysis for South Africa's Rebellion of the Poor'. Paper presented to 18th Conference on Alternative Futures and Popular Protest, Manchester 25-27 March.
14. Peter Alexander and Peter Pfaffe (forthcoming) 'Social Relationships to the Means and Ends of Protest in South Africa's Ongoing Rebellion of the Poor: the Balfour Insurrections.' *Social Movement Studies*. See also, Peter Alexander (2010) 'Rebellion of the Poor: South Africa's Service Delivery Protests – a Preliminary Analysis,' *Review of African Political Economy* 123: 25-40; Peter Alexander (2012), 'Barricades, Ballots and Experimentation: Making Sense of the 2011 Local Government Elections with a Social Movement Lens'. In Marcelle C. Dawson & Luke Sinwell, *Contesting Transformation: Popular Resistance in Twenty-first-century South Africa*. London: Pluto Press; 2013: Peter Alexander, Claire Ceruti, Keke Motseke, Mosa Phadi and Kim Wale (2013), *Class in Soweto*. Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press.
15. Gia Nicolaidis (2013), 'Ramaphosa: Rustenburg belongs to NUM', *Eyewitness News*, 2 May.
16. Rapule Tabane (2013), 'AMCU's no union, it's just vigilantes and liars, say alliance bosses', *Mail and Guardian*, 17 May, p. 2.
17. Charl du Plessis (2012), 'Malema steal the show at Marikana memorial', *City Press* (online), 23 August.



Recognitions

Francis Nyamnjoh: African Hero of the Year*

Former Head of the CODESRIA Publications Programme, Professor Francis B. Nyamnjoh has been named the 'Africa Hero of the Year 2013'. This recognition and the prize-giving was part of this year's annual African Hero Day celebration of the African Students Union of Ohio University, USA. Each year, the union honours one person from the African continent who has made a significant contribution to the lives of its inhabitants. The award ceremony took place in Athens, United States on 16 March 2013.

As the award plaque reads, Professor Nyamnjoh has been so honoured in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the advancement of Africa through his scholarship and teaching practice.

Anthropologist Nyamnjoh follows a long line of distinguished African Heroes, the first of whom was former South African President Nelson Mandela in 1993. According to the award-winner, 'The award means a lot to me, for the simple fact that it comes from students who have followed my work from a distance and are able to appreciate it This is most humbling and

encouraging. I hope I am able to live up to the challenge they have thrown my way'.

Francis Nyamnjoh currently chairs the Social Anthropology section of UCT's School of African and Gender Studies, Anthropology and Linguistics and boasts a prolific publications profile. His impressive bibliography includes work on media and democracy; mobility and citizenship, and of the social shaping of information and communications technologies.

According to him:

There are African scholars and scholarship of global stature in all disciplines, and Africa is increasingly the continent to turn to for new ways of theorising and understanding our world. It offers fascinating everyday examples of the complex, nuanced and accommodating negotiation and navigation of myriad influences by ordinary people.

Below is an excerpt from his Acceptance Speech, which vividly reflects his ever strong confidence in Africa's continued contribution to scholarship, globally.

African Hero of the Year 2013

Nyamnjoh's Acceptance Speech**

As far as Africa and being African is concerned, this award pushes me to revisit an important scholarly debate on Africanness we had in the pages of the CODESRIA Bulletin during my days as Head of Publications. What does it mean to be African? Who qualifies to claim Africa? Is being African or claiming Africa an attribute of race and skin colour (black, white, yellow), birth (umbilical cord, birth certificates, identity cards, passports), geography (physical spaces, home village), history (encounters), culture (prescriptive specificities), economics (availability and affordability, wealth and deprivation), sociology (social configurations and action, inclusion and exclusion), psychology (mind sets), philosophy (world views), politics (power relations), or collective memory (shared experiences and aspirations) – to name just a few of the many possibilities that present themselves? These are questions which have deep roots in debates on citizenship and identity – and, therefore, in the definition of rights, entitlements, duties, responsibilities, and in our case, the very idea of heroism.

The questions of course, are, not uniquely African – indeed, similar issues have been posed and debated with considerable passion in other parts of the world both historically and currently, and contestations around them have also often been played out in violent communal confrontations, civil wars, and inter-state conflicts. And while they may seem straight forward to answer, the questions have been rendered much more complex by the dynamic inter-play of race, ethnicity, gender and religion in the structuring and exercise of power and opportunity.

Precisely for this reason, they are not questions that can be addressed in the abstract.

How one answers the questions that are generated by any attempt at grappling with Africanness is not only situationally determined, but is also a function of how selective one is with regard to the various indicators available. Some individuals and communities on the continent and elsewhere might claim Africanness for various personal, collective, historical and political reasons. But it is not always straight forward to say which of these claims may be legitimate and why, especially as identity is both how one sees oneself, and how one is seen and categorised by others, particularly where the absorption of new populations is involved. This is all the more so as identities are themselves always in mutation, shaped as they are by changing historical contexts and circumstances, including internal and international migrations, shifts in social power relations, and so on.

It is, however, safe to say that to most ordinary people in Africa, Africanness is more than just a birth certificate, an identity card, or a passport – documents that many of them may not have, even as others coming from elsewhere and waving the flag of Africanness may have all of these documents and more. For the ordinary person, to be African is not simply to be labelled or merely defined as such. It is to be a social actor enmeshed in a particular context that has been and continues to be shaped by a unique history that, among others, is marked by unequal encounters and misrepresentations often informed by the

Recognitions

arrogance and ignorance of the economically and politically powerful who take the liberty also to arrogate a cultural superiority to themselves. For the masses of Africans, Africa is above all a lived reality, one that is constantly shaped and reshaped by their toil and sweat as subjected and devalued humanity, even as they struggle to live in dignity and to transform their societies progressively. For these people, the fact of their Africanity is neither in question nor a question.

In CODESRIA circles where Africanity has been debated at length, pan-African dimensions of Africanity have been emphasized. Given my personal experience of multiple dimensions of being African, and in view of the fact that my election as African Hero for 2013 is by a Pan-African Student Union based in the United States of America and in regular conversation with other (students and Africans) on the continent and in the diaspora, permit me to dwell a little on the pan-African dimensions of being African.

To me, pan-Africanism is best seen and articulated as a flexible, inclusive, dynamic and complex aspiration in identity making and belonging. Pan-Africanism, far from promising a single identity, is about offering a mental space for disparate identities to co-exist in freedom and dignity. Pan-Africanism emphasises African unity beyond identities confined by geography, primordialism and narrow nationalism, and champions socio-political inclusiveness for all those who willingly claim or are compelled to identify with the 'Black' race and with a place called 'Africa'. As a quest for a global Black or African community, Pan-Africanism is an aspirational project towards a world informed by solidarities and identities shaped by a humanity of common predicaments. It is the glue to hold together the dreams and aspirations of Blacks divided, among other things, by geography, ethnicity, class, gender, age, culture or religion. Far from overlooking the divisions that these factors give rise to amongst Blacks locally and globally, Pan-Africanism promotes a strategic essentialism around the fact and experience of being Black in a world of hierarchies of purity shaped by being White. The fact of the forced or voluntary mobility that has made of being Black and African a global and dynamic reality, means pan-Africanism as an ideology and an aspiration is realisable anywhere in the world.

