

## Editorial

---

# The Mandela We Will Remember

---

*“I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.” Nelson Mandela*

On Thursday, 5 December 2013, the world lost one of its greatest leaders with the passing of Nelson Mandela. Few people have ever had as unanimous a celebration, in all continents of the world, upon their passing as the one that Madiba is currently having. Beyond the mythologisation that is also so obviously part of what is going on, we are indeed talking about a man who had the courage to pronounce the words cited above in a court where he was being tried for treason by one of the most racist and brutal regimes that have ever existed; a man whose integrity, humility and commitment to the cause of social justice knew no bounds; a man who voluntarily stepped down from power at a time when his popularity was extremely high, and after only five years in office. All these qualities are in stark contrast to what characterizes most leaders of today. His contribution to the struggle to end apartheid and build a peaceful, united and democratic South Africa is huge. He has also inspired millions of people around the world.

Mandela's legacy is far from being exclusively positive. South African society is still riddled with contradictions of a racial and class nature. Some of the inequalities, such as the high concentration of land, wealth and power in a few hands that were among the defining features of apartheid society, are still very much with us. South African capital deploys itself in the rest of the continent with even greater ease today than before. However, despite these problems, there is no comparison between apartheid society and today's democratic South Africa.

Mandela was not alone in the struggle for the liberation of Africa from colonialism and apartheid. Many of his contemporaries, such as Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Leopold Sedar Senghor (Senegal), Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), Mohamed V (Morocco), Haile Selassie (Ethiopia), Patrice Lumumba (Congo), Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), Sekou Toure (Guinea), Samora Machel (Mozambique), Augustinho Neto (Angola), Sam Nujoma (Namibia), Ahmed Ben Bella (Algeria) and, later, Amilcar Cabral (Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde), and Thomas Sankara (Burkina Faso) were also highly committed pan Africanists, and in many respects, visionary leaders. The children of Soweto, the women and men of the African National Congress (ANC) and other South African liberation movements such as the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC), and the Azania People's Organisation (AZAPO); the workers' unions, and the many other people who played leadership roles in the liberation movement, such as Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Oliver Tambo, Albert Luthuli, Alfred Nzo, Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Robert Sobukwe, Albertina Sisulu, Dulcie September, Strini Moodley, Neville Alexander, Tssetsi Masinini, Chris Hani, Saths Cooper, Desmond

Tutu, Allan Bosak, and Winnie Mandela, also deserve credit for the extremely important roles that they also played in the liberation struggle. So do the other leaders of the liberation movement; the millions of ordinary peasants, workers, students and professionals; the leaders and populations of the 'Frontline States'; and the global anti-apartheid and solidarity movement. Mandela himself has said and repeated many times that theirs was a collective struggle, and that if there is one thing he would like to be remembered for, it would be that of having been a man who has performed his duty to his people.

However, Mandela not only symbolized the struggle for justice, he also embodied and led the struggle against apartheid, even while he was languishing in jail on Robben Island. That is the Mandela we are also celebrating.

Some of the limitations of his performance as the first President of post-apartheid South Africa had to do with the circumstances under which the transition from apartheid to democracy was negotiated. Although the South African transition is paradigmatic in many respects, and a clear departure from what has been called the 'Nuremberg paradigm' (Mamdani), for it prioritized 'reconciliation' and the creation of a basis for all South Africans to live together in a post-apartheid 'rainbow nation', to accountability (the creation of a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu was an important part of that process), following what had already become a tradition in African decolonization processes (see the contributions of Zeleza, Mkandawire and Cooper to this issue of *CODESRIA Bulletin*), the 'global community', including the defenders of big business, actually left little room for any radical shifts in the economic system. The ANC's Freedom Charter, that was already much more reconciliatory than the 'manifestoes' around which the movements steeped in the philosophy of the BCM had rallied, was 'cleaned up' (i.e. purged of all references to what could remotely resemble a call for the building of a mixed economy) in the course of the long transition to democratic rule.

In many respects, one can in fact draw a parallel between the kinds of constraints that President Barrak Obama faced in his attempts to reform the health care system of the United States, and the parameters that were set for those who were serious about transforming South Africa. The uproar provoked by the forced mergers of some of the historically disadvantaged (i.e. black and coloured) universities with some historically white universities was a good illustration of the difficulties. The slow pace of the redistribution of land, that is still highly concentrated in a few hands, is another illustration of the difficulties; as were the many struggles that President Thabo

Mbeki has had to wage at various levels. The abandonment of the Reconstruction and Development Programme through which housing and important social services were provided to millions of working and lower middle class people, signaled the definitive abandonment of attempts to build social democracy in South Africa.

Still, the world is very fortunate to have people like Madiba (Nelson Mandela) to show to our children and grandchildren as role models, and evidence of the fact that, yes, there have been, there are, and there can still be people playing visionary leadership roles characterized by courage, moral and professional integrity, humility and unflinching commitment to universal democratic and human values and to their own peoples. Of course, as he has clearly demonstrated in his book *Conversations With Myself* (Macmillan 2010), Mandela was also just a human being, with his doubts, worries, desires and limitations. There is no shortage of examples of leaders and ordinary people displaying such traits.

Furthermore, if we, at CODESRIA, are celebrating Mandela, it is also because his story resonates very well with those of many African scholars (including great South African Scholars such as Ruth First, Archie Mafeje, and Bernard Magubane) who, in their own modest ways, have displayed incredibly high levels of commitment to Africa through their work, and made great sacrifices in their attempts to do research, teach, advise and build independent institutions in and for Africa. The Mandela story also resonates very well with the CODESRIA story.

CODESRIA was established in 1973 by African scholars with a view to creating an autonomous space and a forum for social science research and knowledge production in Africa. Hundreds of scholars contributed (some even made huge personal sacrifices) to the building of a CODESRIA whose only interest is to promote scholarship and produce knowledge in Africa as part of the advancement of science, but also as a contribution to development of our societies in ways that enhance the freedom and wellbeing of our people.

CODESRIA has all along been aware of the need to transform the global epistemological order. African scholars have, for a long time, been working with what Valentin Mudimbe has called a 'colonial library', because the social sciences, as we know them today, are to a large extent the product of the European Enlightenment that came to us through the encounter with the West and we, in Africa and the global South in general, have internalised many of the Eurocentric theories and paradigms in our work.

The context in which CODESRIA was established was one of extreme political fragmentation, because of the colonial partition of the continent into a multitude of small territories. Promoting

social science research in such a context, therefore, required overcoming many barriers that were not only of a disciplinary nature, but also, linguistic barriers (because, in addition to the different African languages, each one of the colonial powers left its own language as the official language of its former colonies), and political, gender, and generational barriers.

CODESRIA has done pioneering work in the field of child and youth, gender, sexuality, and human and citizenship rights. It has published many books that have broken new ground. In addition, CODESRIA publishes 12 journals, the oldest of which is *Africa Development*, first published in 1976 and the youngest is *Method(e)s* (Journal of Social Science Methodology) which will release its first edition in 2014. All CODESRIA journals are published in English and French, some with a translation into Arabic and Portuguese.

The editors of these journals are drawn from the different regions of Africa while others are part of the Africa Diaspora. The journals are representative of the wide spectrum of the social sciences. *Africa Development* takes care of those shades of social sciences that do not fit in the narrowly defined confines of specific disciplines. CODESRIA is convinced that the best way forward, for the social sciences and humanities, is to move along the multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary path because many disciplines cannot make complete sense of social realities in isolation.

CODESRIA is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, in a context characterized, on the one hand, by a number of contrasting phenomena and contradictory trends indicating both the persistence of huge challenges and the emergence of new ones, and many positive developments and the availability of many opportunities on the other hand.

That is why the Executive and Scientific Committees, and the Secretariat, and the entire CODESRIA community also draw inspiration from Madiba, even as we engage critically with his legacy.

Sincere condolences to his wife Graca Machel, his ex-wife Winnie Mandela and the entire Mandela extended family; to our South African and other African compatriots; and to all the peoples of the world.

*Hamba Kahle Mandela* (Go Well Mandela)

Ebrima Sall  
**Executive Secretary**

Alex Bangirana  
**Head, Publications**



## CODESRIA Honoured

---

# Latin "American and Caribbean" Regional Integration Award 2013

---

**W**e are very pleased to inform members and friends of the African social community that CODESRIA is the recipient of the "2013 Latin American and Caribbean Regional Integration Award".

According to Professor Pablo Gentili, the Executive Secretary of the Latin American Social Science Council (CLACSO), the award has been given to CODESRIA in recognition of the work that CODESRIA has been doing over the years to promote regional integration through research, as well as South-South cooperation.

The ceremony at which the award was presented to CODESRIA was held in Santiago, Chile, on 3 October, on the back of the Sixth South-South Institute, and the 29<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Latin American Sociology Association, both of which were held in Santiago.

This was the first time that the award, which CLACSO has been giving out for several years now, was given to a non-Latin American or non-Caribbean institution or person.

Dr. Ebrima Sall, the CODESRIA Executive Secretary, thanked CLACSO for the award, and below is his acceptance speech at the occasion.

---

## CODESRIA Acceptance Speech

---

**O**n behalf of the President of CODESRIA, Professor Fatima Harrak, and on behalf of the Executive Committee and Secretariat of CODESRIA, and on my own behalf, I would like to express sincere thanks to the board and the Executive Secretary of CLACSO, Professor Pablo Gentili, for selecting CODESRIA to be the recipient of "The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Integration Award."

We feel very highly honoured and we are extremely pleased. We also take this as a very good "anniversary present", because CODESRIA is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. CODESRIA was established in 1973 by African scholars with a view to creating an autonomous space and a forum for social science research and knowledge production in Africa.

CODESRIA, like CLACSO, is arguably a child of what could be called the 'Bandung Spirit'. We tend to think about Bandung primarily in political and international relations terms. But the 'Bandung Spirit', I would argue, also existed in the field of knowledge production.

As the Cold War was being fought between the then East and the West, the nations of the global South which, after having suffered from one form of imperial domination or another, refused to take sides in what they saw as a war between great powers seeking to dominate the world, not for the sake of justice and equity, but for their own hegemonic interests. Representatives of the "non aligned" nations met in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955 to discuss ways of collaborating to protect and promote

**Ebrima Sall**  
Executive Secretary  
CODESRIA  
Dakar

the interests of their peoples, as well as the interests of all the peoples of the world.

The scholars who, twelve years later, met to set up CLACSO were driven by the same spirit: a desire to transform the global epistemological order that overly favoured

the West, that tended to mirror the global power relations and the inequalities associated with those relations, as part of the struggle for a better world. The struggle to transform the global epistemological order is part and parcel of the struggle for the transformation of global relations for a just world.

Transforming the global epistemological order has not been, and is not going to be easy. We have, for a long time, been working with 'colonial libraries' (Mudimbe), because the social sciences, as we know them today, are to a large extent products of the European Enlightenment that came to us through the encounter with the West and we, in the South, have internalized many of the Eurocentric theories and paradigms in our work. The study of our regions (Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean) has become a big international industry and large sections of our communities (including our Diasporas) are members of 'epistemic Communities' that extend far beyond our regions.

Geographical aspects aside (after all, the 'South' is not so much about geography, but about politics, power relations, and social conditions), the issue is also that of putting scholarship and knowledge production in the service of humanity, rather than to the service of dominant classes or powers. The geographical South is now very highly diversified, with some of the BRICs

resembling the advanced capitalist countries (the 'developed world') more than they resemble what used to be called the Third World.

Participants in the founding congress of CLACSO decided to encourage the building of regional research councils (similar to CLACSO) all across the South. The Africans who CLACSO invited to its founding congress, most notably Professor Samir Amin from Egypt, carried the message back and decided to implement the decision that they – the participants in the CLACSO congress who came from across the Global South – had made, i.e., to form independent councils and organisations of scholars such as CLACSO, in Asia and Africa as well.

The context in which CODESRIA was established in Africa was one of extreme political fragmentation, because of the colonial partition of the continent into a multitude of small territories, each of which has, since gaining independence been struggling to build itself into a cohesive nation and a truly independent state. Promoting social science research in such a context therefore required overcoming of many barriers that were not only of a disciplinary nature, but also, linguistic barriers (because, in addition to the many African languages, each one of the colonial powers had left its own language as the official language of its former colonies), and political, gender, and generational barriers. CODESRIA therefore adopted a pan-African approach right from the start, out of conviction, given that it comes out of a long history of struggle for liberty that the global pan-African movement was part of, but also out of necessity. The need for an autonomous continental research space and a networked, a pan-African research community, was made even greater by the prevalence of authoritarian regimes on the continent at the time. Therefore regional integration and South South cooperation were inscribed in the philosophy and work of CODESRIA from the outset.

We are right now in the closing session of the sixth edition of the South South Institute jointly organized by CLACSO, CODESRIA and IDEAs. Each edition has been attended by between 20 to 30 young scholars; the institute has become a formidable vehicle for building lasting scholarly collaborations across the South. The research conferences and workshops, the research grants, and the publications produced by our institutions serve the same purposes.

The ultimate objective is to think together and project the perspectives of scholars from the South on all the global issues of our time. The only way to make knowledge truly global, and bridge the global knowledge divides, is to have knowledges of various kinds, including indigenous and endogenous knowledges from all over the world recognised, which would be an important step towards the transformation of global political, economic and cultural relations.

As I said, the struggle to transform the global epistemological order, to make it truly universal, is part and parcel of the transformation of the world to make it a better place for everybody. Latin America and the Caribbean have been at the forefront of that struggle. The pan-African movement has some of its roots in this region (Latin America and the Caribbean), with great people such as Toussaint L'Ouverture, Henri Sylvester Williams, Marcus Garvey, Leon Damas, Aime Cesaire and others.

Many of the dependency theorists, such as Frank, Prebisch, Cardoso, and Stavenhagen, whose work shifted development paradigms in a major way, were from this region. Liberation philosophy had its roots here. Henrique Dussel wrote *The Invention of the Americas* a few years before Edward Said's book titled *Orientalism*, and Valentin Mudimbe *The Invention of Africa* and, later, *The Idea of Africa* were published. These books and many others (like Samir Amin's *Eurocentrism*, and Cheikh Anta Diop's works on African history and civilization, Partha Chatterjee's work on nationalism and modernity, etc.) have had a profound impact on how we think about the Americas, the Orient, Africa and the global South.

The challenge has been to deepen the paradigm shift away from the reference to the West as the primary centre or mover of history and theory, towards more de-centred theory and approaches to history (like the Comaroffs, Mbembe, Boaventura de Sousa and many others have been doing). In some sense, this is also what the great pan-Africanist thinkers such as Du Bois, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Cabral and others have been engaged in. The reverse movement was also very important. African culture and scholarship inspired scholarship and struggles in this region – Senghor was read in Columbia, Amin was read along with Prebisch, Frank, Cardoso and others, Mkandawire's work on transformative social policy was highly appreciated in Latin America.