Little wonder that Pan-Africanism is claimed not only on the continent called Africa, but globally. Indeed, as a movement, Pan-Africanism originated not in Africa, but in the West Indies, amid feelings of nostalgia about and occasional dreams of an eventual return to a lost home land – mother Africa. We are all familiar with the literature and music of nostalgia and dreams of an idealised Africa by diasporic writers and artists claiming descent with the continent. Just as we are familiar with the growing number of African-Americans who are tracing their DNA ancestry back to various regions and countries in Africa.

If being African or pan-African is permanent work in progress, is there any sense in defining and confining Africa and Africans to what Joseph CONRAD infamously termed 'the Dark Continent'? And what is there to stop Europeans, Asians and others from claiming their places in the African sun through relationships

with the places and peoples currently associated in problematic essentialist terms with the labels 'Africa' and 'African'?

When I shared with your President Kingsley Antwi-Boasiako, a number of papers I had published, to choose from as a theme for my short address to you this evening, he settled on: *'Potted Plants in Greenhouses': A Critical Reflection on the Resilience of Colonial Education in Africa*. This is a 15,000 word long paper. It would take me the whole night to read it out to you. Given we've got pots of food and exciting music to keep our evening alive and entertaining, I have opted to share with you only the highlights of potted plants in greenhouses, with a firm promise to make the published version available to whoever wants to read the full paper.

Education is the inculcation of facts as knowledge and also a set of values used in turn to appraise the knowledge in question. When the values are not appropriate or broadly shared, the knowledge acquired is rendered irrelevant and becomes merely cosmetic or even violent. In Africa, the colonial conquest of Africans – body, mind and soul – has led to real or attempted epistemicide – the decimation or near complete killing and replacement of endogenous epistemologies with the epistemological paradigm of the conqueror. The result has been education through schools and other formal institutions of learning in Africa largely as a process of making infinite concessions to the outside – mainly the western world. Such education has tended to emphasize mimicry over creativity, and the idea that little worth learning about, even by Africans, can come from Africa. It champions static dichotomies and boundedness of cultural worlds and knowledge systems. It privileges teleology and analogy over creative negotiation by Africans of the multiple encounters, influences and perspectives evident throughout their continent. It thus impoverishes the complex realities of those it attracts or represses as students.

'Potted Plants in Greenhouses...' draws on Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino* and other critical voices to argue that education in Africa is victim of a resilient colonial and colonizing epistemology, which takes the form of science as ideology and hegemony. Postcolonial African elite justify the resilience of this epistemology and the education it inspires with rhetoric on the need to be competitive internationally. The outcome is often a devaluation of African creativity, agency and value systems, and an internalized sense of inadequacy. Education has become a compulsion for Africans to 'lighten their darkness' both physically and metaphorically in the interest of and for the gratification of colonizing and hegemonic others. The paper calls for an epistemological conviviality through the creative reconciliation of the myriad ways of being African epitomised by the competing and often conflictual ways of being African as depicted by Okot p'Bitek in the characters of Ocol, Lawino and Clementine. Such reconciliation requires an articulation of being African that is simultaneously cognizant of history and the ethnographic present, structure and agency, blood and choice, elite and non-elite, cosmopolitan and particular, tradition and modernity. It calls for listening to ordinary men and women who, like p'Bitek's Lawino, are challenging the prescriptive gaze and grip of emasculated elite, while at the same time imploring them to marry recognition and relevance, continuity and discontinuity, dependence and independence in the interest of accommodation as an external aspiration. The paper thus argues

for recognition of ongoing popular creative processes of negotiation as Africans seek conviviality and interdependence between competing and conflicting influences.

I hope these reflections are in tune with the reading of my work and scholarship that convinced you to elect me African Hero for 2013. Thank you immensely for this award. It means a lot to me. It is an honour I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Notes

- * This is an edited version of an article that appeared in University of Cape Town, Newsroom & Publications, Daily News, 11 April 2013, under the title 'Nyamnjoh is 2013's "African Hero"'.
** Excerpt from Nyamnjoh's Acceptance Speech at "African Hero" 2013 Award Ceremony.

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Assié-Lumumba Elected to CIES Leadership*

Professor N'Dri Assié-Lumumba, a member of the Scientific Committee of CODESRIA, was recently elected Vice President of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) for 2013 – 14 and will assume the society's presidency in 2015 – 16.

Assié-Lumumba is a Professor of African and Diaspora Education at the Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, Ithaca, United States. Her research areas cover comparative and international education, social institutions, African social history and the study of gender. She came to Cornell in 1991 as a Fulbright Senior Research Fellow and Ford Foundation/Africana Studies Fellow.

The new Vice President says she is particularly humbled by the fact that she is the first Cornell faculty and African scholar to be elected to the highly exalted leadership position of CIES.

N'Dri Assié-Lumumba is an author and editor of several books, including *Cyberspace, Distance Learning, and Higher Education in Developing Countries: Old and Emergent Issues of Access, Pedagogy and Knowledge Production*, *Higher Education in Africa: Crises, Reforms and Transformation* and *Women and Higher Education in Africa: Reconceptualizing*

Gender-Based Human Capabilities and Upgrading Human Rights to Knowledge.

Founded in 1956, CIES is the premier professional organization for scholars in the field of comparative and international education. It fosters cross-cultural understanding, scholarship, academic achievement and societal development through the international study of educational ideas, systems and practices. Its membership includes nearly 2,500 academics, practitioners and students from around the world, and about 1,000 institutional members, primarily academic libraries and international organizations.

The election results were presented March 15 to the CIES membership at the society's 2013 annual conference in New Orleans.

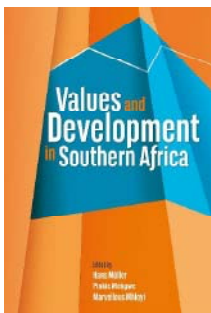
CODESRIA congratulates Professor N'Dri Assié-Lumumba on this election which we look forward to as yet a springboard to more honours and recognition.

Note

- * This is an edited version of an article which was first published in *Cornell Chronicle*, April 17, 2013.

Values and Development in Southern Africa

Edited by Hans Müller, Pinkie Mekgwe & Marvellous Mhloyi



Development has been on Africa's agenda for a long time but progress has been both varied and limited, partly due to the diverse level of the discussions on the challenges and the interventions for tackling them. Africa's greatest challenge is the uneven development within and between its countries, and the pressing issues of extreme poverty in southern Africa, and the continent as a whole. Poverty causes its victims to suffer social exclusion and political repression. In addition, societies that experience poverty are also mostly under continuous threat of ecological disasters and diseases. All poor people are therefore plagued by loss of freedom and dignity, and are often unable to participate effectively in the political, economic, legal and social processes of their countries.

This book focuses on the social and cultural dimensions of development dynamics and, in particular, the role of values in shaping development. Values are at the core of the hopes and aspirations of individuals, communities and societies. The book therefore explains the values that motivate and inform African communities and societies, with a view to facilitating a dialogue about sustainable development in Africa among academics, intellectuals, policy and decisionmakers, and the communities. It also investigates the social and cultural dynamics of development in Africa, as a better alternative to earlier studies that blame African culture for poverty and exclude the people of Africa in their definition of developments in the continent.