Regional integration is nowadays presented as a necessity, if we want our regions to preserve their sovereignty and negotiate more respectable positions in the world; it is also necessary for the preservation of the interests of our peoples; and for development. Kwame Nkrumah, Cheikh Anta Diop, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Amilcar Cabral, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Tajudeen Abduraheem and many other great African leaders, and the leaders of the global pan-African movement were all in support of regional integration, and right now there is an interstate movement towards greater integration in Africa, led by the African Union and Regional Economic Communities of Africa (ECOWAS, SADC, EAC, IGAD...). But there is also a popular movement for integration. Regional integration is also necessary to ensure peace and greater human security. Latin America and Africa can learn a lot from each other in terms of their experiences.

Of course, Regional integration is not going to be a miraculous solution to all our problems of development: the class divisions that exist at the national level also manifest themselves at the regional level, and for that reason, there are competing regional integration projects: there are those driven by and favour capital, informed today mainly by neoliberal philosophies and serving the interests of the big businesses of the world. There are also the alternative regional integration projects that seek to enhance the freedoms and well being of the peoples of the different regions (there are interesting examples here in Latin America). Here too, I think it is very important that research informs regional integration policies that seek to enhance the freedom and well being of our peoples.

As I am saying this, in this beautiful and historic Senate Building, my mind also goes to all people like Salvador Allende and Simon Bolivar, who sacrificed a lot in order to see to it that their regions and their peoples unite to become and remain free, and live in much better social and economic conditions.

Our South South programme, I would argue, is a model of collaboration. CODESRIA has been involved in many programmes of this kind, and still is: SEPHIS, the South-South Sustainability Forum (SSSF), WSF... and works with many South South networks. However, this programme is, in many ways, unique: the way in which it has been conceptualized and the way it is managed are good examples of scholarly collaboration, and I would like to acknowledge all those who made it possible for the programme to come this far: Atilio Boron, Emir Sader, Bayo Olukoshi, Hari Singh (of the APISA), Sam Moyo and, before then, Marcia Riviera, Thandika Mkandawire, Abdallah Bujra, Samir Amin, and many others.

There are also the programme staff who, on a day to day basis, make sure that the programme stays on course and moves forward—Gladys Lechini, Alberto Cimadamore, Luciana Gil, Carolina Mera, Victoria Mutti, Mauricio, Dominique... on the CLACSO side; at IDEAs (Malini, Chandru), and at CODESRIA: Pinkie Mekgwe, Carlos Cardoso, Mame Sokhna Thiare Toure.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to also thank Sida for the support rendered to the South-South Programme, and for the decades-long support to both CLACSO and CODESRIA. The challenge now for Pablo Gentili, Jayati Ghosh and I, is to encourage research funding agencies of the South, both state and private, to also support the programme.

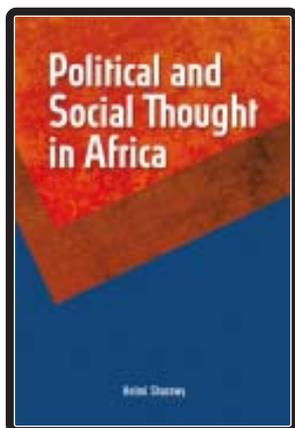
We are now enlarging the membership and broadening the thematic coverage of the programme. And we are reaching out both to the social movements, and to the policy makers. The next level of cooperation is that of establishing joint research and publication projects, and to engage in the study of each other's regions more systematically, and more deeply.

Last, but not least, we also need to disseminate the results of our work much more effectively, using all the possibilities that the information and communications revolutions have created.

I thank you for your attention.

## Political and Social Thought in Africa

Helmi Sharawy



The essays collected together in this book reflect the author's varied experiences in the realms of politics and social struggle, he notes that they cannot be separated from his other experiences in my own country, Egypt over the years. These extend from popular culture or folklore, to the wide world of African liberation politics, and to the Committee for the Defence of National Culture.

This book is like a long trip with African culture from the 1950s to these beginnings of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is most likely going to provoke many memories, sweet and bitter, with maybe the bitter ones as the more lasting. The author notes that it seems as if the only relationship that seems to have mattered for a long time, for the Egyptians, was the river Nile which joins the country with ten other African countries, while a vast desert stands in-between. Such separation ignores the ancient relations between Pharaonic Egypt and the rest of Africa, the Egyptian role in supporting many African liberation movements seems to have been forgotten.

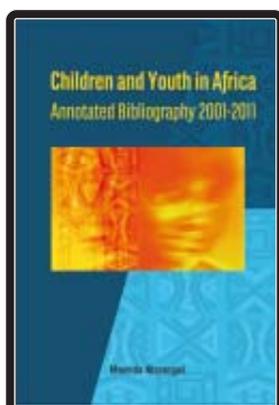
The author has set himself some tough questions: Is it legitimate today to sub-divide the African continent according to the races it contains? Can this, moreover, be simply done with a-historic content for race, or an idealistic concept of identities? Or are we going to talk about the Arabism of Egypt, Libya or Maghreb as if it were an identity gained with the advent of the Arab race, implying that these

were 'lands with no people' – a sort of 'No Man's Land' or fragile spaces that could not confront the invading empire? Or will Arabism equate with Bantuism or negroism sometimes, and Hausa and Swahili cultures at other times? These are the types of issues that Helmi Sharawy examines in this very important book.

Experiences that inform this book began with the author's first encounter in March 1956, with some African youths who were in Cairo for higher studies or as representatives of African liberation movements with whom he worked as an intermediary with the Egyptian national state left an everlasting impression.

## Children and Youth in Africa: Annotated Bibliography 2001–2011

Mwenda Ntarangwi



This annotated bibliography provides a summary of scholarly work specifically focused on children and youth in Africa published between 2001 and 2011 in both journals and books. Some African scholars have questioned this view of children especially when it comes to their own agency and full participation in socioeconomic production for households, the idea of children as vulnerable social subjects continues to shape much of the research that was carried out on African children.

This view of children as passive and vulnerable is also reflected in much of the work and perceptions of children in the West especially when seen from an economic perspective. Western restrictions on specific age limits that govern children's participation in work or labour, whether paid or not, and the subsequent rights that go along with them are often not easily translatable to many African contexts. As is often the case of children acting as household heads and fending not only for themselves but for their siblings and times their parents, the Western notion of children as 'emotionally priceless but economically useless'<sup>3</sup> is not tenable. This construction of African children and youth in terms of received Western categories of personhood is still very strong today.

The overwhelming focus of research publications on HIV/AIDS and orphans, violence and child-soldiers, children's rights, and street children, demonstrates this continued interest in regarding children as vulnerable and in need of adult protection. Moreover, with most of the research projects being shaped by external funding agencies it is not surprising that many of the research questions being pursued tend to focus on areas of study preferred by these agencies. Focusing on the vulnerable child in Africa is mostly a result of the construction of childhood in modern (mostly) Western perception of childhood based on chronological age. This book examines the wide spectrum of writing on children and youth in Africa. It is very important for all scholars working in this field.

## Tributes to Nelson Mandela (1918–2013)

### “For my Generation, the Death of Mandela Marks the End of Africa’s Liberation Struggle”\*

LSE’s African Chair Thandika Mkandawire suffered imprisonment for his role in the struggle for the independence of Malawi and 30 years of exile. In this post, he writes about the role Nelson Mandela played in inspiring his generation of political activists.

**Thandika Mkandawire**  
London School of Economics  
UK

Personally, I did a prison stint in 1961 and emerged as a “Prison Graduate” after three months of incarceration on trumped-up charges of inciting violence. We took it for granted then that being jailed for nationalist activities came with the territory.

It is difficult to write about Nelson Mandela without sounding sycophantic or as if engaged in uncritical hero worship. Mandela’s stature and personality left little room for other sentiments other than those of profound admiration and gratitude. The post-World War II era produced some memorable African leaders who grace the pantheon of champions of the African liberation struggle. There is little doubt that Nelson “Madiba” Mandela ranked among the best of these.



In this brief note, I will simply point to the influences the man had on my generation (politically speaking). For much of the last century during which I grew up, Africa was involved in ridding itself of colonialism and racist rule. From the 1960s onwards, the walls of colonial domination crumbled one after another as the colonialists granted independence or simply ran away as did the Belgians while ensuring that King Leopold’s ghost would continue to haunt the heart of Africa that Congo is. And so for my generation, the death of Mandela marks the triumphant end of Africa’s liberation struggle.

The name Mandela became first inscribed in the annals of African liberation as nothing particularly unusual at the time. The late fifties was an era of trials and detentions in the colonies. The Treason Trial, which took place from 1956 to 1961, was closely followed by those of my generation largely through Drum Magazine. Mandela was one of 156 people arrested and tried for high treason. During this period leaders such as Jomo Kenyatta, Dr Hastings Banda, Kenneth Kaunda, Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo were in and out of courts, detentions centres or prison. Some, like Patrice Lumumba, were assassinated.

The rapid pace of decolonisation was brought to a halt on the shores of the Zambezi River by the recalcitrant racist regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia and the decrepit, fascist Portuguese regime of Salazar who continued to insist on maintaining its colonies.

We anxiously followed the fate of Mandela when he went underground as the “Black Pimpernel”. His arrest in 1962 and his conviction for life in 1964 together with the assassination of Lumumba and the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Zimbabwe in 1965 were major reversals to the liberation of the continent. These were only countered by the emancipation of the “Protectorates” of southern Africa a few years after Mandela’s sentencing. It did appear then that not only would the wave of liberation be derailed on the banks of the Zambezi river but that it would be reversed by neocolonial machinations that included the assassinations of African leaders and coup d’états. South Africa took the war outside its border, hunting down exiled leaders.

If the life imprisonment of Mandela seemed like a major reversal for African nationalism and a victory for the remaining racist and fascist regimes, the Nelson Mandela statement at the dock of the court on 20 April 1964 was one of the most inspiring statements for my generation.

*“This is the struggle of the African people, inspired by their own suffering and experience. It is a struggle for the right to live. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society, in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunity. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and achieve. But, if needs be, my Lord, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”*

We read it as a call for the final push in southern Africa through armed struggle. We also understood it as meaning that the usual path of “protest-detention-talk-statehouse” that had been taken by many nationalist leaders was closed for the remaining colonial regimes of the region. It was clear now that the struggle for liberation in southern Africa had taken a dramatically different turn – that of armed struggle and indeed the liberation movements of Lusophone Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe took this position and we were to witness an acceleration of armed struggles in the region. Three decades later came the end of apartheid, a remarkable achievement in Africa’s tormented history.



Mandela’s release on 11 February 1990 marked the beginning of the final chapter in the struggle for the liberation of the continent from colonial domination but it was also a spur to the struggle for the “Second Independence” – the struggle for the end of authoritarian rule and democracy – that was being wedged throughout the continent. It emphatically underscored the fact that the incarceration of a person for political reasons had no moral basis. Political prisoners in every African country became “our Mandelas” calling for release. In Malawi one political prisoner released in 1994 had spent as much time in jail as Mandela.

There were so many features in the amazing life of this outstanding man. Highlights will differ from one commentator to another. One of the most highlighted areas has been the spirit of reconciliation exuded by a man who had been incarcerated for close to three decades. Important though this aspect was in light of the racial animosity and fears that apartheid had generated, it was not unique to Mandela.

From its original articulation by Jomo Kenyatta, “reconciliation” became the slogan of all the leading nationalist movements in white settler-dominated countries. It is often forgotten that even Mugabe was feted in the capitals of Europe for precisely conveying that message.

The focus of the West on reconciliatory overtures occluded other aspects of the leadership of these men – the avaricious accumulation of wealth in case of Kenyatta and the brutal repression of fellow citizens on the part of Mugabe. In all these cases, reconciliation skirted the issue of justice. And within South Africa the terms of reconciliation are still a hotly debated issue. So there must obviously be something more to Mandela than the “spirit of reconciliation”.

Four things struck me as why the man is the most admired among Africans. One was Mandela’s deep commitment to the liberation of the African people, a commitment baldly stated in court and underscored by his years on Robben Island.

The second was Mandela’s deep sense of duty and a warm sense of respect for the people he led and the movement to which he had been of selfless service. Contrast that to the arrogance of some of the triumphant nationalist leaders who rewrote history for their own purposes and reduced the movements that had brought them into power into massive voices of sycophancy and intolerance.

The third feature was Mandela’s eminently sane relationship to power. It never got into his head. And for all his regal bearing putatively born of his royal upbringing one felt he was a humble and loyal servant of a movement to which he has given so much. Mandela contributed by example in his exercise of power. One unfortunate outcome of the heroic struggles for liberation and the enormous personal sacrifices incurred by individual leaders was the production of “heroes” who in turn produced, wittingly or unwittingly, hero worship. A number of leaders conducted themselves with a sense of entitlement to the throne on the basis of their contribution and sacrifices. Mandela emerged from all this with a remarkable sense of duty and recognition of the many others that had contributed to the struggle. He graciously retired from office after only one term of leadership, a remarkable gesture, given Africa’s experience with national heroes turned “life presidents” and his enormous popularity. Mandela’s gesture cast the searchlight on the “Life Presidents” on the continent and exposed much of the pomp and grand standing for what it was – waste and arrogance

The fourth was his commitment to democracy and rule of law. In a sense Mandela normalised the idea of democracy in Africa. No leader could proudly proclaim himself (it was always a he) a dictator by claiming that African culture sanctioned it without looking extremely foolish.

Mandela was the one individual of and to whom it can be said the African continent was unanimously proud and infinitely grateful.

Hamba Kahle, Madiba

\* First published: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2013/12/06/for-my-generation-the-death-of-mandela-marks-the-end-of-african-liberation-struggle-thandika-mkandawire/>

## The Mandela I Knew

**D**uring my incarceration in the same single-cell block in Robben Island Maximum Security Prison with Nelson Rohihlala Mandela between 1977 to 1982 I got to know him intimately and had the advantage of interacting with him on a daily basis.

**Saths Cooper**  
International Union of  
Psychological Science  
Johannesburg, SA

isolation block, which was rarely used, save as a punishment and in some instances when specific groups of prisoners were first admitted to the prison after their conviction. Madiba mentioned an incident involving the Late Neville Alexander where the latter was accustomed to use first names which had

These were less than ideal conditions, often fraught with the tensions that accompany incarceration, but such hardships provide the opportunity for the best and worst in ourselves to emerge.

The perspicacity of the man was demonstrated the very next day after Aubrey Mokoape, the Late Strini Moodley and I were moved to his B-Section single-cell block from the C-Section

apparently caused resentment amongst peasant inmates. This was Madiba’s way of informing us that he preferred to be called Madiba, although we had used the respectful ‘Ntate’ (Sesotho/Setswana for a male elder). He probably foresaw that as we were urban university-student types in our late twenties and early thirties, we could lapse into using first names.

Our respect for him and the older prisoners and our disquiet with using clan/tribal names, resulted in our continued usage of 'Ntate' until it simply became Madiba. Months later, when Zithulele Cindi and Kaborone Sedibe (also my co-accused in the SASO/BPC trial) replaced Aubrey and Strini in the B-Section cell block, Madiba realized that Zithulele as a matter of principle wouldn't use any clan/tribal names. Madiba deftly resorted to calling him 'Ou-Maat', thus opening the door for Zithulele to reciprocate by calling Madiba 'Ou-Maat'. Indeed, when certain Stalinists within the African National Congress (ANC) objected to Madiba fermenting 'puzamandla' (a protein supplement that was given to black African prisoners) to have with his 'mealie pap' porridge each morning, Zithulele - who was beyond the Stalinists' rein - was the source of Madiba's fermented breakfast, which he clearly enjoyed.

The generational and political gaps were obvious and it was much easier to overcome the latter. We naturally accorded Madiba and the older comrades the respect that we were wont to do our elders, which was part of our upbringing, and indicated to them the many ways in which we perceived the world differently, which Madiba and many of the older leadership acknowledged.

The political differences were much more difficult to resolve. The source of tension was the post-June 1976 aftermath which resulted in the largest influx of political prisoners in the history of Robben Island. This portended a ripe recruitment opportunity for the older sections of the liberation movement which were largely comprised of middle-aged members. Initially, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) attempted to avoid recruitment, because of its inherently divisive nature, but the ANC had no such qualms. Madiba and Walter Sisulu - the ANC Liaison with the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) - decried this situation and only when the BCM had dwindled in size around 1980 did they sign a non-recruitment pact. The PAC, then feeling that it had lost out in the numbers game, balked at signing.

The major political difference between the ANC and us in the BCM was the ANC's four nations hypothesis; that Africans, Coloureds, Indians and Whites comprised the four spokes that emblazon the ANC wheel. We held that all blacks were oppressed by a phalanx of white racist power and privilege that was apartheid and that our unity as blacks in opposition to apartheid was paramount.

In our first encounter that chilly Spring afternoon in 1977, he also invited us to discuss with him when his exams were over (the SASO/BPC trialists were denied study privileges) the question of when it was appropriate for a liberation organization to open its membership to other races. Our response was that the ANC had taken such a decision at one of its conferences in Tanzania and that our BCM was founded on the testimony of all blacks - Africans, Coloureds and Indians - working together in the same formation to actively oppose apartheid. We never traversed this topic again. In many ways, the ANC in Robben Island was different to the ANC outside those prison walls, as most of the information only reached prison much later. The natural tendency in most people - and politicians are no exception - is to retain understandings that we are familiar with.

Although he initially could not understand the birth and growth of the Black Consciousness Movement, he soon began to appreciate our standpoint and accepted the definition of 'black'

as essentially embracing all those who were not white. I never heard him use the pejorative 'non-white' after October 1977. Thus it perhaps is that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa relies on this generic description of blacks (eschewing the narcissistic and demeaning term 'non-white'), as opposed to privileged whites who had generally enjoyed and benefitted from the previous apartheid system.

We asked for and got a meeting with all the Rivonia trialists a few days later to make known our strong reservations about their impending meeting with George Matanzima and members of the Transkei Cabinet, concerning their possible release as part of the Transkei Homeland Independence celebrations. This we did the following day, amidst intense but cordial questioning. The meeting with Matanzima was aborted, and the Transkei anniversary celebrations went ahead without anyone being released from prison. I often wonder how someone who had been in jail for some 15 years, with the harsh prospect of serving life imprisonment would have felt of black hotheads who put principle above all else.

Madiba's initial impression of me as a radical hothead was probably tempered over time and through various interactions of a social, sport and political nature. We used to share early morning runs around the tennis court, have regular tennis matches, and I even learnt to play dominoes which he loved to play almost daily after lunch. He would often share personal and political information and felt obliged to inform the leadership of the various political organizations of any developments that may impact them. He was adamant that all our organizations had been infiltrated by apartheid agents, which the record confirms. Yet some of his fellow trialists could not accept that Gerhard Ludi (an apartheid agent) had infiltrated Rivonia.

There was no rancor in any of our dealings with Madiba and the older ANC leadership, despite the periods of intense tension caused by the recruitment already alluded to. Our engagements were always cordial and grew to an easy camaraderie and deepening mutual respect. Disagreements on political positions never degenerated into acrimony - which was quite rife with the influx of hundreds of post-June 1976 youth into the rest of Robben Island - but always ended with us agreeing to disagree. This is something that our polity sorely lacks, as is seen in our tense and violence-prone political discourse.

From the time that I first met him in those miserable conditions in prison till the time of his recent illness he exuded a regal demeanor and carriage that infused respect amongst all who came into contact with him. A stickler for custom and pleasantries, he dictated the pace of the ensuing interaction, by careful listening, usually without interruption, and then presenting how he saw the way forward. Very few could refuse to take tea with him, by which time any anger and rancor had dissipated.

When he had made up his mind about a position he was committed to it, despite the howl of protests from others around him. But if you could convince him that his position was flawed, he would not hesitate to acknowledge this. In this way he was able, for example, to move white racists in our midst to accept the inevitability of peaceful transformation in our country. And, he led by example, making extraordinary concessions to reconciliation which, unfortunately, some in our country have taken for granted, ignoring the massive exploitation, oppression and suffering wrought by the erstwhile apartheid system.

During his presidency of our country he was magnanimous to many of his detractors within the ANC who, if they had been in power, may not have been as generous. He went out of his way to accommodate numerous former prisoners from across the political spectrum who owe their positions to his ability to rise above partisanship. Beneficiaries of apartheid owe him a particular debt of gratitude for his reconciliatory approach that has permitted them to continue with their enterprises and positions, in most cases reaping unimaginable profit and personal benefit.

Since his release from prison, his accession to political power as our nascent democracy's Founding President and his retirement, my interactions with him were infrequent. I avoided being intrusive. When we did meet, it was always with great fondness and he had the knack of saying the right thing, whatever the circumstances, especially to those I was with, whether family, friends or colleagues. This quality will endear him to all those people that he has interacted with in South

Africa and abroad. Each will have their memories of being touched by a 'saint' in his lifetime. Madiba was the first to disavow that he was a saint, but he was far from being a sinner either. There will be other occasions to dissect his foibles. Now is the time for South Africans to acknowledge the debt of gratitude that we owe to his singular contributions. Pity it is that there will be constant squabbling about his legacy. He deserves better. Unfortunately, greatness in public life is not a guarantee of equanimity in private life.

His ability to relate to all sectors of society, his sense of humor and quiet dignity has enamored him to people all over the world who have had the fortune to interact with him. History will record in detail his role in shaping our country. His lengthy illness has allowed most of us to grieve and accept his passing. It's now time to celebrate his life and times that we have been so much a part of, and ensure that what he and we have struggled for will not be in vain.

---

## Hamba Khale, Madiba: The Contestation Between Symbolism and Mythologies

---

As Mandela passes on to join the ancestors, a wave of sadness sweeps the entire planet. There can be few places and few people who are not in some way deeply affected by this event.

Madiba symbolizes many things for many people. For the survivors of the brutality of apartheid, he is the symbol of the victory of their struggle for freedom and justice, the symbol of the possibility of a future that is about creating a better world, and not a world built on bitterness for past crimes, the symbol of all those values on which the South African constitution was founded. For the oppressed and exploited across Africa, he represents the finest qualities of integrity and principled leadership, the hero who dared to re-assert the humanity of the colonized over the tyranny of empire. For those unjustly imprisoned, he symbolizes the hope of freedom. For anti-apartheid activists across the world, Mandela represents the worth of the years of persistent organizing and creative campaigning. For groups like Amnesty International, he represents their shame for failing to recognize him as a political prisoner. For capital (international and local), Mandela is the saint who delivered a peaceful transition from apartheid that ensured that their hegemony continued undisturbed. For the international financial institutions and World Bank, the rapid implementation of structural adjustment programmes in South Africa would not have been possible without the endorsement of Madiba.

All these symbols of Mandela, and many others, co-exist. They are all in some ways true, and yet none of them are wholly accurate. Physically small in stature, Mandela is universally recognized as a giant of our era for good reason. The example of his life of courage, compassion, and determination in the face of extreme violence and injustice reaches into the dark prisons of our times and into the hearts of millions of people around the world who hope and struggle for a better future for humanity.

It is the tragedy of great people that their passing provides the opportunity for those in power to create a myth to serve their own interests, a myth that often serves to arrest the very vitality that such lives inspired. We are already witnessing the creation of mythologies of Mandela. (Or perhaps consolidation is a better word, for this process has been going on for some time, especially since he resigned as President). The mythologies will be articulated through obituaries in corporate media, through the speeches of politicians, through the eulogies sung at his funeral, through the proclamations of commemorative holidays, biographies, institutions, and so on.

Mythologies about great people, whether they portray them as saints or as villains, are idealized representations, and as such, fundamentally reactionary. Mythologies are the sustenance of all forms of fundamentalism, whether religious or ideological (e.g. the market fundamentalism of neo-liberalism). The contributions of great people are frequently reduced to a few simple 'truths', truths that are based on the denial of uncomfortable aspects of their stories, and thus ironically based also on lies.

The process of mythologizing represents a contestation between symbolism and mythology. The greatest disservice that we could pay to Mandela is to allow the complexity, courage and humanity of his long life to be reduced to a fairy tale. Mandela represents for so many the finest values of courage, liberation and freedom. For all his exceptional greatness, he lived and struggled in the world as a human being with others. His legacy should not be placed on a pedestal of myth but rather inspire us to take lessons from the complexity and imperfections of those struggles as we continue the long walk to freedom.

**Firoze Manji**  
CODESRIA  
Dakar

Dakar, 6 December 2013

## Mandela's Long Walk with African History

---

The death of Nelson Mandela has provoked an outpouring of mourning, celebration, and commentary around the world that is unprecedented for an African leader. Glowing tributes have gushed from world leaders and major magazines and newspapers have carried special features on his extraordinary life and legacy. He has been showered with lavish praise as a great man, colossus and conscience of his nation and the world for his magnanimity, moral courage, and dignity; for his resilience, patience, and passion; for his charisma, charm, regal countenance and common touch; for his humility, visionary and political brilliance; and above all, for his spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation, believed to be the driving force behind the South African "miracle" that steered the beloved country from the abyss of a racial bloodbath. Several countries including Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania have declared three days of mourning, and in several European countries and the United States flags were flown at half mast as part of national mourning for Mandela.

Everyone, it seems, seeks to bask in Mandela's reflected glory, including many African leaders who compare quite unfavorably with him for their mendacity, self-aggrandizement, and dictatorial tendencies. But there are critics, including some in South Africa and among the African left, who accuse Mandela of having failed to dismantle the South African apartheid economy that has left millions of black people especially the unemployed youth in grinding poverty. Reconciliation, they argue, rescued whites from seriously reckoning with apartheid's past and its legacies and deprived blacks of restitution. Mandela's death forces South Africans to reflect on the post-apartheid state he helped create. Deprived of Mandela's aura, some believe, the ANC's monopoly of power will continue to erode. Such critical assessments of Mandela's legacy can only be expected to grow, but for now they are drowned by outflows of endearment.

It is hard to remember that Mandela was once widely reviled in much of Euroamerica as a terrorist as he was revered in Africa and the progressive world as a revolutionary figure. He is now everyone's venerated hero, the man sanitized into a transcendent myth; his place in African history stripped of its messy contexts and multiple meanings; his life and legacy of protracted struggle morphed into a universal redemptive tale of reconciliation. His iconic image of lofty leadership satiates a world mired in pettiness; it is a resounding reproach to the small-minded leaders most countries are currently cursed with. The various Mandelas being commemorated offer different opportunities to people, politicians and pundits in the North and in the South—absolution from the barbarous crimes of imperialism for the former and affirmation of their humanity for the latter and a reminder of the heady dreams of independence.

As with the day he was released from prison in 1990, many will remember where they were when they heard the news of

**Paul Tiyambe Zeleza**  
Quinnipiac University  
Connecticut, USA

Mandela's death. I remember February 11, 1990 as if it were yesterday. I sat glued to the television with bated breath for the live broadcast of Mandela's release. I told my then six-year-old daughter this was one of the most memorable days for my generation

and she would live to remember it, too. I choked with tears of joy, anger, sadness, pride, anticipation and other bewildering emotions as we watched the tall, smiling, dashing, and unbowed Mandela walking out of Victor Verster Prison beside his wife, Winnie, a militant in her own right who had suffered so much and done a lot to keep his memory alive. They walked with defiant dignity, holding hands, their other arms raised with clenched fists. The announcement of his death, although long anticipated because of his age and grave illness, came more unceremoniously. It arrived as a news alert on my iPad as I was working on some memo in my office. But it was no less momentous for it marked the end of an era, of Africa's long twentieth century.

Predictably, the traditional media and social media have been awash with tributes, reminiscences, and verdicts on Mandela the person, the politician, and the symbol. In the United States and Britain, politicians, pundits, and celebrities have been falling all over themselves to find the most laudatory words to describe Mandela as the epitome of global moral authority, of humanity at its best, the last in the hallowed canon of twentieth century saintly liberators from Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King. Such encomiums are to be expected for a world hungry for goodness, forgiveness, trust, and optimism that Mandela exuded so masterfully. Conveniently forgotten is the fact the British and American governments upheld the apartheid regime for decades and condemned Mandela's African National Congress as a terrorist organization. We all remember Ronald Reagan's and Margaret Thatcher's resolute defense of the apartheid regime and fierce condemnation of the ANC and its leaders including Mandela. In the United States, ANC leaders were officially regarded as terrorists until 2008!

The sanctified portrait of Mandela hollows out the exceedingly complex and contradictory man and historical figure that Mandela was and the true measure of his life and legacy. Anyone who has ever read Mandela's two-volume autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, and the equally voluminous biographies including Anthony Sampson, *Mandela: The Authorized Biography* and Meredith Martin's *Mandela: A Biography*, knows he was not the caricatured figure of the popular media who rose from clan royalty to the South African presidency and global political celebrity, appropriately purified by 27 years of imprisonment. Rather, his greatness arose from the very complexities and contradictions of his life and times and how he embodied them, experienced them, articulated them, learned from them, manipulated them, deployed them, and tried to transcend them. He was not much of a father for his children, but he became a beloved father of the nation; he had several

failed marriages but the public was seduced by his warm embrace; he was a ruthless political operator as much as he was a self-effacing leader; and his deep sense of empathy cultivated out of the very texture of daily life and struggle under apartheid allowed him to effectively deal with his jailors and negotiate with his Afrikaner opponents in the transition from apartheid to democracy.