Tributes

Professor Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane: An Obituary

Professor Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane joined the league of ancestors on the evening of Friday 12 April 2013. He was four months shy of his 83rd birthday. It is often said that when an elder dies in a village, a whole library is burnt down.¹ With Prof. Magubane we have a rich library of his scholarly works, political writings, a memoir, and several interviews.

For a generation of African students and scholars in North America, Magubane's 'A critical look at indices used in the study of social change in colonial Africa' (1971, *Critical Anthropology*) would have the same insurrectional impact that Archie Mafeje's 'Ideology of Tribalism' (1970, *Journal of Modern African Studies*) had on the other side of the Atlantic. The paper was sent to fifty scholars for review, with over twenty written reviews (Editorial Note, *Critical Anthropology*, 12[4-5]: 419). Often understood as a relentless (even polemical) critique of the Manchester School of Anthropology associated with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (RLI) in the former Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), 'A critical look...' is better understood as an uncompromising re-centring of the African experience in narratives on Africa, especially African in the context of settler-colonialism. As Magubane noted in his memoir, *My Life and Times* (2010: 252), his encounters early in his academic career with the presentation of Africa and Africans as what others acted upon instigated in him a passion 'to rectify the situation in my scholarship in line with the post-colonial scholarship that was evolving in Africa.'

Whether in his earlier works—such as his master's thesis dissertation at the University of Natal, on sports and politics in the townships of Durban, his doctoral thesis on African-American consciousness of Africa at the University of California, Los Angeles and his early scholarly journal articles such as 'Crisis of African Sociology' (*East African* 5[2], 1968—or his subsequent works such as *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa* (1979), *The Making of a Racist State* (1996), *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other* (2007), Magubane's driving motive was the centring of the African experience and the re-affirmation of the agency of Africans. The history of the savannah plains will not be that of the hunters alone but of the lions as well.

To understand Magubane and the corpus of his intellectual contribution to South African liberation scholarship on the one hand, and African Sociology on the other, one needs to locate him within the contending forces that defined 20th century South Africa, the African-American context of the 1960s, and the continental African anti-colonial movements. For a person who regularly described himself as 'lucky' and who 'happened to be at the right place at the right time,' Magubane was as much a

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product of his time as he was an active force in setting his own stars. As with the 20th century story of his home-country, South Africa, the story of Bernard Magubane is one of triumph over immense adversity.

Born on 26 August 1930, within two generations of the colonial dispossession of the historical Zulu nation, the context of his birth and early childhood epitomised the eviscerating impacts of settler colonialism. His grandparents lived in the Zulu nation ruled by Cetshwayo kaMpande. By the time of Magubane's birth, colonial dispossession meant that his parents, Xegwana and Nozibukutho kaKhumalo, were squatters on a 'White-owned' farm near Colenso, in the KwaZulu Natal Midlands. His father was a farm worker, who was also a seasonal migrant worker on the Durban docks during the dry season. An altercation between his father and the farmer forced Xegwana to flee Colenso with his family to Durban.² The family finally settled down in Chesterville, a new township in Durban. The working class environment of his home³ and the township, and the settler-colonial context of dispossession and pervasive racism would provide the vital resources that framed Magubane's intellectual approach. It was also a context in which radical trade union activism and the African National Congress-led resistance to the racist settler-colonial order meshed in the leading personalities and issues. African working class struggle was one side of a coin. The other side was the resistance against racial oppression and settler-colonialism. This thread runs through all of Magubane's intellectual works.

Had his father not fled the Colenso farm with the family in 1937, Magubane would probably have grown up a non-literate second generation farm worker. The restricted educational circumstances in Durban at the end of the 1930s and early 1940s regardless, the Magubane children proved to be quite precocious. Bernard progressed from Mount Carmel to Mazenod, and then the teacher's college at Mariannhill. Again, in all probability, Magubane would have settled into the life of a junior school teacher but the rise of the National Party to power in 1948 raised new challenges. Its heightened pursuit of racist policies, especially the Bantu Education policies, would set the limit on the options available in a teaching career for Magubane and many in his generation. It was Johnny Makhathini who raised the challenge to Bernard Magubane and others in their circle of friends in Durban in 1953, but it was the guidance of Mazisi Kunene that led Magubane to sit for the matriculation examinations and eventually gain admission to the Non-European section of the University of Natal in 1954. University education was a channel of escape and an act of resistance against the rising tide of National Party totalising racist policies.

Already married to the love of his life, Thembe (nee Kaula) and a growing family of his own, Magubane went to complete his

junior bachelor's, Honours, and Master's degrees in Sociology at Natal. It was during this period that Magubane met and developed a life-long friendship with Leo Kuper, a Professor of Sociology at Natal at the time. Kuper supervised his Honours and Master's theses. Magubane and Tony Ngubo worked as field researchers for Kuper in materials that would be published as *An African Bourgeoisie* (Kuper, 1965). While diplomas have to be won, much of Magubane's education at this time was facilitated by anti-Apartheid resistance taking place outside the classroom and the analyses in publications like the *Guardian*, *Advance*, *New Age*, and *Fighting Talk*. However, the classroom provided him groundings in the works of leading 'bourgeois' sociologists, having to read Max Weber and Emile Durkheim in the original. The dissonance between the debate going on in his classrooms and the lived experiences and struggles of people in his neighbourhoods is one thing that Magubane would reflect on then and later in life as disconcerting.⁴ From Zambia to Storrs (Connecticut, USA), Magubane's pedagogic practices would be shaped by the need to avert such dissonance.

In another instance of being at the right place at the right time, the opportunity to continue his studies in the United States came through an encounter with an American who was passing through the University of Natal at the time Magubane was completing his master's thesis work. He and Tony Ngubo were invited to apply for postgraduate scholarship to study in the US; a scholarship both received. Leo Kuper had left Natal in 1961 for UCLA and facilitated Magubane's graduate school placement at the UCLA Sociology department.

The delay in Magubane's departure (on 21 December 1961) was in large measure a micro-level impact of Dr H.F. Verwoerd's infamous question: 'What is the use of teaching 'the Bantu child mathematics?' If teaching the African child mathematics was pointless, what would be the point of giving an African in his early thirties a passport to go for doctoral studies in the US? It took the intervention of several individuals and organisation for Magubane to secure the travel passport. The passport, valid until November 1964, was not re-issued until the 1990s. When Magubane left in December 1961, he was forced to leave behind his parents, wife, and three daughters. Thembie had also left teaching to train as a nurse in the search to escape being tools for delivering the National Party's Bantu Education programme. The family was not to be re-united until Thembie and their three daughters joined him in Los Angeles in the Spring of 1965.