Moreover, Mandela's unflinching loyalty to his comrades in the liberation movement sometimes blinded him to their limitations with adverse consequences as exemplified by his two immediate successors; and there was the loyalty he exhibited to the unsavory leaders of states that had supported the anti-apartheid struggle such as Libya's Moammar Gadhafi and Nigeria's Sani Abacha. The early Mandela was known for being impetuous and boisterous; the later Mandela could be fiercely stern, coldly calculating, and compellingly charming to seize opportunities and advance his aspirations. At age 33, he declared that he would be South Africa's first black president, but when he did achieve this goal at 76 he forswore the grandiosity of office so beloved by many leaders in Africa and elsewhere. However, there were constants in his life, too. He remained supremely proud and confident of himself and his African heritage, and his commitment to South Africa's liberation struggle was steadfast.

Many have remarked on Mandela's remarkable understanding of the nature of politics and the performance of power that enabled him to embody the nation better than many of his fellow founding fathers of African nations and his two successors. Above all, he is praised for his lack of bitterness after spending 27 years in jail and his embrace of forgiveness and reconciliation. The manner in which this issue is discussed often serves to advance the redemptive narrative of Mandela's road to political sainthood. Only he and his closest confidants of course know how he truly felt. Post-apartheid reconciliation may or may not have been a romantic attribute of Mandela the man; it was certainly a pragmatic imperative for Mandela the nationalist leader. Mandela's life and legacy cannot be fully understood through the psychologizing and symbolic discourses preferred in the popular media and hagiographies. It could be argued that he and his comrades were able to sublimate their personal anger and bitterness because the liberation struggle was too complex, too costly, too demanding, too protracted, and too important to do otherwise. Reconciliation was both a tactic and a necessity because of the dynamics of the liberation struggle in South Africa.

This is to suggest that like all great historical figures, Mandela can best be understood through the prism of his times and the political, economic, social, and cultural dynamics and conditions that structured it. Mandela changed much in his long life but it was a life defined by the vicissitudes of African nationalism. For those who don't know much about African history, or are wedded to exceptionalist notions of South African history they would be surprised to learn the parallels Mandela shares with the founding fathers of many other independent African nations, in whose rarefied company he belongs. In fact, his historic significance, and the eruption of grief over his death and gratitude for his life in the Pan-African world and elsewhere can partly be explained by the fact that he is Africa's last founding father.

The decolonization drama started in Egypt in 1922 with the restoration of the monarchy and limited internal self-government and finally ended in 1994 with the demise of apartheid in South Africa. In the long interregnum, decolonization unfolded across the continent, reaching a crescendo in the 1950s and 1960s; in 1960 alone, often dubbed the year of African independence, 17 countries achieved their independence. The colonial dominoes began falling from North Africa (Libya 1951) to West Africa (Ghana 1957) to East Africa (Tanzania 1961) before reaching Southern Africa (Zambia and Malawi 1964). The settler laagers of Southern Africa were the last to fall starting with the Portuguese settler colonies of Angola and Mozambique in 1974, followed by Rhodesia in 1980, and Namibia in 1990. South Africa, the largest and mightiest of them all, finally met its rendezvous with African history in 1994. Mandela is cherished because of his and his country's long walk with African history.

Mandela embodied all the key phases, dynamics and ideologies of African nationalism from the period of elite nationalism before the Second World War when the nationalists made reformist demands on the colonial regimes, to the era of militant mass nationalism after the war when they demanded independence, to the phase of armed liberation struggle. Many countries achieved independence during the second phase through peaceful struggle. Others were forced to wage protracted armed struggle. The variations in the development and trajectories of nationalism were marked by the way each individual colony was acquired and administered; the traditions of resistance in each colony; the presence or absence of European settlers; the social composition of the nationalist movement; and the nature and ideologies of the leadership. Similarly, there were different ideological orientations and emphases. Some nationalists espoused secular or religious ideologies; among the former there were competing liberal, socialist, and Marxist ideologies that would later frame postcolonial development agendas.

All along, African nationalism unfolded in a rapidly changing world. Most critical were the effects of the Great Depression and the Second World War; the emergence of the Superpowers and the Third World; and the growth of Pan-Africanism and civil rights struggles in the Diaspora. Independence marked the triumph of the first out of the five humanistic and historic objectives of African nationalism, namely, decolonization. The other four objectives included nation-building, development, democracy, and regional integration. In so much as contemporary Africa is largely a product of struggles for independence and their complex, changing, and contradictory intersections with colonialism, imperialism, and globalization, Mandela's life and legacy as a historic figure are conditioned by the contexts and imperatives of nationalism. Like many of Africa's founding fathers, Mandela's life spanned much of South Africa's existence as a nation, traversed the various phases of the country's nationalist movement, and embodied the trajectories of post-colonial Africa.

Mandela was born in 1918, a mere eight years after the founding of South Africa as a nation out of four separate settler colonies and an assortment of conquered African states and societies, and six years after the formation of the African National Congress. He was thirty when the country's racist settler regime gave way to the uncompromising racial barbarity of apartheid in 1948. In the early 1940s he was one of the founders of the

ANC Youth League in the early 1940s that sought to radicalize and rescue the ANC from its reformist politics. When the ANC adopted the Program of Action in response to the establishment of apartheid, he became the leader of the Defiance Campaign in the early 1950s. In 1955 he was among 156 activists who were tried in one of the largest political trials in South African history that lasted from 1956 to 1961. Following the Sharpeville Massacre in March 1960, the liberation movement decided to shift to armed struggle and Mandela was charged with the formation of the ANC's Unkotho we Swize (Spear of the Nation).

In 1963 Mandela and nine other leaders including Walter Sisulu, his mentor, and Govan Mbeki, the father of future President Thabo Mbeki, were charged with sabotage at the infamous Rivonia Trial. During the trial, on April 20, 1964, Mandela uttered his immortal words from the dock: "I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." Thus Mandela was not an advocate of Gandhi's or King's non-violent resistance, not because he was not a man of peace, but because he correctly understood that in the South African context, fighting against an obdurate racist settler regime required all available tactics from mass protest to armed resistance. For him multiple tactics had to serve the overall strategy of achieving national liberation. In short, as a freedom fighter he was simultaneously a political leader and a guerrilla leader. Under the ANC's broad and tolerant political umbrella he worked with traditionalists, liberals, socialists, communists, and Black Consciousness activists, both before and after his long incarceration.

Mandela outlived apartheid by nearly twenty years. His story can be told of other African nationalists. Some progressed from peaceful protest to armed liberation struggle. They included the nationalists of Algeria, Kenya, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau and Zimbabwe. Many of those who led their countries to independence were also born either just before or after their countries were colonized. Examples include Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first President, born at least six years before Kenya became a British colony in 1895, who outlived colonialism by 15 years by the time he died in 1978; Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana born in 1909 who also outlived colonialism by 15 years; Félix Houphouët-Boigny the first President of Cote d'Ivoire who was born in 1905 and died in 1993, thirty three years after the end of French colonial rule; Léopold Sédar Senghor, Senegal's first president who ruled for twenty years, was born in 1906 and died in 2001, outliving colonialism by forty one years; and in my own homeland, Hastings Kamuzu Banda who was reportedly born in 1898, a few years after the country was colonized, lived to rule Malawi for thirty years between 1964-1994 and died in 1997.

The long and large lives of many of Africa's founding fathers including Mandela represents a historic rebuke to the destructive conceits of European colonialism. In the notorious words of Ian Smith, the Prime Minister of the settler colony of Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, the European colonists believed colonialism would last at least a thousand years. Set against many of his fellow founding fathers, Mandela stands out for his singular contribution to democratic politics. He relinquished power after only one five-year term in office. Many

others were overthrown in coups like Nkrumah or died in office like Kenyatta and Boigny. Before Mandela, the only other African leaders to voluntarily leave office were Senghor and Julius Nyerere, the founding President of Tanzania.

Mandela's example shines all the brighter when compared to his nemesis in Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, once a widely admired liberation hero who remains president 33 years after independence. Mugabe together with the likes of President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda now in power for 27 years, the same number of years Mandela spent in apartheid jails, and still going, represent the dinosaurs of African politics in a continent that has been undergoing various forms of democratic renewal since the turn of the 1990s, in part influenced by the demonstration effect of South Africa's transition to democracy and Mandela's enlightened exit from office after only five years.

The lateness of South Africa's decolonization, it can be argued, helped compress the sequentiality, as it turned out for the early independent states, of the five objectives of African nationalism. While the latter achieved decolonization, they struggled hard to build unified nations out of the territorial contraptions of colonialism which enjoyed statehood without nationhood. They came to independence in an era when development, democracy, and regional integration were compromised by weak national bourgeoisies, relatively small middle classes, and the Cold War machinations of the two Superpowers, the United States and the former Soviet Union.

Mandela's South Africa benefited from both the positive and negative experiences of postcolonial Africa, the existence of a highly organized and vociferous civil society, and the end of the Cold War, which gave ample space for the growth of democratic governance and the rule of law. But the new post-apartheid state was held hostage to the dictates of the negotiated settlement between the ANC and the apartheid regime arising out of the strategic stalemate between the two sides—by 1990 South Africa had become ungovernable, but the apartheid state was not vanquished as happened in Angola and Mozambique. This, combined with the global triumph of neo-liberalism in the post Cold War era, guaranteed the powerful interests of capital in general and the white bourgeoisie in particular against any serious economic restructuring despite the great expectations of the masses and the ambitions of successive development plans by the new government from the *Reconstruction and Development Program* to *Growth Employment and Redistribution* to the *Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative*.

Nevertheless, the post-apartheid state achieved much faster growth than the apartheid regime ever did. The country witnessed massive expansion of the black middle class and the ANC government fostered the growth of a black bourgeoisie through the black economic empowerment program much as the apartheid regime before it had cultivated the Afrikaner bourgeoisie through apartheid affirmative action. There was also some reduction in poverty, although huge challenges remain in terms of high levels unemployment and deepening inequality. Interestingly, South Africa now lags behind much of the continent in terms of rates of economic growth, in part because of the lingering structural deformities of the apartheid economy in which the peasantry was virtual destroyed, the

labor absorptive capacity of the economy is limited by its high cost structures, and South Africa suffers from relatively low levels of skill formation for an economy of its size because of the apartheid legacy of poor black education. It is expected that South Africa will soon be overtaken by Nigeria as Africa's largest economy. The continent's rapid growth, reminiscent of the immediate post-independence years, which has been dubbed by the world's financial press with the moniker of a 'rising Africa,' has given rekindled hopes for the establishment of democratic developmental states that might realize the remaining goals of African nationalism.

Thus, Mandela's political life and legacy resemble in significant ways that of other African founding fathers, and South Africa's trajectory mirrors that of other African countries, notwithstanding the differences of national historical and geopolitical contexts. It is worth remembering Mandela's rhetoric of reconciliation was a staple among many African founding presidents in the immediate post-independence years. Jomo Kenyatta used to preach reconciliation, urging Kenyans to forgive but not forget the ills of the past as a way of keeping the European settlers and building his nation fractured by the racial and ethnic divisions of colonialism. Even Mugabe in the euphoric days after independence urged reconciliation between white and black Zimbabweans before domestic political challenges forced him to refurbish his revolutionary credentials by adopting radical land reform and rhetoric.

Reconciliation was such a powerful motif in the political discourses of transition to independence among some African leaders because of the imperatives of nation building, the second goal of African nationalism. It was also a rhetorical response to the irrational and self-serving fears of imperial racism that since Africans were supposedly eternal wards of whites and incapable of ruling themselves, independence would unleash the atavistic violence of "intertribal warfare" from which colonialism had saved the benighted continent, and in the post-settler colonies, the retributive cataclysm of white massacres. Instead of comprehensive accountability for apartheid and its normative institutional violence, which engendered "crimes against humanity", post-apartheid South pursued "truth and reconciliation" that individualized both the victims and perpetrators and shifted the logic of crime and punishment of the Nuremberg Trials for the logic of crime and confession, justified tendentiously in the name of "Ubuntu."

Mandela bookends Nkrumah in Africa's independence struggles. Nkrumah fired the Pan-African imagination, Mandela gave it its most memorable consummation. The former was a key architect of Pan-Africanism, a cosmopolitan intellectual activist whose Diaspora associates included W.E.B Dubois, George Padmore and C.L.R James, while the latter was largely a home grown pragmatic revolutionary whose long incarceration and struggles revitalized the intricate Pan-African connections between the continent and its Diaspora.

In the United States, the anti-apartheid struggle offered the civil rights movement its most powerful and successful intervention in American foreign policy. The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) that emerged in the mid-1970s out of

growing black political representation, together with TransAfrica, spearheaded the anti-apartheid sanctions campaign which galvanized the country from churches to college campuses. Over the past two centuries, African American mobilization over Africa has been greatest where the intersection of imperialism and whiteness as concrete and symbolic constructs, national and international projects and policies, have been most pronounced and where Africa advocacy is likely to yield significant domestic dividends.

For the CBC passing anti-apartheid legislation was imperative not only because this was a popular cause in the black community, and increasingly throughout the country, it offered them an opportunity to demonstrate and raise their power and profile in the halls of Congress, which would enable them to advance their domestic agenda. So widespread and powerful did the movement become that Democratic and even Republican politicians scurried to prove their anti-apartheid credentials. In 1986, after nearly two decades of black Congressional representatives sponsoring sanctions bills, the CBC registered a historic victory, when it succeeded in getting the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act passed over President Ronald Reagan's veto. That marked the apotheosis of African American influence on US policy towards Africa, which was not to be repeated any time soon. Mandela's release in 1990 and subsequent visits to the United States were widely celebrated as the return of a native son. This was true in other parts of the Diaspora from the Caribbean to Latin America, Europe to Asia.

It is therefore easy to understand the iconic status of Mandela and the overflow of emotion his death has provoked in the Pan-African world. The fact that President Obama started his politics as a student at an anti-apartheid rally, and his acknowledged indebtedness to Mandela's exemplary life and struggle, offers a poignant thread in the thick ties that bind Africa and the Diaspora in the struggle for emancipation from racial tyranny and dehumanization. For the rest of the world Mandela's life and legacy resonate deeply because his progressive nationalism was fundamentally a struggle for human freedom and dignity, for social justice and equality. It is not hard to see why that would be universally appealing to a world rocked by the horrendous devastations of the twentieth century, a century of emancipatory, ambiguous and destructive mass movements, of mass culture, mass consumption, mass education and mass media, as well as mass war and mass murder. The first part of this long century was dominated by the genocidal regimes of Hitler and Stalin and the overlords of imperial Europe, while during the second half the long arc of history swung towards the liberators from the South such as Gandhi and Mandela and from the imperial heartlands themselves such as Martin Luther King. That, I would submit, is Mandela's global historical significance—he was a major player in the most important political movement of the twentieth century, decolonization. And for that his place in history is assured.

07 December 2013

## Debates

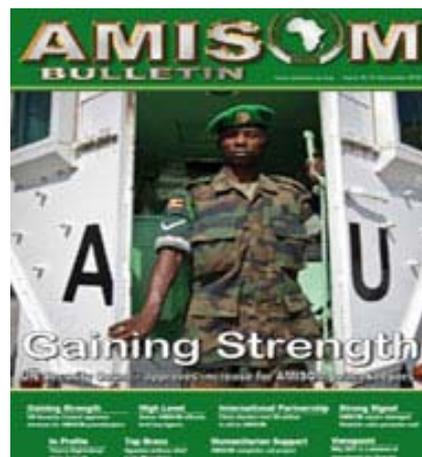
# Peacekeeping as Occupation: the African Union Mission in Somalia

In November 2012, in the wake of a UN report accusing Uganda of backing the M23 rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Ugandan government threatened to withdraw its peacekeeping troops from Somalia. With Ugandans constituting at least one third of the 17,000 strong peacekeeping mission in Somalia, the media warned of the potential for a ‘security vacuum’ absent the Ugandan forces. The spatial metaphor of emptiness implied by this term is striking considering the massive influx of arms and military actors in Somalia since late 2006, all in the name of ‘peace’. While Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni did not follow through with his threat, he was exercising newfound leverage as one of the continent’s leading brokers in the market for violent labor.

In *The War Machines* (2011), anthropologist Danny Hoffman suggests that we think of violence as a mode of work. Like their counterparts in Sierra Leone and Liberia where Hoffman conducted his ethnographic study, violent work has become an increasingly secure source of employment for Ugandan men who work as armed ‘rebels’ in Congo, as ‘peacekeepers’ in Somalia, and as private security ‘contractors’ in Iraq. Crucial to the nature of this work, according to Hoffman, is flexibility of movement: the ‘ability to allow for the temporary colonization of space and then, when necessary, the rapid redeployment of bodies to another location’ (Hoffman 2011: 172). While Hoffman points to multiple sources of the demand for this form of labor, from transnational mining companies, to private security, to the state itself, he devotes less attention to the discourses and practices that produce and define the movement of monies, arms, and troops, naturalizing some while criminalizing others (see Maurer, Coutin, and Yngvesson 2002). Through an

Samar Al-Bulushi  
Yale University  
USA

examination of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), I suggest that ‘peacekeeping’ is a form of violent labor – an occupation of two sorts – characterized not only by the colonization



of space but also by a substantial amount of legitimation work by transnational governing bodies like the United Nations and the African Union.

From the seemingly banal text of UN Security Council resolutions, to AMISOM’s flashy monthly magazine celebrating the opening of Mogadishu’s FIFA-refurbished soccer stadium, to mind-numbing EU funding reports, the institutions and bureaucrats that design peacekeeping operations devote considerable energies to portray the sudden influx of armed labor as a legitimate, ‘neutral’ and stabilizing presence in foreign territories. Like discourses of development, UN rhetoric on peacekeeping subsists on a logic that appears to stand outside political-historical context, inserting itself to fill seemingly vacuous minds and territories *as needed*.

Launched with an initial six-month mandate in January 2007, AMISOM is formally operated by the African Union. In effect, however, AMISOM constitutes the UN Security Council’s legalization of an illegal military operation:<sup>1</sup> just one month before the Security Council vote, 50,000 US-backed Ethiopian troops had invaded Somalia with the declared objective of unseating the Islamic Courts Union—the first stable government Somalia had seen in years (Hagman and Hoehn 2009; Lindley 2010; Kamola 2013). Despite the illegality of the Ethiopian



Rationalisation of AMISOM’S Work in Progress

intervention, both US and UN officials discouraged their immediate withdrawal, stating their concerns, again, about a potential ‘security vacuum.’ With as many as 20,000 deaths and 2 million displaced in a matter of months, this military adventure had indeed wreaked an incredible amount of destruction. Rather than demand an investigation, however, the UN authorized the continued presence of foreign troops with the declared goals of restoring stability and supporting national reconciliation. In just one document (Security Council Resolution 1744), the UN simultaneously affirmed its respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia, and rendered legal the illegal presence of foreign troops.<sup>2</sup> It is in this sense that I suggest we think of peacekeeping operations not just as territorializing practices, but also as bureaucratic ones, in which creative rule-making procedures are integral to the circumvention or re-writing of existing international laws (see de Goede 2007). While the territorializing dimension is performed through the conquering of space, the legitimating dimension is performed through press conferences, workshops, AMISOM publications, and Security Council resolutions.

Today, AMISOM consists of over 17,000 armed personnel and dozens of civilian staff.<sup>3</sup> With forces drawn from Burundi, Uganda, Djibouti Kenya, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Mali, Senegal, and Zambia, AMISOM fulfills Alexis de Toqueville’s call for the creation of a special ‘African army,’<sup>4</sup> designed to minimize the cost in European lives but with substantial financial and bureaucratic support from outside Somalia. With an approximate annual budget of \$700 million<sup>5</sup>, funding comes in various forms (arms, ‘logistical’ materials, trainings, salaries for troops) from the US, UN, European Union, NATO, China, Turkey, and Qatar. Collectively, these actors constitute the thought and practice behind a dizzying array of governing bodies that remain relatively invisible in contrast to the black bodies of AMISOM that constitute the operation’s public face: UN Support Office for AMISOM, the Joint Security Committee, the Joint Financial Management Board, the Technical Selection Committee, the National Security and Stabilization Plan, the Somali Reconstruction and Development Plan, the International Contact Group on Somalia, the UN Trust Fund for AMISOM,

the African Peace Support Operations, the AU commission for African Peace Facility, the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, and the Restructuring and Rebuilding Fund for Somali Security Sector Reform. In this web of committees, commissions, plans, and ‘support’ offices, mid-level bureaucrats are tasked with producing public and not-so-public documents that account for their institution’s role and that delineate the legitimate from the illegitimate (whether in the use of violence or the flow of monies). It is this legitimating work that distinguishes peacekeeping operations from other forms of violent labor.

Public documents (reports, press releases, etc.) celebrate the latest round of trainings, while semi-public ones (grant reports, TORs) account for money spent or to be spent. By studying these documents, we observe the painstaking preoccupation with terminology, characterized by debates over when to use the terms *peace-building*, *peace-keeping*, *peace-support*, or *peace enforcement*. While each term is intended to signify a different type of operation, all are intended to be distinguished from war and violence, and instead be associated with the politically neutral and morally righteous (see Pugh 2007).

Further examination of public documents teaches us about ongoing ‘capacity building’ efforts: US military and private security companies train Ugandan troops in Kampala prior to their deployment; US private security companies obtain State Department contracts to transport the Ugandans to Mogadishu; and upon arrival, the Ugandan government (like its Burundian counterpart) hires the ‘non-profit’ US security company Bancroft Global to ‘transform’ these ‘conventional combat forces’ into a ‘much more sophisticated peace-support operations capability.’ (Not announced publicly is the fact that the State Department reimburses the Ugandan and Burundian governments for the Bancroft-led trainings rather than pay Bancroft directly). Ugandan troops then train Somalis, but the Somalis also fly to Kigali and Djibouti City for (re)-training by Rwandan and Djiboutian forces, who themselves are trained by US or private security actors. And to ensure ultimate ‘professionalism,’ private security companies like Bancroft (including Dyncorp and Pacific Architects and

Engineers) conduct follow up trainings of these same Somali forces. Collectively these seemingly endless ‘capacity building’ projects serve to legitimate the movement of certain troops, monies, and arms into specific spaces.

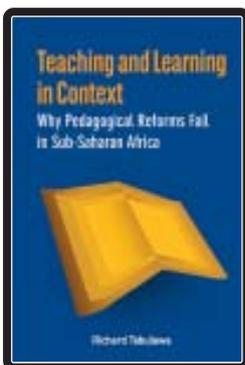
But what of the daily realities of life in Somalia? Without direct observation, we know little of the content of these trainings and the extent to which they emphasize operational ‘flexibility’ over the rule of law. We hear little of the salaries not paid, of arms sold on the black market, and of lives lost – at least one source places an estimate at 3,000 AMISOM troops, which may surpasses the total number of UN peacekeepers who have died in all previous operations.<sup>6</sup> Nor do we hear of abuses committed by the peacekeepers themselves against the population they were called on to protect. While UN reports have documented black market arms sales by AMISOM troops to Al-Shabaab, Human Rights Watch reports of indiscriminate mortar and rocket attacks by AMISOM in civilian areas, leading not only to loss of life but repeated displacement.<sup>7</sup> And while key decision-makers may have reasons to keep such stories from the public eye, mid-level bureaucrats are steeped in emails, trainings, conferences, and paperwork. The documents they produce – and the very process of producing them – work to simplify complexity, avoid ambiguity, and generate a common framework of knowledge and meaning tied not to any specific place or incident, but that extends elastically across time and space (See Feldman 2012). At the same time, however, they are designed to conjure a kind of political complexity and precarity that justifies the need for bureaucratic ‘expertise’. In some ways, the rationalization of AMISOM’s work by AU, EU, State Department, UN, and Somali bureaucrats seems to serve not only the purpose of public legitimation, but also a kind of self-hypnosis through which bureaucratic officials persuade themselves of their high moral purpose (See Scott 1992). In this sense, the contracting of violent labor seems as much about the empty clichés of rule of law and democracy promotion as it is about physical occupation of a given territory. While it is on the streets of Kismayo and Mogadishu that violence is made real, it is in the bureaucratic offices of Nairobi, Geneva, and New York that it is made banal.

## Notes

1. When the Kenyan army launched its own (illegal) invasion of southern Somalia in October 2011, the UNSC again legalized their presence by authorizing an increase in the number of peacekeepers from 12,000 to 17, 731 in order to account for—and assume responsibility for paying the salaries of— the Kenyan forces.
2. United Nations, 'Security Council Authorizes Six-Month African Union Mission in Somalia,' Security Council Resolution 1744, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc8960.doc.htm3> Difficult to determine exact figures, especially when factoring in the various funding arms with agencies/offices focused on AMISOM. Perhaps this is worth emphasizing in the text itself?4
3. Writing in 1841, Alexis de Tocqueville warned of the potential human and financial cost to France of long-term French military engagement in Algeria: This is an intolerable state of things that, if it continues, will nullify our actions in the world and will soon force us to abandon Africa. We must therefore find a way to make the same effort with fewer men, fewer illnesses, and less money. The best means to achieve this is the creation of a special African army (Tocqueville 2001: 75). <http://forums.ssrc.org/kujenga-amani/2012/11/19/towards-more-effective-partnership-peacekeeping-in-africa/> 6
4. James Traub, 'From Black Hawk Down to Standing Up,' [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/31/from\\_blackhawk\\_down\\_to\\_standing\\_up7HRW](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/31/from_blackhawk_down_to_standing_up7HRW), 'Somalia: Stop War Crimes in Mogadishu,' (Feb 2011). See also HRW, 'Harsh War, Harsh Peace,' (April 2010)

## References

- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. Penguin, 1963.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2006.
- De Goede, Marieke. 'Underground Money' *Cultural Critique* 2007.
- De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Writings on Empire and Slavery*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Feldman, Gregory. *The Migration Apparatus: Security, Labor and Policymaking in the European Union* Stanford: 2012. Higate, Paul, and Marsha Henry. 'Space, Performance, and Everyday Security in the Peacekeeping Context,' *International Peacekeeping* (2010).
- Hoffman, Danny. *The War Machines: Young Men and Violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Human Rights Watch, 'Harsh War, Harsh Peace: Abuses by al-Shabaab, the Transitional Federal Government, and AMISOM in Somalia,' April 2010. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/04/13/harsh-war-harsh-peace>
- Human Rights Watch, 'Somalia: Stop War Crimes in Mogadishu,' February 2011. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/14/somalia-stop-war-crimes-mogadishu>
- Hourd, Katharine. 'Bancroft Global Development, U.S. Group, Advises African Troops In Somalia,' *Huffington Post*, August 2011. Available at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/10/bancroft-global-development-somalia\\_n\\_923531.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/10/bancroft-global-development-somalia_n_923531.html)
- Kamola, Isaac. 'Capitalism at Sea: Piracy and State 'Failure' in the Gulf of Aden,' in Smith and Verdeja, eds., *Globalization, Social Movements and Peacebuilding*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013.
- Lindley, Anna. 'Leaving Mogadishu: Towards A Sociology of Conflict Related. Mobility,' *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2010).
- Maurer, Coutin, 'In the Mirror: The Legitimation Work of Globalization,' *Law and Social Inquiry* (2002).
- Pugh, Michael. 'Peacekeeping and critical theory,' *International Peacekeeping* 2007.
- Riles, Annelise. *Documents: Artifacts of Modern Knowledge*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.
- Scahill, Jeremy. *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield*. Nation Books. 2013.
- Scott, James. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Vicky, Alan. 'Cheap Help from Uganda,' *Le Monde Diplomatique* May 2012. Available at <http://mondediplo.com/2012/05/05uganda>
- Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. New York: Verso, 2007.
- Wezeman, Arms Flows and the conflict in Somalia. SIPRI Background Paper 2010.
- Williams, Paul. 'Towards More Effective Partnership Peacekeeping in Africa,' *Kujenga Amani*, November, 2012. Available at <http://forums.ssrc.org/kujenga-amani/2012/11/19/towards-more-effective-partnership-peacekeeping-in-africa/>. In 2008 the UN Monitoring Group estimated that as much as 80% of the arms, ammunition and other material supplied to support the TFG had been diverted for private purposes, to the Somali arms market or to opposition groups. (Wezeman quoting a UN report)



### Teaching and Learning in Context

#### Why Pedagogical Reforms Fail in Sub-Saharan Africa

By Richard Tabulawa

ISBN: 978-2-86978-569-4 — pages: 200

Since the 1990s, sub-Saharan Africa has experienced unprecedented attempts at reforming teacher and student classroom practices, with a learner-centred pedagogy regarded as an effective antidote to the prevalence of teacher-centred didactic classroom practices. Attempts at reform have been going on all over the continent. This book attempts to explain why pedagogical change has not occurred in spite of the much energy and resources that have been committed to such reforms. The book also takes us inside what the author calls 'the socio-cultural world of African classrooms' to help us understand the reasons teachers dominate classroom life and rely disproportionately on didactic methods of teaching. Its conceptual analyses capture the best of both the sociology and the

anthropology of education in contexts of poverty, as well as the politics of education. The book concludes that a socio-cultural approach should be the basis for developing culturally responsive indigenous pedagogies, though these may or may not turn out to be in any way akin to constructivist learner-centred pedagogies.