A student on a shoe-string scholarship, Magubane combined studying with holding down multiple low-paying jobs. He completed his Master's degree in Sociology in 1963 and his PhD in Sociology in 1966. In early 1967, Magubane took up a teaching position at the new University of Zambia. His initial stay in the United States would form the third plank of the intellectual influence on his scholarship. While Magubane's exposure to Marxist literature in the 1950s was through the contributions to the radical newspapers and magazines, it was at UCLA that he would read Marx and Engels in their own words for the first time. But while these would be influential, it was the writings of W.E.B Du Bois and the political struggles of the African American communities that shaped his thinking on race and class. He did his doctoral thesis on African-American consciousness of Africa (published as *Ties that Bind* in 1987). The period of graduate studies abroad was not a time of

distancing from the political struggles in South Africa. In 1962, with Martin Legassick and Tony Ngubo, Magubane organised the earliest anti-apartheid picketing of the South African consulate in the West Coast. It was also a time for widening the pan-African network of friends and colleagues. Both would stand him in good stead later in life.

When Magubane relocated to Zambia in 1967, to take up a lecturing post in the new Department of Sociology at the University of Zambia, it was a decision he made against more financially rewarding job offers in the United States. The three years he spent in Zambia were not only exceedingly rewarding intellectually, they would insert him and his family in the growing network of ANC leadership in exile and South African exile community in Lusaka. Magubane had joined the ANC in 1951 in Durban.⁵ As Magubane would say, it was another case of being in the right place at the right time. The experience of living and teaching in Zambia would bring Magubane face to face with the existential implication of colonial Anthropology as well as the imperative of creative pedagogy when available materials are largely irrelevant to the context in which he was training students. The first set of his scholarly works in the period include 'Crisis of African Sociology' (1968), 'Pluralism and Conflict Situations in Africa: A New Look' (1969) and 'A Critical Look at the Indices Used in the Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa' (1971). They would bring Magubane early scholarly attention and a measure of academic superstardom.

Politically—and unanticipated at the time of his departure for Lusaka—the period 1967 to 1969 firmly placed him within the leadership circles of the African National Congress. O.R. Tambo would spend time at the Magubanes'—initially for space and time to work while the family was at work or school, and later to stay-over. Years later, Magubane would speak glowingly about the humanity of O.R. Tambo—not simply as one who led the Movement through the dark days of exile but about the humanity of a person who would help the Magubane girls with their Mathematics homework and do dishes with the family after dinner. Jack Simon and Ray Alexander would become close friends and intellectual sounding boards. Magubane would also speak with deep affection and respect for the young activists like Chris Hani and Basil February whom he met in Lusaka. Hani would lead the Luthuli Detachment in the Wankie Campaign and February would be the first martyr of that campaign.

From serving on the production team of *Mayibuye* journal of the ANC to being a delegate to the 1969 Morogoro Conference of the ANC, the period in Lusaka would serve to firmly ground Magubane's life work within the works of the ANC. In many ways, Magubane saw his intellectual works as the pursuit of the political struggles by means available to a scholar. The Lusaka period was also a time for deepening his intellectual engagement with Marxist writings. This was the period of encounter with Frederick Engel's *The Conditions of the Working Class in England in 1844*—a work that would reinforce Magubane's position that to understand the conditions in South Africa, one needed a global understanding of capitalism and its historical developments. Magubane would go on to publish an article in *Dialectical Anthropology* (1985, No. 10) on the

Tributes

continuing relevance of the work and Engel's 1872 *The Housing Question* to Urban Anthropology.

In 1970, Magubane returned with the family to the United States, initially on a visiting appointment at UCLA but later in the year to a tenure track appointment at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. The UConn appointment, Magubane would argue, was another instance of a fortuitous convergence of events. The invitation to apply for the position at UConn was at the instance of James Faris, who first became aware of Magubane through his works while in Zambia. It was the start of a life-long friendship. Faris and Norman Chance would provide a near ideal environment—politically and intellectually—for the next 27 years that Magubane would spend at Storrs.

The period from 1970 to 1997 marked an immensely productive and politically engaging time for Magubane. In addition to his numerous scholarly works produced, Magubane's two most important books, *The Political Economy of Race and Class* (1979, Monthly Review Press) and *The Making of a Racist State* (1996, African World Press) were released. Several of the articles have been republished in two collections. *South Africa—from Soweto to Uitenhage* (1989, African World Press) is a collection of Magubane's more 'political' writings. *The African Sociology—towards a critical perspective* (2000, African World Press) is a collection of his more 'academic' writings. The more 'political' materials, Magubane would argue, were writings he did to keep himself sane over the long years of exile. The more 'academic' writings were to keep his day-job. Yet, a close reading of both collections would suggest that the scholarly writings were driven by political commitment, as much as the political was driven by intellectual demands.

Magubane's scholarly works contended with the *pluralist* narratives of the 'Liberal White' scholars and Anthropologists and the 'neo-Marxists' as well. The former defined the South African conditions in terms of a 'plural society' and dismissed the relevance of class analysis. For Magubane, it was impossible to speak of the impact of colonialism on the indigenous population or their contemporary situation without confronting the exploitation of the labour-power of the local population. Memory is a weapon of the oppressed in negating efforts to routinize their lived realities. In the new settler-colonial society created, 'white domination was not only economic but political and cultural as well. Any theory of change in the patterns of behaviour of the indigenous population must take into account this total situation' (Magubane 1971: 419). To account for the 'total situation' requires a venture in historical sociology. For Magubane, it is in exploring the history of dispossession and disruption of the human conditions of the indigenous populations that one can account for their social existence in the present.

The neo-Marxists who focused exclusively on class relations fail to address the 'over-determination' of racism (Magubane [1985] 2000: 482). Here, Du Bois (1933: 55) was an important source for Magubane: 'First of all colored labor has no common ground with white labor. No society of technocrats would do more than exploit colored labor in order to raise the status of whites. *No revolt of a white proletariat could be started if its*

object was to make black workers their economic, political and social equals.'⁶ In failing to grapple with the 'over-determination' of racism and the specificity of the 'National Question' in South Africa, the neo-Marxists missed the knob of the situation. The issue, Magubane would argue is not race or class but race and class; in the racist settler-colonial context, racism over-determines class. Much of what passed for the 'workerist' discourse in South African labour historiography, in the 1980s, dismissed this critical element to the South African situation. In *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other* (2007) Magubane assembled the primary sources and arguments that underpinned his analyses since the 1970s.⁷

The undeclared undertone of Magubane's scholarship is the distinction that must be made between 'White' people and others who may be of Caucasian or European descent but firmly rooted in anti-racist traditions and emancipatory politics. 'White' is a category of power rather than phenotype or pigmentation. As a description of skin colour, 'white' is deeply false. Only in the context of racial domination does whiteness acquire its salience as a signifier of power over the 'dispensable Other.'

If Magubane's writings did not reflect the pessimism that sometimes afflicts exile scholars, it is largely because of his proximity to the liberation movements in Southern Africa and the ANC in the particular case of South Africa. His time in Zambia had placed him in close proximity to the leadership of the most prominent liberation movements in Southern Africa. The return to the United States and being at Storrs—with its close proximity to the ANC officials in New York—meant that he maintained a fire-side view and engagement with political works of the liberation movement. Over the years, and increasingly in the 1980s, Magubane would undertake representational duties for the ANC. In addition to the local anti-Apartheid movement in the West Coast, the increasing mobilisation work would bring him into close contact with a wide range of people in the anti-Apartheid community in the United States. Magubane would later serve as a member of the ANC delegation at the July 1987 meeting in Dakar with a delegation of Afrikaner intellectuals.⁸

Magubane was always the first to acknowledge that it was the strength derived from the warm family environment that he built with Thembe, their daughters and the growing number of grandchildren that sustained him and her in exile—as much as the community that the ANC afforded him. A scholar committed to the liberation project, Magubane was himself sustained by the network of people committed to the same project. The friendship of James Faris and Norman Chance and of their families with the Magubanes in rural Connecticut provided both an enabling intellectual environment and support for his political works. When he was away from the university, he could rely on Faris and Chance to step in for him—personal angles and contributions that are easy to miss in a macro-history of emancipatory politics.