# Flexible Exchange Rates and the Chinese Yuan

These thoughts are comments on texts I received from friends from China. They complement my article "China 2012" which was published on the Pambazuka News website as Number 45.

## Introduction

The proposals made by HSBC concerning the management of the Yuan can be summed up in one phrase: China should adopt the flexible exchange system, meaning it should allow the Yuan exchange rates to be freely determined by the international currency market. The expected benefits of this system are: (i) eliminating risks related to the current exchange rate; (ii) reducing the costs of transactions; (iii) offering China more freedom to manoeuvre in her national and international policies.

However, the entire history of the last fifty years proves that the flexible exchange system does not actually reduce exchange rate fluctuations, but rather it makes them extremely volatile. Yet HSBC acts as though we should ignore reality and subscribe unconditionally to the dogmatic theory which claims that the open market brings stability. We should therefore:

- (i) Discuss this theory to find out whether it is true or false
- (ii) Find out what led HSBC to adopt this opinion - whose interests (Chinese or otherwise) are being defended by this bank and all those proposing flexible exchange rates.

## The Illusion of Flexible Exchange Rates

The theory which states that flexible exchange rates bring 'stability' is scientifically and logically baseless. It is essentially a theory derived not from an analysis of capitalism not as it exists in reality, but rather from a totally imaginary system, defined by a "generalised market" where those that create supply and demand (of and for anything – goods, employment, liquid assets, agricultural land, access to resources etc.) are free and rational "individuals". The theory substitutes these "individuals" (homo oeconomicus) for what in reality are the

**Samir Amin**  
Third World Forum  
Dakar

creators of this supply and demand: productive enterprises (sometimes of the monopolies), "workers", peasants, banks, etc. It is therefore not a realistic theory taking reality as the starting point for understanding; it is rather an ideological dogmatism a priori. Deng Xiaoping used to say that you should always take reality as a starting point. This "theory" does the exact opposite: it starts from an ideological illusion bearing no resemblance to reality. It is therefore a dogmatic, unscientific theory.

So the real issue which then arises is knowing what hidden interests are being defended by the defenders of this theory. In fact, these interests are those of the great financial monopolies of the historic centres of imperialism (USA, Europe, Japan). These monopolies dominate the production and markets, which are managed exclusively in their interest, that is, maximising their superprofits. I refer back to my book *The Implosion of Contemporary Capitalism*, (which has been translated into Chinese), and to the developments therein that I devoted to the contemporary system of "globalised, generalised and financialised monopolies". This is the fundamental reality from which the characteristics of real capitalism can be analysed.

## Flexible Exchange Rate System and Devaluation of Currencies

The flexible exchange rate system was adopted by the major powers (the USA, Europe, Japan) in 1973-1975, and then gradually became "accepted" by (or rather "imposed" on) the countries of the Global South. What has it produced over those fifty years?

First of all, it has not even produced a relative stabilisation of the exchange rates of major countries (dollars, pounds sterling, marks then euros, Swiss francs, yen). On the contrary, it made these exchange rates volatile, meaning they are

subject to huge fluctuations: for example, the dollar/euro rate doubled in one direction and then the other. These enormous fluctuations are obviously not explained by transformations of the relative competitiveness of the economies concerned (these transformations are very slow). They are explained by the fact that adopting flexible exchange rates opened up a spectacular scope for short-term speculation on the currencies. We must ask who has profited from this speculation? They are the ones who defend flexible exchange rates.

Second, regarding exchange rates between major currencies (the dollar, the euro, the yen, the pound, the Swiss franc) and those of countries in the Global South, adopting flexible exchanges has produced extreme volatility in and continuous devaluation of the Global South currencies. This devaluation has enabled the capital of the monopolies of the Global North to "buy" real assets in the South at negligible prices, such as mines, factories, commercial chains, banking companies and land. This was the aim all along. Take Brazil as an example – did flexible exchange rates support the growth of the Brazilian GDP? It remains very modest at 3 per cent. So do we want to reduce China's growth rate to such an extent?

## Flexible Exchange Rates and Stagnated Growth

Let us therefore return to the issue of who the real beneficiaries of this system are. Forget their ideological discourse, which argues that flexible exchange rates are favourable for all countries, all people and all individuals on the planet.

The fact is that the system has produced fifty years of continuous growth of the financialised monopoly superprofits (that is, the monopolies that operate on the financial markets), especially the major banks of the USA, Europe and Japan. What is the true cost of this growth? The stagnated growth of the real economies of the USA, Europe and Japan. This cost was basically initiation into a permanent recession – where we declare victory at 0.1 per cent to 1.2 per cent growth and claim that we have recovered from the recession!

The defenders of this system are therefore those that profit from it, primarily major banks. HSBC is one of these. HSBC is an old colonial British bank, established in Hong Kong following the First Opium War. This bank has never been sensitive to the "interests of China"! It remains foreign to these interests and is only sensitive to the growth of its superprofits.

### **Flexible Exchange Rates versus Uncertainty of the Yuan Rates**

Until now, China has resisted continuous pressure to put an end to manipulation of the Yuan (Government and Central Bank of China). This resistance has allowed China to continuously record the strongest growth rates in the world.

Naturally, we can always say there is a risk involved due to the uncertainty of the Yuan rates, as decisions that may be taken by the Chinese authorities concerning this rate of exchange are "unknown". I will even say that these Chinese authorities have made errors and could make more in the future. Nobody has a foolproof vaccine. Yet this is a minor risk – as the errors can be corrected – in comparison with the enormous risk of unpredictable volatility of the Yuan rates involved in adopting the flexible exchange system.

### **External versus Internal Demand**

If the theorem that "the flexible exchange system brings stability" is false, then the corollaries that can be deduced from it are also false. However, HSBC draws all its corollaries from the acceptance of this false theorem.

Would a flexible Yuan rate reduce transaction costs? Or on the contrary, would its volatility, in turn, give them more scope? There is no reason for flexible exchange rates to promote the growth of foreign trade. This depends on other, much more decisive factors, that is, the nature and volume of China's production.

Moreover, why should China strive for unlimited export growth that exceeds GDP growth? It's absurd. China must reverse this ratio and switch the growth driver from external to internal demand. The future of Chinese industries is the immense Chinese market and improving the standard of living of the working class. It is not export growth to the detriment of the domestic market.

So why does HSBC Bank offer the opposite of what is required? The little colony – Hong Kong – has no choice but to support growth which comes from exports, and thus to be competitive, at all costs, in increasing exports continuously, without restrictions. But China is not Hong Kong – China has choices. Thinking of turning China into a "large Hong Kong" is the same as wanting to turn China into a "large colony" that sacrifices the standard of living of its people, for the purposes of export. Exports whose recipients are therefore foreign consumers, producing an extreme trade balance surplus, with no purpose.

Does adopting the flexible exchange system give more freedom to manoeuvre in national economic policy? In reality, the total opposite is true; the volatility of the exchanges creates a fragile situation which reduces the range of choices, in terms of national economic policy, and obliges these choices to be subject to the limits of what the dominant system allows (that is, the system dominated by the monopolies of the major powers - USA, Europe, Japan). The "emerging" countries of Latin America and South-east Asia are victims of this very system, and their room to manoeuvre has been greatly reduced in comparison to that of China, which is larger precisely because China has kept out of financial globalisation (and out of the flexible exchange system).

Behind HSBC and the other large banks lies the strategic political objective of the USA, Europe and Japan, which is to ruin China's sovereign plan of building a great independent modern economy, forcing her to adhere the plan to an unequal relationship with the major powers, and reducing it to tender like the plans of other countries of the Global South, Brazil, etc.

### **Financial "Speculation" or "Transaction"**

Behind HSBC is Hong Kong, but what is Hong Kong? It was a British colony until it was politically reinstated into the Chinese nation. The economy set up in Hong Kong was a colonial economy, dominated by firms that were and have remained the property of foreign capital, even if "rich Chinese" are associated with it, like a comprador bourgeoisie. HSBC is a bank of this type, that is property of foreign capital, with Chinese associates. It is not surprising that this bank proposes a policy that would turn China into a large

Hong Kong – an economy dominated by foreign capital, with Chinese associates. What is more desirable? Going in that direction or slowly transforming Hong Kong so that it truly becomes more and more Chinese, and less and less foreign? Like China, where the presence of foreign interests is accepted, but subject to the command of the Chinese state and Chinese interests, and not the other way round.

Taiwan is in a different situation to Hong Kong, because if Taiwan was a Japanese colony, the power that the Kuomintang exerts there would eradicate it. Admittedly the KMT is a reactionary party and as such, is not immune to influences from within the comprador bourgeoisie. However, the KMT also originates from a revolution which brought forward a national plan (which was bourgeois). I won't develop this any further, as my knowledge of Taiwan is highly insufficient.

HSBC believes that its argument for adopting flexible exchange rates for the Yuan is reinforced by saying – look at Hong Kong, our fortune is made from a mass of floating capital, thanks to speculation on the exchange rates (although HSBC prefers to say "financial transactions" rather than "speculation") ...Yes, the fortune of foreign bankers! Does that really equate to the fortune of China?

### **Internationalisation and Prospects for Convertibility of the Yuan**

The Sapanha's position in the second article that I will comment on is different to that of HSBC. It is a careful position, close to the official position of the Beijing authorities. Sapanha notes that internationalisation is already at work, but the prospects for convertibility and opening up of the capital account are still a long way off (on the horizon for 2020). Sapanha seems to approve this cautious policy.

Although it is remote, convertibility, floating exchange and the opening up of the capital account still remain the objective. I have said it before, and I will repeat, that carrying out this objective would be catastrophic. However, if we must go in this catastrophic direction, it's better to go slow rather than fast! By going slowly, at least it will be possible to observe the negative effects of steps in this direction, to correct them and stop!

To prevent countries from stopping on this catastrophic path, the ideologists of

Washington, the IMF and the World Bank invented "shock therapy" – which destroys everything and adopts all principles of economic liberalism overnight, as found in USA. Russia under Yeltsin accepted "shock therapy" and it was a total disaster – Russia would experience much suffering and would take several decades to leave the tunnel it was driven into by "shock therapy".

Moreover, in my opinion, if China goes slowly (towards 2020?) the danger of catastrophe is highly likely to have disappeared by this time, as the neoliberal system, founded on the free markets, financial deregulation and flexible exchange rates, is already very sick. I have previously stated that the implosion of this system has begun and it will continue to deepen. What will be left of this system in 2020? I believe it will have disappeared by this time, but I don't know what it will be replaced by – it could be better or it could be worse. For example, by this time, the euro could have disappeared and the European Union could even become fragmented (with Great Britain being the first to leave). This is not my topic of discussion in these comments. I refer back to my book *The Implosion of Contemporary Capitalism*.

### **The Bancor as the Sole International Reserve Currency**

Sopanha finishes by interpreting a suggestion made in 2009 by Zhou Xiaochuan, Governor of the Central Bank of China, to make Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) an international reserve currency alongside the other major currencies (the dollar, the euro, the Chinese Yuan, etc.), which would require the Yuan to become a convertible currency.

My personal reading of Zhou's suggestion is different. It seems to me that, beyond short-term measures such as the SDRs, Zhou was thinking more of the long term proposal made by Keynes in 1945: the Bancor.

The Bancor could have been the sole international reserve currency, rather than a reserve currency alongside others. The Bancor would have been defined as a basket of national key currencies, balanced according to the importance of each currency. It would have been measured by the volume of real transactions made in each of these national currencies. By "real transactions" we must include com-

mercial exchange and direct investments abroad, and exclude international financial transactions of speculation. As the objective of the Bancor was to reduce speculation and not to grant it full scope for deployment, as with the floating exchange system. Exchange rates between the selected currencies would have been fixed rather than left to the market. Of course, these fixed rates could be revised from time to time by concerted decision of the countries concerned, but not on a day-to-day basis, as the system's total autonomy would be left to the national economic policies. The different consequences of these different policies would then have imposed intermittent revision of the rates.

The Bretton Woods system rejected the Bancor. It went much too far and limited the then enormous power of the dollar, which Keynes wanted to associate the pound sterling with on equal footing. However, Bretton Woods retained a small part of the ideas of Keynes – fixed but revisable exchange rates and subsequent creation of SDRs besides other reserve currencies. Bretton Woods was then abandoned in 1971, to the advantage of floating exchange rates.

What I have read – between the lines – of Zhou's intention in the long term is the Bancor. But I admit, as comments from the most senior Chinese officials would suggest, that my capacity to read between the lines is somewhat limited.

### **Foreign Assets Acquisition versus Liquid Reserves**

The issue raised concerning China's purchase of foreign assets deserves to be developed. China has given first priority to the growth of its exports, which is stronger than that of the GDP. It then accumulates a growing surplus which it places almost entirely in liquid reserves, retained largely in dollars, that is by buying US Treasury bills with only minimal interest, which in reality is negative, (lower than the rate of inflation).

This choice of giving priority to exports was probably necessary to begin with, in the 1990s. China had to gather together a decent volume of currencies quickly, in order to import the goods that were essential to growth; equipment and technology, raw materials, oil. However, China has gone too far in this direction, as the reserve placed in the already

enormous dollar continues to increase relentlessly.

So is it necessary to continue, modifying only the surplus composition and usage, making liquid investments in the dollar rather than buying real assets such as factories, mines, agricultural land? This solution could be tempting, but it involves dangers that must not be underestimated:

The vulnerability of such investments is considerable. Imperialist countries make this kind of investment in the Third World. However, foreign investments are always dangerous for non-imperialist countries that do not have armed forces ready and waiting to take action if necessary to ensure their "rights" are respected. For example, imagine that following a serious natural disaster, China has to draw on her foreign assets, and consequently requests that Washington refunds a large quantity of US treasury bills. If the USA refused, what would China do? Declare war? Here's another example – when Allende nationalised copper in Chile, the USA organised the Pinochet coup. Could China do the same? Surely not.

Some of these asset acquisitions are negative for the country that China moves into: an example of this would be the sale of African agricultural land. Practising this policy destroys the prospect of building a broad front of the Global South countries against American hegemony and imperialist pillaging. This path should not be taken, as it will serve to insulate China and thus eventually incur America's aggression, if Washington deems it to be necessary. The plans for acquiring foreign assets must therefore be studied in concrete terms, and they must be associated with plans to intensify good cooperation between China and the countries of the Global South. For example, China buys a copper mine in Zambia and associates this purchase with participating in Zambian industry building, which the western "club of donors" always denies. These industries are in a partnership, China/local state. The advantage: China contributes to building a "Global South front", reducing the insulation pursued by the USA. Yet perhaps unfortunately, we no longer believe that China has this potential. This is a serious error.

On many of the issues raised here, I recommend reading this excellent book: Yilmaz Akyuz, *Financial Crisis and Imbalance*: South Centre, Geneva, 2012.

**N.B.**

The so-called economic science taught in the universities of the West, especially in the United States, is founded on one premise: the existence of a "homo oeconomicus" – a human being that would not have known evolution in history, that would be identical today to beings of five thousand years ago, that would be the same everywhere on the planet and across all the ages, and would belong to neither any particular nation or people, nor any social class that makes up this nation. Whether entrepreneurs, factory or bank owners, workers or peasant farmers, they are all the same homo oeconomicus, and the interaction of all these equal and identical individuals, by their exchanges on the market, would constitute the social fabric and the economic system of production. Economics is reduced to this simplistic anthropology, the worst kind of anthropology imaginable. This kind of economic science then exerts all its intelligence on deducing what logic allows to be deduced from interactions on the markets.

This curious way of thinking is not new. The ancient Chinese believed in the existence of dragons. Thinkers, as intelligent as ourselves, would work hard at drawing conclusions on the existence of these imaginary beings and attributing

qualities to them (as the homo oeconomicus is defined by selfishness and rationality of behaviour). All that can be concluded in order to understand how the fate of the Chinese would depend on these dragons.

The Chinese did not have the monopoly on this way of thinking. The European Christians of the Middle Ages believed in the angels. Theologians, as intelligent as ourselves, could write theses on topics such as "the sex of the angels" because they thought that the answer to this question would increase understanding of the world.

Method: deriving knowledge by taking an imaginary premise as a starting point. Method of presenting the arguments concerned: using jargon to the ordinary people (such as the jargon of today's economists). This is a means of imposing the political conclusion that we want to reach in invoking the "indisputable science of the experts".

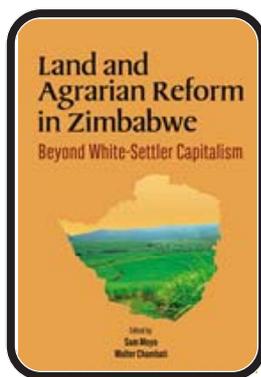
It goes without saying that by taking an imaginary premise as a starting point, any conclusion can be drawn – anything, everything and the exact opposite. We are told that the homo oeconomicus acts rationally, on the basis of what he thinks of the actions and reactions of others (these are the famous "anticipations").

The result of interactions on the markets will thus depend on these anticipations, it is unknown, and can thus be imagined how we please.

If you ask yourself false questions such as what are the characteristics of the dragon, the sex of the angels, or the anticipations of the homo oeconomicus, you cannot use your intelligence in an effective and useful way. You waste time; you sterilise the intellect. The American universities of economics do not produce intelligent experts; they sterilise their students' intellect.

This kind of economics is merely a pseudo-science, like the science of the dragons or the angels. It was created in response to Marx and to discredit him. Marx effectively began to teach us the reality of society on the basis of real (existing) concepts; recognition of successive and different periods in the history of peoples and humanity, recognition of specific structures of organisation of production and power, and of social classes etc. Marx is realistic; whereas American "economics" is not.

I also wanted to avoid jargon, which serves to mask reality, and draw on language which, I hope, is accessible.



### **Land and Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe**

Edited by *Sam Moyo and Walter Chambati*

ISBN: 978-2-86978-553-3 • pages : 372 p.

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.

This book comes to a conclusion that the Zimbabwe land reform represents a new form of resistance with distinct and innovative characteristics when compared to other cases of radicalisation, reform and resistance. The process of reform and resistance has entailed the deliberate creation of a tri-modal agrarian structure to accommodate and balance the interests of various domestic classes, the progressive restructuring of labour relations and agrarian markets, the continuing pressures for radical reforms (through the indigenisation of mining and other sectors), and the rise of extensive, albeit relatively weak, producer cooperative structures. The book also highlights some of the resonances between the Zimbabwean land struggles and those on the continent, as well as in the South in general, arguing that there are some convergences and divergences worthy of intellectual attention. The book thus calls for greater endogenous empirical research which overcomes the pre-occupation with failed interpretations of the nature of the state and agency in Africa.

## New Media, New Truths, New Lies: Popular Struggles in Africa and the Media\*

The bursting of citizens onto the streets of Tunisia and Egypt early in 2011 and the ensuing overthrow of the dictators Ben Ali and Mubarak attracted widespread media attention that characterized these events as the beginning of an ‘Arab Spring’.<sup>1</sup> But during the same period, though largely ignored by the mainstream media, there were mounting protests, demonstrations and actions by citizens in a number of other African countries including Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, Western Sahara, Zimbabwe.<sup>2</sup> While many of these have not (yet) been on a scale witnessed in either Tunisia or Egypt, the fact is that the events in these countries represent qualitative changes in the political and social environment. And yet these events have received little media attention. The only significant exceptions seem to be in the case of Côte d’Ivoire, Libya, Somalia and Mali where Western governments have been involved in military interventions; Senegal, where mass protests, especially by the youth, prevented former president Abdoulaye Wade from establishing his dynasty; and South Africa where striking miners in the Lonmin platinum mines were massacred. Even in these instances, the perspective of the media has been, I would suggest, strongly biased towards propagating the narrative of power – corporate and imperial power.

The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt were, for much of mainstream media, unexpected, just as they were for the US administration, the IMF, and the World Bank who had been lauding the regimes of Ben Ali and Mubarak as stable allies of democracy before the uprisings began. Tunisia was even declared the most successful and stable government! While Al Jazeera provided almost 24-hour coverage from within Tunisia and Egypt during the uprisings, the majority of western broadcasting and print media,

Firoze Manji  
CODESRIA  
Dakar

perhaps caught napping by the illusions of stability that they had been fed to them by the US administration were taken by surprise. Without reporters on the ground until much later, their primary source of information became new media, especially Twitter and Facebook. They were quick to name the events, therefore, as the Twitter and Facebook revolutions. As many studies have subsequently shown, neither of these new media outlets could be shown to have played a significant role in the mass mobilizations of citizens. Indeed in Egypt, the largest popular mobilizations occurred in the aftermath of the Mubarak regime decision to cut off access to the internet and to the mobile phone networks. In characterizing the uprisings as a function of new media alone, they revealed an apparent lack of awareness of the scale of social discontent that had been manifest and growing in both countries for some years prior to the mass mobilizations that brought down the regimes. There had been a series of worker and student strikes across Egypt in the years before, and activists had pounded their feet organizing and encouraging people to protest. The mobilisations were the result of sheer hard work by activists and trade unionists.

What also tends to be ignored are the subclinical manifestations of rising discontent that are reflected in the emergence of a wide range of social movements such as *Bunge la Mwaninchi* (People’s Parliament) in Kenya, *Abahlali* base Mjondolo in South Africa, the shack-dwellers movement, landless peoples movements, peasant movements, women’s movements, movements of LBGTIQ people, anti-eviction campaigns, anti-privatization movements, trade

unions and many other such formations across the continent.

Such lack of awareness is, I would suggest, symptomatic of much of mainstream media’s reporting on the global South where the agency of citizens is assumed to be lacking. The narrative and the perspectives of the ‘wretched of the earth’ is rarely seen as worthy of reporting, it is the narrative of imperial power or of corporations that tends to predominate. Or put it another way, there is tendency to see the people of the global South, and especially in Africa, as natives, not as citizens — the objects, not the makers, of history.

Where discontent has been reported upon, the explanation that is often presented, especially by the more conservative sections of the media, is that the uprisings have occurred because the growing middle-classes have rising expectations for individual freedom, mobility, money, private health and education, luxury commodities, cars, and so on. It is suggested that what is fuelling the discontent with autocratic regimes is middle-class aspiration for an unfettered market and frustration with the regimes that prevent them enjoying these benefits. To give credence to this perspective, the African Development Bank and the World Bank claim that Africa has a burgeoning middle class: apparently one-in-three Africans are today middle class, based on the ridiculous definition of that class as being those with an income of \$2-\$20 a day, a group that includes a vast number of people considered extremely poor by any reasonable definition, especially given the higher prices of most consumer durables in African cities. Conveniently forgotten, of course, is that 61 per cent of Africans, who are below the \$2 a day level, are destitute, hardly able to keep body and soul together.

So what gave rise to the protests, uprisings and revolutions that we have been witnessing?

## A common history

The discontent that gave rise to the uprisings in North Africa has causes and origins similar to the social upheavals witnessed in other parts of the continent, namely the growing impoverishment of the majority associated with neoliberal economic policies that have dominated the global South over the last 30 years.

This was a period during which there have been, especially in Africa, systematic reversals of the gains of independence.

It is important here to recognize the extraordinary achievements of post-independence governments prior to the 1990s. There were major economic and social transformations carried out by post-independence governments as part of the social contract established with the mass movements whose uprisings during the post Second World War period had brought nationalists into power. These are frequently forgotten by media, academia and the 'development' industry alike. According to a UN/WIDER report produced by Surendra Patel, over the 40 years from 1950-1990, countries of the South sustained an average annual growth rate of over 5 per cent by a population ten times larger than that of the developed world. There had been significant levels of industrialization and increasing share of manufacturing in exports; an increase in the rates of savings and investment; and an unprecedented expansion of social development, including health and education, dramatic improvements in life-expectancy (from 35 to over 60 years), literacy and unprecedented expansion of education.<sup>3</sup> In other words, in a relatively short period, the *underdevelopment* of the continent by European and trans-Atlantic slavery and by colonialism about which Walter Rodney so brilliantly wrote<sup>4</sup> was on the way to being reversed.

Such gains of independence were to be cruelly arrested beginning in the early 1980s. Almost without exception, the same set of social and economic policies – the so-called structural adjustment programmes – were implemented across the African continent opening avenues for capital expansion through the extreme privatization and liberalization of the economies. The state was declared 'inefficient' (despite its earlier remarkable achievements) and public services were first run down before being sold off

cheaply to the private sector, principally to international corporations. The state was barred from subsidizing agricultural production (in the way that US and Europeans continue to support agriculture today), and prohibited from investing in social infrastructure, including capital investment in health, education, transport and telecommunications, until eventually public goods – the commons – were sold off to and taken over by international corporations. Tariff barriers to imports from advanced capitalist countries were removed, access to natural resources opened up for pillaging, and tax regimes relaxed to the advantage of international corporations and the local elite.

The effect was to reduce the state to a narrowly prescribed role in economic affairs, with precious little authority or resources for the development of social and public infrastructure. Its primary role was in effect reduced to ensuring an 'enabling environment' for international capital and policing the endless servicing of debt to international finance institutions and governments. With such narrow *marge de manoeuvre*, governments abdicated their role in determining economic and social policies.

Over time, privatization was extended to land, agriculture, and food production and distribution. The scale of land-grabbing that has been a feature of the most recent forms of dispossession taking place in Africa have, in general, received a fair amount of attention by the media and to some extent also by the development industries. But for the large part, land-grabbing has been portrayed as positive investment and in support of 'development', and rarely is there analysis of the price paid by the peasantry in the loss of land, livelihood and the creation of mass poverty. And rarely is attention given to the fact that the land so grabbed is to be used for the needs of the advanced capitalist countries and corporations, and not for the benefit of citizens who originally owned it.

The result of neoliberal policies was to increase the gap between the haves and the have-nots. A small minority, whose interests and enterprises were closely associated with the multinational corporations and finance, got obscenely rich, while the standard of living of the majority and value of the wage for those lucky enough to find work declined

rapidly. Unemployment, landlessness and homelessness became the lot of the many. Forced to survive on inadequate nutrition, living in squalor and lacking the basic infrastructure of water and sanitation and adequate food, it is hardly surprising that the period saw a growing prevalence of diseases associated with suppression of the immune system and weakened resistance to infection.

This period witnessed not only wide scale and systematic dispossession of natural resources and wealth from the continent, but also a gradual political dispossession of citizens' ability to influence social and economic policies. African governments had in effect become more accountable to the international monopolies, international financial institutions, banks and aid agencies (most of whom ardently supported the implementation of neoliberal policies) than to the citizens who elected them.

And it is thus no surprise that we are witnessing as a result a growing disenchantment with the policies pursued by our governments, a rising anger at the widening gap between rich and poor, and a growing realization that the lot of the majority has been to continue to suffer in much the same way as – and sometimes worse than – they had under colonial or apartheid rule. It was this anger, combined with the frustration with the way in which their regimes fattened themselves through their collusion with international capital in the exploitation of their countries that fuelled the explosion of citizens on to the streets of Tunisia and Egypt. And it was the same frustrations and anger that have brought about protests and uprisings across so many African countries. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that the events we have witnessed in Greece, Spain, Occupy movements, Wisconsin, and even the Idle-No-More movements, share the same fundamental etiology.

## Stereotypical perspectives

How, then, has the period of pauperization and impoverishment of the continent over the last thirty years been portrayed?

The predominant view of Africa is not a place that had been devastated and impoverished by slavery and colonialism; nor as a place that had succeeded in the immediate post-independence period in reversing some of those historical

disadvantages against all odds; nor a place where attempts to implement social policies that favoured the majority were frequently thwarted by assassinations, western supported coups d'état, threats and economic blockades, to say nothing of foreign military intervention to achieve regime change.

Rather, Africa is portrayed – either explicitly or implicitly – as a place whose natural state has always been a place of poverty.

The reality is that it has become conventional to describe Africans only in terms of what they are not. They are chaotic not ordered, traditional not modern, tribal not democratic, corrupt not honest, underdeveloped not developed, irrational not rational, lacking in all of those things the West presumes itself to be. White Westerners are still represented as the bearers of 'civilization', the brokers and arbiters of development, while black, post-colonial 'others' are still seen as uncivilized and unenlightened, destined to be development's exclusive objects.

At the heart of this construct of Africa is in effect an implicit denial that Africa's people have a history, or that if there is a history, it is irrelevant to today's challenge of 'development'. Thus, half a century after most African countries achieved independence, there are parallels with the denialism that pervaded colonial rule during which it was also assumed that Africans had no history. As Milan Kundera put it:

"The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history, Then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long the nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was. The world around it will forget even faster. ... The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."<sup>5</sup>

Walter Rodney made much the same point about the destruction of memory under colonial rule:

The removal from history follows logically from the loss of power which colonialism represented. The power to act independently is the guarantee to participate actively and consciously in history. To be colonised is to be removed from history, except in the most passive sense.<sup>6</sup>

He went on to castigate white anthropologists "who came to study 'primitive society'. Had he lived today, perhaps he might have turned his ire on development academics, professionals and perhaps even sections of the media who today perform a similar function!

The stereotypical view is that Africa is hopeless, indebted and heavily aid-dependent – a 'basket-case', as Tony Blair so delicately put it – a continent that fails to develop without the assistance of aid and the *noblesse oblige* of the development industry. That this view is unsubstantiated by the facts does not appear to deter its propagation.