The final home-coming in 1997 was meant to be a period of rest, after retiring from UConn, but this was not to be. Yet, of the numerous works and challenges that he took on after 1997, the most significant and rewarding for Magubane was his invitation to direct the *Road to Democracy Project* under the auspices of the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) project.⁹ The project, at the instance of President Thabo Mbeki, was concerned with the recovery of memory and the documentation of the years of struggle in a period when documentation was a

threat to underground work. The multi-volume works that have been produced under the SADET project, the nurturing of a new generation of South African scholars who have successfully continued the project,¹⁰ will serve as the enduring legacy of Bernard Magubane. The inclusive nature of the project is evident in the expansive coverage of the contributions of a diversity of movements, organisations, and forces to the South African liberation project.

In 1999, Professor Magubane received national honours of the South African government for his contributions to the social sciences. He was a recipient of honorary doctoral awards from the University of Fort Hare and the Walter Sisulu University. In 2004 he delivered the keynote address at the annual conference of the South African Sociological Association. July 2007 saw his investiture as a founding *Fellow of the African Sociological Association*. In 2010, an international conference was organised in Tshwane to mark his 80th birthday and to celebrate his intellectual contributions.

With the passing of Magubane, we would need to double our efforts in reversing the intellectual erasure and elective amnesia with which the works of scholars like Bernard Magubane are met in the mainstream of South African social science. The corpus of his works and the example of his life are important resources for educating a new generation of South Africans. They should be acknowledged as important aspects of our intellectual heritage.

Notes

1. This is often intended as a signifier of the non-literate character of such societies in which elders are considered repositories of knowledge. The problem with the aphorism is that the ontological underpinning

of such societies hardly admits to the irrevocable destruction of knowledge that 'burning of the library' imagery connotes. Communication between the 'living' and the ancestors continues beyond the different 'planes of existence'.

2. Interview with Bernard M Magubane, 29 December 2009 (Deinfern, Johannesburg). Magubane, *My life and times*. Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2010, pp.14-15. There were three children in the family at the time. Magubane's older sister, Mary, and a younger sister, Florence.
3. His father, a dock worker, and his mother combined domestic labour services with informal traditional beer brewing (Interview... 29 December 2009).
4. Interview with Bernard M. Magubane, 03 January 2010 (Deinfern, Johannesburg).
5. Interview with Bernard M Magubane, 31 December 2009 (Deinfern, Johannesburg).
6. WEB Du Bois. 1933. 'Karl Marx and the Negro', *The Crisis* 40(3), March, cited in BM Magubane, 1996, *The making of a racist state*. Trenton, NJ: African World Press, p.337.
7. These are materials that Magubane used in his teaching over the 27 year period at UConn.
8. BM Magubane. 2010. *My life and times*. Scottsville: UKZN Press, pp.318-319.
9. Interview with Bernard M Magubane, 3 January 2010 (Deinfern, Johannesburg).
10. Dr Sifiso Ndlovu, a trained historian, worked with Prof. Magubane from 1997 and went on to succeed Magubane as the Director of the SADET project.

Professor Hocine Khelifaoui

Hocine Khelifaoui who was a senior member of the CODESRIA and the African scholarly community died on Saturday, 30th March 2013. He devoted much of his life to the service of CODESRIA for which he was one of the main editors of the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*. He worked with Yann Lebeau to produce a journal that enjoys international acclaim and is highly regarded by the research community. They worked tirelessly to ensure that the journal was published on time. His commitment also should be saluted for the personal involvement in the peer review process and mentoring he offered to young scholars. He put a lot of his time and energy at the service of the younger generation who were ready to take advantage and benefit from his great experience as a scholar and researcher.

Prof. Khelifaoui participated in many CODESRIA programmes and activities whenever he was called upon; he made himself available and attended to the duties with seriousness and unwavering commitment. Although he lived and worked in Canada, this reality never distanced him from the realities of the continent.

Mamadou Drame
CODESRIA
Dakar, Senegal

He was an authority on higher education and African society. Hocine was also respected for the quality of his teaching; he was a professor at the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM), and he earlier taught at the Polytechnic Institute of Montreal. He was also a member of the

Interuniversity Research Centre on Science and Technology (CSIRTs). His expertise was also sought after by international institutions including UNESCO for which he analyzed the different educational systems in different African countries, and the IRD for which he was the resident scientist in charge of several of its programmes.

In every sense, he was a humble and committed person, and a seasoned and serious scholar, a generous and open-minded teacher that the African scientific community and the world will miss greatly. CODESRIA salutes the memory of a man who contributed so much to generation of new knowledge and nature young talent.

CODESRIA Report

Pan-Africanism: Adapting African Stories/Histories from Text to Screen

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), in conjunction with the Guild of African Filmmakers and Producers organized, on 25 and 26 February 2013, a workshop on ‘*Pan-Africanism: Adapting African Stories/Histories from Text to Screen*’.

Manthia Diawara
New York University, USA

Carlos Cardoso
CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal

apart’. Thus, the word, the name, the stereotype, has the potential to contract the scope, to reduce or distort the quality within the overall undertaking of naming; ‘in short, a word can inhibit or expand imagination. It can prove a curse or a blessing’.

Bringing together filmmakers, writers and directors, the workshop’s goal was to explore some possibilities of Pan-Africanist narratives, aesthetics, theoretical and political configurations in literature, films and videos today. The point of departure of the reflections was that there are contradictory images of Africa in Nollywood and other Anglophone and Francophone narratives that compel us to ask some questions like the following: What are the mass-mediated images of Africa today, in texts, music, film and videos? What is the role of African literature, film and video in the global art world today? Is it desirable and possible for African artists to achieve a Pan-Africanist literature, cinema and video, today, in the same way that the first generation of writers and filmmakers were able to set nation building as their main goal? What would the aesthetic language of Pan-Africanism, the art that sets as its aim the unification of Africa and its Diaspora, consist of today? Crucially, what is the role of adaptation from text to film, to video, to music and plastic arts, and vice versa, in the proliferation of such aesthetics? We could also see here an important role given to the documentary cinema and video genres, which would include archival materials on the history of key Pan-Africanist figures of the past and present.

The workshop started with a key note address delivered by the Nigerian writer and Nobel Literature Prize winner, Wole Soyinka, entitled: ‘A Name is More than the Tyranny of Taste’. Soyinka began his presentation by defining the ‘Arts’ as a ‘singular expression of the human imagination and inventiveness’, which has the capacity of provoking our most suppressed feelings. He put cinematic art at the centre of such catharsis.

From the title of the speech to this cautionary opening, one understands right away that the main topic of Soyinka’s presentation has to do with ‘names, designations, genres and qualifications’ that may, or may not, deserve to be called ‘Arts’. Words are often tied to images; they have shapes and meanings which can go beyond their intended and literal signification, to connote apprehensions in our minds. For Soyinka, there can be so much distortion in the meaning of certain ‘names’ that the conjured up stereotypical ‘images become eventually attached to words with such intimacy that they can no longer be prised

Reverting to the African oral traditions, Soyinka reminded us that naming the child constituted a creative process in Africa: ‘Naming in Africa, especially in Yorubaland, is a special gift that the ancestors as progenitors of the nation bestowed on the elders. Names have meaning and, as they would have us believe, names push their bearers to actualize their encoded meanings – *Oruko a maa ro omo* (literally meaning that the name may mold the child). So, you don’t find any Yoruba parent giving to their babies names that embed evil meanings’.

Soyinka also pointed out that there are variations in names: names that have meanings, original names, plagiarized ones and those that are un-mediated imitations, such as the infamous names that signify other names and events – the ‘N’ word, the ‘B’ word, or the ‘A’ word, as in Africa. He then went on to elaborate on the history of cinema, from the infamous ‘Birth of a Nation’, to ‘Purlie Victorious’, to the Italian Neorealism, to ‘Django Unchained’, which he praised for its mastery of the parodic style in film. He also made brilliant references to the films of his favorite African directors: Sembene, Cisse, Sissoko and Mambety Diop.

To summarize, we would like to suggest that there were two main strands in Soyinka’s paper. The first was concerned with what he called the ‘N’ word, which is his acronym for Nollywood. He admonished the filmmakers in Nigeria to be better than what Nollywood had so far produced; to rise above the negative stereotypes of Nigeria and Nigerians, where ‘Everything is oversize in the birthplace of Nollywood – oversize consumption, oversize class distinctions, oversize exhibitionism, oversize egos, oversize superstition, oversize de-humanization, oversize corruption, oversize inflation – both human and economic - oversize national real estate, oversize pugnacity, oversize garbage heaps, oversize decay, oversize media, oversize foreign investments, oversize churches and oversize mosques, oversize consumerism by an oversize elite, even oversize First Ladies with oversize vulgarity, oversize rapacity, avaricious-ness and overreachingness [sic]’.

The second theme in Soyinka’s speech addressed itself to all African filmmakers. He advised them to be courageous, for, to be an artist today in Africa is to have great courage: courage to

speak out in the face of impending danger – danger created by undemocratic leaders and religious zealots, such as Boko Haram, MUJAO and Ensardine. He challenged our filmmakers to look for art in the many African mythologies that are as enduring as the ‘Harry Potters’ of the West; to dare compete with the Spielberg and the Tarantino in their mastery of film language. If they search for the iconic images of our time, they will find them in ‘the plight of women who are being lashed publicly for showing off an inch or two of bare flesh above their ankles ... in the disfigurement of individuals whose hands have been amputated, equally on account of stealing a loaf of bread as for shaking hands with a human being of the opposite sex ... in those blood-drenched pits where women have been buried to the neck and stoned to death by a public for the crime of giving their bodies to whomsoever they please ... in images of men awaiting execution for yielding to the impulses of that biological make-up that responds only to others of the same sex and result in homosexual relationship’.

After Soyinka’s inspiring keynote address, the workshop moved to panel presentations and discussions by the participants. The workshop was organized around five thematic clusters, constituting four plenary sessions and one round table:

1. Filmic adaptation and what is adaptable in the last 50 years of African literary production;
2. The relations and differences between literary and filmic narrations;
3. Contemporaneity: The African film and literary movements
4. African literature and film in the Era of digital technologies
5. Is there such a thing as African Literature and Film?

Four presentations were made in the first group, touching on issues related to adaptation and creation, oral traditions, linkages between literature and cinema in Africa, African folklore and writing screenplays in South Africa. Discussions amongst participants pointed out that adaptation is a recurrent practice in filmmaking, especially when it comes to adapting written texts into screenplays. Nevertheless, adaptation should not be seen as an act of ‘slavish’ imitation, whereby the secondary text (film) is considered as inferior to the primary text (novel or play).

There is a debt on the director who adapts from an original work. Adaptation symbolizes a ‘creative transformation’ in the sense that there is a transfiguration of the work. There is a recreation in the act of adapting. It is in the freedom of the adaptor that the creativity lies. Some examples of adaptations include ‘Kongi’s Harvest’, ‘The Ambiguous Adventure’, ‘Things Fall Apart’, and ‘Waiting for the Vote of Wild Beasts’.

It was recalled that the creative landscapes are characterized by certain complexities due to overlapping modes of expression and the fluidity of frontiers between different modes of expression. It is from this perspective that one has to consider the relationships between oral traditions, literature and cinema, which exist side by side, influencing, confronting and interacting with each other, in a dialogically and mutually transformative ways. There is an interesting dynamics of exchange between these art forms, which is predicated on varying degrees of repetition, revision, subversion, parody, ‘betrayal’ and change, as well as a blurring, conflation or even erasure of the boundaries. One participant recalled that many artists are

shedding singular designations as novelists or filmmakers to take on plural or hyphenated labels as griot-filmmaker or writer-filmmaker. The consensus was that we needed to capture the nature of the exchange between oral tradition, literature and cinema, and most importantly to discover the continuity and back-and-forth flow between the art forms.

Building on the already existing contributions of African scholars who have generated and circulated knowledge about Africa through literature and film, and on the presentations made, participants shared the view that the adaptation of African folklore (tales, legends and myths) into films offers an inexhaustible fount of inspiration for filmmakers. The discussion on the subject of adaptation, from a historical and formalist perspective, was expanded, yet again, by additional presentations, which looked at the topic from a philosophical angle, which emphasized the notions of origin, originality, primary/secondary creativity and borrowing.

A more general and theoretical discussion of the topic then followed. The participants stressed the fact that although there is always a debt on the adaptation vis-à-vis the original work, adaptation does not prevent one from being creative, and that in such a case, we are allowed to talk of ‘creative transformation’. It is the freedom to adapt that leads to inspiration and creativity. Therefore, in adaptation, there is always a moment of creativity.

After these, there were specific presentations focusing on case studies of adaptations. A presentation on the adaptation of Uganda folktales revealed that great works of art, past and present, have drawn from people’s history and folklore, and have functioned as windows into the community’s culture and worldview. The presenter was then able to extrapolate that African films like *Yeelen*, *Keita* and *Guimba*, are among the great movies from the continent that have drawn heavily from folklore. The filmmakers have effectively articulated community issues that are at once both local and universal. Through an examination of folktales from Uganda, the presentation showed that such stories can be adapted into film to illustrate mainstream African and universal cultural values. The argument is that such moral and redemptive values are not always accessible in modern and contemporary life.

There was also a case study which focused on writing screenplays in South Africa. The main presenter explored a number of key challenges that confront scriptwriters in the cinematic and cultural landscape in the country. The presentation stressed the fact that writers have to wrestle with a wide range of contradictions that range from the ambiguous status of African Literature in the cultural and educational sectors; matters pertaining to cultural identity, from artistic and visual aesthetics to those that are embedded in the repertoires and economies of production that are symptomatic of the South African film industry. As far as the issue of identity is concerned, it was stressed that although since 1951 there have been twenty adaptations from novels, only three of them were written by Black South Africans. Given that Blacks constitute the majority of the South African population, and they own the bulk of folktales, the presentation raises important questions on the

CODESRIA Report

limits of writing and adaptation in contemporary South Africa. This presentation questioned the modes of existence of national cinema in South Africa, where the filmmakers look more to the West than to the rest of Africa and its literature and folklore.

In the second group of presentations, two papers were discussed on two icons of African art and literature: one dealing with Ousmane Sembene's heritage and the other with Wole Soyinka's filmic palimpsests. The presentation and discussion around Sembene Ousmane recognized that during his half-century career, more than a quarter of his literary and film output were devoted to interrogating the African past. Films like *Emitai*, *Ceddo* (1977) and *Camp de Thiaroye* (1988) co-directed with Thierno Faty Sow, are proofs of such inclination. Before coming to cinema, Ousmane Sembene had already gained popularity throughout the world as the author of the literary masterpiece, *God's Bits of Wood* (1960), a fictional reconstruction of the 1947-1948 African railroad workers' strike that paralyzed traffic for months on a line that goes from Senegal to Mali. But for Sembene, the act of writing about history means, at the same time, to make history. History is about how we imagine the past. So, whenever his camera pointed to the past, it was always with a critical eye.

The discussion on Wole Soyinka's work centred on the theory of 'Third Cinema' which considered the camera as a weapon that shed light on unseen people and their histories. The argument is that 'Third Cinema' as opposed to Hollywood and European 'auteur' cinemas, is capable of providing new stories, a new life and a new humanity to Third World people who have been stereotyped throughout the history of cinema; hence, the term 'the camera as a weapon'. Participants stressed the point that the use of the camera as a weapon must also take into consideration the context in which the production takes place, and also the way and means chosen by the artist to pass his message across. It was remembered that some of his critics accused Soyinka of writing in a mode that makes him inaccessible to some sections of the society. It was recognized that some of the works of this great writer, that take the form of film are not well known by large audiences, and that some of his films like *Culture in Transition* (1963), *Kongi's Harvest* (1971) and *Blues for a Prodigal* (1984) could have bridged this chasm between the creator and his audience, if they had been able to circulate widely.

The presenter concluded by stating that Soyinka engaged in a 'film palimpsest', which forces the readers to develop several tools of reading, and several levels of understanding. Thus, new generation of filmmakers were encouraged to take advantage of Soyinka's script writing skills and film making experience.

The two presentations on these great icons of African film and literature helped the participants to better understand the ties between the two art forms, and to re-examine more closely how Sembene and Soyinka approached the questions of adaptation, translation and transformation of the primary texts by the secondary ones. What can we say today about adaptation, influence and/or translation of African primary texts in the light of the film works of Sembene and Soyinka?

Coming to the fourth group, which was devoted to contemporaneity, participants analyzed the intersectionality of literary and cinematic socioscapes, and issues related to mutating literacies, cultural productions and new imaginaries of Africanness. The presenters also examined the meanings of tradition, African identity, and the unstable notions of authenticity. In trying to understand the African film and literary movements, they raised the following questions: Are writers, filmmakers and video-makers contemporaries of one another? Are they travelling fellows, in the sense that they read the same books, see the same films and listen to the same music? Are they in the same time line? Do they have the same preoccupations with African politics, history and arts?

One of the strongest views expressed during this debate is that 'divergences in the vistas, narratives and textures of writers and popular cinema practitioners, jostle for space with their converging constructions of 'old and new' modes of being'. Thus, popular African cinema, including the video film industry, embodies some shared contradictions, pathologies, struggles and visions that reflect one of the framing kilns in which they are wrought. The most important questions included the varying artistic forms that enter into play, when different artists work with the dynamics of African languages and their ever-evolving polyglot cultures to produce texts that have discursive resonances for Africans today.

It was in the same vein that another presentation argued for a visual literacy through a collage of videos, photos and films that engage people into a conversation. The thesis in this presentation was that we have moved into a new context, which requires us to produce works that could feed the emerging imaginations. Young video makers today characterize themselves through the universal language of their video installations. They express themselves through images of Sankara, Lumumba, Che, and they try to look and feel like the youth everywhere, with common dress style, music and attitudes. They are the new pan-Africanists.

One of the presentations focused on the challenges of creating new tools for visual literacy, which could help us to account for the new languages of digital and performance cultures that include the new means of social struggles and quests for imagining new subjectivities. One of the speakers asked: 'Why do we have the American artist Kanye West producing music videos with Nigerian performance artists? Why has New York and Lagos become so close to one another?' We need to develop new vocabularies to account for these digital and 'mutating' vocabularies of adaptation. In the same vein, we have Ghanaian and Nigerian artists, who use cyber culture to talk to each other and to create new imaginary communities, which are transnational and not tied to any one place. Thus, we can conclude that these new devices of literacy are more over-determined by television than by dramatic literature of celluloid film. The youth now think in algorithm, instead of a logo-centric and traditional manner.

In connection with this question, participants further discussed on the need for new ways of representing women and their role in African societies. It was underlined that African women filmmakers have a better potential of presenting an improved image of the social status of women and of demanding more equality with men. One paper argued that African women filmmakers had created works that showed women's reaction to

their social and legal positions, and their critique of pressing political violence and war in Africa, in which women are always the victims.

Interestingly, the same presenter lamented the paucity of films in sub-Saharan Africa, by men or women, on the highly taboo topic of homosexuality. Some participants called for critics to denounce the demonization of lesbian women in sub-Saharan African video movies. Such films, often made with the support of religious groups, present lesbians as aberrant, foreign, and/or diseased. Film critics should demand better representations of lesbians in sub-Saharan Africa today, particularly in the many films being produced by Nollywood in Nigeria.

Also discussed was the question of the invisibility of certain ethnic and social minorities in the visual and literary texts. It was argued that art and culture can participate in the construction of a modern African continent and its diaspora by making such groups visible in a positive light. Participants agreed, therefore, that there is need to make a cartography of the invisibility of Black and African men and women.

The second day of the conference opened with the visit of the Senegalese Minister of Culture, Mr Abdul Aziz, who made a brief presentation on the cultural policy of his country and its support for film and the other arts. The minister pointed out that Africa has a lot of stories to tell the world and that this should be done by Africans themselves. According to him:

We have a continent full of untold of stories and it is our turn to speak, to make our films, to create our arts. We should tell stories that enable us to mobilize our youth for the future. Nobody should tell our stories for us. The world should give us the opportunity to make our own mistakes. In making and adapting those histories, we should talk first about quantity, and then about quality. In order to advance in areas like filmmaking, we need to define right policies, in such fields as education. We need to put our resources together, because one country alone cannot do it. Let's talk the same language first, and then coordinate our policies. It's only by doing this that we can become strong. Our governments should wake up. We have the duty to make a reality of the dreams of our youth. Culture is important! You cannot develop economy without culture.

The fifth group of the workshop was devoted to African Literature and Film in the Era of Digital Technologies. Here, participants tried to respond to questions about the relationships between African Literature and Film and the New Technologies. What can we learn from Nollywood and the other video movements in Africa today? Can the video makers learn from African literature and film? Central in the debate were questions about the economic gains and the aesthetic losses in digital cinema.

There was a presentation on the history of TV and video production in South Africa. Given the Apartheid history of that country, it was pointed out that most of the television programmes were oriented towards Western productions, TV shows and films. At the end of Apartheid, the struggle changed to how to decolonize the television programmes. Independent video producers still have serious difficulties in putting their films in the public broadcasting programmes. One thing that came out of the digital revolution was that it broke the

television's monopoly on the representation of the images of South Africa. As the distribution of bootleg copies of DVDs grew, more critiques of the government developed. Concurrently, it was also interesting to notice the growth of Christian educational documentaries. The new struggles now concerned the need for independent film and video makers to put their works on TV.

Another key concern of the presenter had to do with the poor quality of training in the era of digital revolution. While exciting in their potential for democratizing access to audio-visual expression and enhancing possibilities in the editing room, the digital technologies have adversely impacted on the depth of expression in terms of taking time to edit the films. Anybody who has a video camera can become a filmmaker now. People just shoot and quickly put the films together, without giving any serious thought to techniques of storytelling, ethics and intellectual editing.

The presentation on the Ghanaian videos was also historical, in terms of the evolution of that country from film to digital videos. It was argued that movies coming from Ghana have come a long way and gained some level of international recognition, especially with its English language titles, which have won international awards. However, in the past five to ten years, there has been a steady growth of local productions in Twi and other local languages. Christened 'Kumawood', because of the fact that the videos are mostly produced in Kumasi, these movies have grown in popularity especially with the rural people where literacy in English is very low. In making the films a source of knowledge about people's life, these movies are largely social dramas told in simple plots to make the average person understand and appreciate them.

Nevertheless, the digital revolution has also created a 'quantity/quality' divide here, too. Without government support for film production, filmmakers have had to fend for themselves as producers and distributors of their own films. The market pressure also forces them to quickly produce bad quality films, with bad subtitles. There is also a realization that it is popular stars that carry the films, and not good stories. All of these elements of the digital reality have contributed to lowering the quality of Ghanaian movies. It was pointed out in the discussion that the problem was not only that the videos were shot in a local African language. The real issue has to do with poor quality of production, which is an imperative of the digital, instantaneous demand by the consumer society. As one of the participants in the audience put it, the digital technology has its own exigencies and requirements, which influence the content and the form of the videos. In another quality/quantity discussion, this time with regard to distribution, it was said that one reason the local language 'Kumawood' films were not able to reach an international audience was that the producers were happy with only Twi speaking audiences in Ghana, which constituted 60 per cent of the population.

The last two sessions were devoted to the issue of whether there is such a thing as Pan-African Literature and Film today. The first speaker at this round table stated that Pan-Africanism can come through many forms, and not just through militancy.

CODESRIA Report

Pan-Africanism can also come, regardless of color. This is where African film and video make a strong impact, by strengthening the ties between Africa and the Diaspora. African films have given a new life to African literature. The films thus meet the test of pan-Africanism by providing an access to African cultures, wherever there are shown. It is a known fact that African films are taught more in the curriculum in America than they are in African countries. We see therefore the world from the perspectives of the films, which is an interesting way of shifting the centre, and creating bonds with the Diaspora and the rest of the world.

There was a suggestion that discussions around the issues of sexuality should be at the centre of today's Pan-Africanism. This is to say, true Pan-Africanists should be able to talk about women loving women and men loving men as something positive of African endeavour towards freedom, democracy and modernity.

Artists are beginning to define Africa and Africanness in new and different ways. There are collaborative works between Ghana and Nigeria. We are coming to grips with new political economies which determine the ways in which Africans define themselves, in terms of being related or separate nations. As we become our own writers, film and video makers, we talk about problems that are more pressing to us: Trans-Saharan slavery, homosexuality and other gender issues.

Just like the founding fathers, young Africans are also critical of the language barriers (Anglophone, Lusophone and

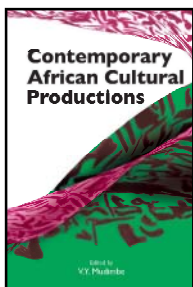
Francophone) in the digital era. It was strongly recommended that we use the new digital tools to get to know one another better. We need to read across language and technological barriers. We are at crossroads that bring together writing, filmmaking, curating art, photo and digital technologies. We have to take seriously such neologisms as: Afropolitans, transAfricans, postnegritudists and Afrofuturists, because they are the new languages that organize the youth in Africa and its Diaspora. We need to develop digital and cultural tools to teach the youth in communities that are bigger than the nation state, and even bigger than Africa.

A speaker pointed out that Pan-Africanism is firstly a political project, which came out of a sense of exclusion, an experience of being excluded, while the rest of the world was getting modernized and getting ahead. Pan-Africanism can also be defined as a generosity of spirit, with larger plans in mind. Imagination and openness is a large part of Pan-Africanism. It is about being able to claim more space, and being part of a larger world, with ideas migrating from place to place; the ones influencing the others, connecting them with the ties that bind. In this sense, we still need Pan-Africanism and Black trans-nationalism. We have no choice.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the CODESRIA/FESPACO workshop was very successful. Wole Soyinka's keynote address was energizing and cited throughout the two-day meeting. Many of the participants and colleagues pleaded with CODESRIA to publish the proceedings, which could be used as a textbook in many African universities. Some of the presentations could also serve as useful materials in the development of film and video curriculums where none presently exists.

Contemporary African Cultural Productions

Edited by V.Y. Mudimbe



All over Africa, an explosion in cultural productions of various genres is in evidence. Whether in relation to music, song and dance, drama, poetry, film, documentaries, photography, cartoons, fine arts, novels and short stories, essays, and (auto)biography; the continent is experiencing a robust outpouring of creative power that is as remarkable for its originality as its all-round diversity.

Beginning from the late 1970s and early 1980s, the African continent has experienced the longest and deepest economic crises than at any other time since the period after the Second World War. Interestingly however, while practically every indicator of economic development was declining in nominal and/ or real terms for most aspects of the continent, cultural productions were on the increase. Out of adversity, the creative genius of the African produced cultural forms that at once spoke to crises and sought to transcend them.

The current climate of cultural pluralism that has been produced in no small part by globalization has not been accompanied by an adequate pluralism of ideas on what culture is, and/or should be; nor informed by an equal claim to the production of the cultural – packaged or not. Globalization has seen to movement and mixture, contact and linkage, interaction and exchange where cultural flows of capital, people, commodities, images and ideologies have meant that the globe has become a space, with new asymmetries, for an increasing intertwining of the lives of people and, consequently, of a greater blurring of normative definitions as well as a place for re-definition, imagined and real.

As this book – Contemporary African Cultural Productions – has done, researching into African culture and cultural productions that derive from it allows us, among other things, to enquire into definitions, explore historical dimensions, and interrogate the political dimensions to presentation and representation. The book therefore offers us an intervention that goes beyond the normative literary and cultural studies' main foci of race, difference and identity; notions which, while important in themselves might, without the necessary historicizing and interrogating, result in a discourse that rather re-inscribes the very patterns that necessitate writing against.