According to a recent study of 33 'sub-Saharan' African countries conducted by the University of Massachusetts, these countries lost a total of \$814 billion through capital flight during the period between 1970 and 2010. Taking into account a modest estimate of the interest earned on that capital, this would amount to a cumulative total loss of at least \$1.06 trillion. Even without interest, the volume of capital flight far exceeds the amount of official development aid (\$659 billion) and foreign direct investment (\$306 billion) received by these countries over the same period, *making Africa a net creditor to the rest of the world*.<sup>7</sup> With rather few exceptions, such perspectives rarely get aired.

During the early years of the new millennium, many Northern governments proclaimed that aid to developing countries had grown. Through an analysis of IMF data, Abugre was able to show that the increase could be largely accounted for by the cancellation of debt to Iraq and Nigeria. Since debt relief is considered as part of aid, the repayment of interest on debt also needs to be considered as part of the equation. Taking debt servicing into account, his analysis showed that the net flow of aid from the North to the South over the period 2002 to 2007 amounted to *minus \$2,785 billion*. That is to say that, the net flow of aid was not – as is usually portrayed as being in favour of the South – but rather a net flow of aid from the South to the North.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, despite all the evidence (and I have only cited here a few examples), prevailing wisdom remains that the North is the saviour of the peoples of the South, and in particular, that Africa cannot survive without being supported by the North.

## Development pornography

It is important here to emphasize that it would be wrong to blame mainstream media for such caricatures of Africa and its people. This perception of Africa is to be found pervading, to varying degrees, business, academia, parliamentary political milieu (especially foreign policy), the arts and literature. It is to be found especially in the development / aid industry. Indeed, this perspective is at the heart of the rationale for overseas development aid, overseas volunteering, the work of many international development agencies, development courses at universities, and public responses to fundraising for 'poverty alleviation'.

International development NGOs and the aid industry tend to have a cozy relationship with the media. Governments need to justify devoting public funds to 'development'. And NGOs need to entice the public to make donations for their work in Africa. To raise funds effectively, or to justify aid, Africans are portrayed as suffering victims, starving, emaciated and pleading for help. Graphic images are used of starving children by ever growing numbers of competing charities to gain the attention of the public. But repetitive portrayal deadens the appeal. So each image depicting poverty has to be more graphic than the last to elicit responses. The spiral leads to what may be characterized as 'development pornography'.<sup>9</sup>

It was the use of such pornography that Walter Rodney – back in the 1970s – so roundly condemned: "Oxfam never bothered their conscience by telling [the public] that capitalism and colonialism created the starvation, suffering and misery of the child in the first place." Save the Children Fund's current use pictures of the 'black child with a transparent rib-case, huge head, bloated stomach, protruding eyes and twigs as arms and legs' for fundraising might equally be blamed for failing to tell the public that it is development policies, corporations, banks and international financial institutions that created the 'starvation, suffering and misery of the child in the first place.'

That mainstream media should reflect the pervasive prejudices of the dominant ideology is hardly surprising and it would be wrong to hold it solely accountable for creating these negative stereotypes about Africa. But its power to amplify such

views makes its role clearly important in the process of propagating and legitimizing the mythology.

### Media and social protest

The media's shortcomings however are especially revealed in relation to the reporting of protest by citizens or strikes by workers. Protests are frequently sensationalized (or sometime just ignored). It is rare to have analyses that explain to the reader what brought about the protest or strike. Instead, if the action is reported on, there is a tendency to report on scenes of violence or to portray those engaged as causing disruption to the public or to 'development'. Where there is violence, it is frequently the protestors who are condemned: the possibility that the violence might be provoked by over-reactions of the police or the decision of the state to employ heavy-handed repressive mechanisms is rarely given much credence. The result is a caricature that criminalizes protestors in the eyes of the public and the police and legitimizes state repression.<sup>10</sup>

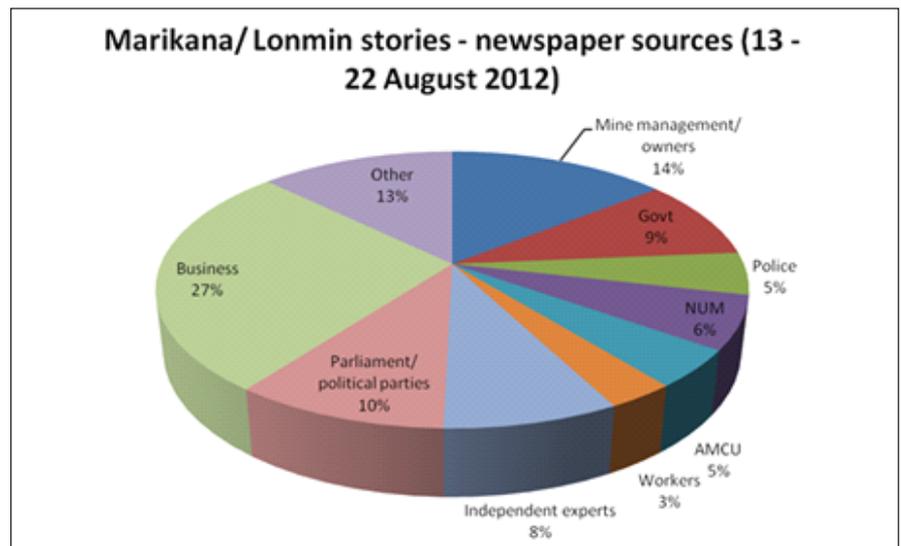
To some extent, journalists are only as good as their sources. If the expert opinions they seek are primarily from governments, business, academia, international NGOs and other institutions that are imbued with the 'basket-case' perspective of Africa, that perspective will inevitably get reproduced by the media. More worrying in the long run is the related, deeper bias regarding the credibility and legitimacy of sources of information when it comes to the reporting of social protest. Thus, for example, in an analysis of more than 2000 stories in the New York Times about Nicaragua, for example, Bennett found that reporters paid much more attention to the views of political elites than to non-official forms of public opinion, such as protest groups or opinion polls.<sup>11</sup>

The way in which the now infamous miner's strike in the Lonmin platinum mines in Marikana, South Africa, during which more than 40 workers lost their lives, was reported (at least in the early period) is illustrative. In analysis of articles published in the period immediately following the events, it was found that media focused almost exclusively on the views of business, parliamentarians, mine owners and management, government and police, with only 3 per cent providing the views of miners themselves (see Fig 1).

Worse still, "... of all 153 articles [analysed] only one showed any attempt by a journalist to obtain an account from a worker about their version of events. There is scant evidence of journalists having asked the miners the simplest and most basic of questions, namely 'what happened?'."<sup>12</sup>

litical situation would also have pointed out how the Ugandan government uprooted local farmers in the area and interned nearly a million of them in camps. Unable to tend their farms, their lives were controlled by Ugandan military personnel, and the population became dependent for their survival on hand-outs from the de-

**Figure 1:** Sources of information related to the reporting of the Marikana massacres<sup>13</sup>



The other feature of much of mainstream media on which I want to briefly comment is in relation to information that gets propagated through new media sources. There is a tendency to take at face value and report uncritically on campaigns that reinforce dominant prejudices such as seen last year in relation to *Kony2012*.

Here was a video that portrayed an American talking with his five-year-old child that sought to demonize Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA. The intent here was clearly to mobilize public opinion to support a call for US military intervention in Uganda. The video went viral, but its premise was rarely subject to any critical analysis in the mainstream media. Why was the LRA being singled out for attention now? As Mamdani points out, "The LRA is a raggedy bunch of a few hundred at most, poorly equipped, poorly armed, and poorly trained. Their ranks mainly comprise those kidnapped as children and then turned into tormentors. It is a story not very different from that of abused children who in time turn into abusive adults. In short, the LRA is no military power."

Anyone familiar with the events in the north of Uganda would already have known this. Anyone familiar with the po-

velopment and humanitarian agencies (who equally benefit from ignoring the causes of the interning of so many people). None of that received attention from the most of mainstream media.

But in particular, what was missed by almost everyone was the involvement of much darker forces in the development of the video that caused such a stir. Investigations by Horace Campbell<sup>14</sup> subsequently exposed the fact that Jason Russell of "Invisible Children" and father to the 5-year-old in the video, was himself trained at the US military sponsored Institute for Creative Technologies (ICT) at the University of Southern California, whose website declares: "ICT was established in 1999 with a multi-year contract from the US Army to explore a powerful question: What would happen if leading technologists in artificial intelligence, graphics, and immersion joined forces with the creative talents of Hollywood and the game industry?" The extent to which the *Kony2012* video was part of a military experiment to see how new media can be used for manipulation of the public imagination remains unknown.

But the critical point about the *Kony2012* video was that it played to the dominant prejudices about Africa, without which it

would not have gained the popularity that it did. In addition, the media focused on the phenomenon of a video that went remarkably viral, but without serious critical analysis of its content and validity.

## Conclusion

That Africa gets portrayed in negative ways cannot be wholly blamed on the media. Media is after all only one of many institutions in modern capitalist societies that manufacture and propagate ideology and prejudice. As Herman and Chomsky have argued, there are considerable pressures on the media for conformity to political consensus. These include pressures from ownership of the media houses, their dependence on advertising as the principal source of revenue, pressures what information is sourced, who is considered 'legitimate' and the resources available for investigative reporting, the political and/or legal threats that media potentially face in addressing politically sensitive materials, as well as the pressures to conform with prevailing ideology and prejudices in society.<sup>15</sup>

The shortcomings of mainstream media, combined with the opportunities created by developments in information and communications technologies, have led to the emergence of alternative media in a way that had not previously been possible. There are today a number of significant websites that provide alternative perspectives and analyses about Africa – including the South African Civil Society Information Service ([www.sacsis.org.za](http://www.sacsis.org.za)), Jadaliyya (<http://www.jadaliyya.com>), Sahara Reporters (<http://saharareporters.com>), West Africa Democracy Radio (<http://wadr.org>), and others, including Pambazuka News (<http://www.pambazuka.org>) which I founded. There are also a number of broadcasting networks operated by activists in the Diaspora (Africa Today on KPFA.org, Afrobeat on WBAI.org etc). Networks such as Al Jazeera have to some extent played an important role in providing a non-western perspective on news (although it too suffers from the pressures imposed on it by its owners about both what it can report as well as how particular news is reported).

To some extent, these alternative media sources perform an important function in overcoming some of the shortcomings of corporate media. But their influence on mainstream media tends to be limited as,

with relatively few exceptions, their output tends to be ignored by corporate media.

To overcome some of the shortcomings of media, civic society has of course no alternative but to raise critical voices of protest against bias in the media, while at the same time supporting new media initiatives that publicize alternative perspectives. But it is important at the same time not to delude ourselves too much about the power of the media: while it is true that media tends to reinforce prevailing prejudices and ideologies, the reality is that the public is not incapable of forming their own opinions about the nature of the materials broadcast or published. The public may be fooled some of the time, but not necessarily all the time.

I believe that there is a danger of devoting too much energy to either critiquing media or trying to create alternative forms of media. In capitalist societies, especially in a period such as ours, where there is such centralization, concentration, and financialisation of capital, as well of the media, it is almost inevitable that media will reflect the interests of those who hold power. Indeed, in some instances, those interests are propagated aggressively. The power of corporate media is substantial. But that is not to say that they are not susceptible to change.

Look at how corporate media represented women in the 1950s and 1960s. That representation did not change merely because convincing arguments were provided, but because the rise of the women's movement challenged those perspectives. That is not to say that women are not exploited by the media today, but rather to say that there is unfinished business that will once again be taken up as the most oppressed and exploited reassert themselves through struggle.

To give another example, there were remarkable changes in the way in which the people of Egypt or Tunisia were portrayed just a couple of years ago. Where once they had been seen as docile, lazy and accepting, such portrayal of the people was transformed when the streets were filled with protesting, creative and courageous people seeking to take the future into their own hands!

The point is that the rise of social movements, the emergence of the struggle of the oppressed and exploited plays a significant role in changing the way in

which the media propagates ideology (or constrains itself in expressing negative perspectives).

Pambazuka News is often perceived of as a news magazine / website / newsletter. But producing and disseminating news was never its purpose. The whole point of Pambazuka was a political one - to nurture, support and contribute to the building of a progressive pan-African movement. We did this in numerous ways: by commissioning and publishing articles, by producing podcasts, by participating in campaigns, by giving voice to those engaged in the struggle for freedom and justice, by enabling social movements to use it as an organizing tool, by organizing events and in some cases even by publishing books. My point here is that the driving force of building a movement was the purpose of Pambazuka. Our point, to paraphrase that well-known saying, was not to just to report on the world, but to change it.

And I think that should be at the heart of the program for the future. What can we do to support the oppressed, exploited, the 'wretched of the earth' to bring about the changes that are so desperately needed to ensure the future of humanity and the future, dare I say it, of the planet? How to we ensure that those voices are heard and how do we ensure that they can organize to bring about change.

It is applying ourselves to that goal that we will change the way in which media portrays our struggles. The media will change in response to momentum of the struggles for freedom and justice, not the other way round. That is not to say that corporate media will simply lie down and accept the changes. Media is a terrain for contestation between corporate power, the state and citizens. But whereas corporate media draws strength from the power of money and its privileged access to the state, citizens can draw their strength from struggles of ordinary people, the disenfranchised, and the exploited.

## Notes

\* First presented at the World Social Science Forum, Montreal, Canada (October 2013)

1. Despite the fact that both Tunisia and Egypt are both in Africa, and have a long and intimate political and historical connection with the rest of the continent (both are members of the African Union).

2. For further details and analyses of these uprisings, see Manji F & Ekine S: *African Awakening: The Emerging Revolutions* (Oxford, Pambazuka Press 2011).
3. Patel S (ed): *Technological Transformation in the Third World. Volume V: The Historic Process*. UN/WIDER 1995.
4. Rodney, W: *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Originally published in 1972, the book has been republished by Pambazuka Press in 2012.
5. Milan Kundera: *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1979.
6. Rodney 1983 *op cit*.
7. Boyce, James K and Ndikumana, Leïonce (2012): *Capital Flight from Sub-Saharan African Countries: Updated Estimates, 1970 - 2010*. Political Economy Research Institute, Amherst: University of Massachusetts, October 2012.
8. Abugre, C: (2010): Development aid: robbing the poor to feed the rich. Pambazuka News. <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/65096>
9. Rotimi Sankore (2005): Behind the image: Poverty and 'development pornography' <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/27815>
10. Duncan, J (2013): The stuff of investigative journalism. SACIS: <http://sacsis.org.za/site/article/1535#>
11. Bennet W: Marginalising the majority: the news media, public opinion and Nicaraguan Policy Decisions. Quoted in Onyedike, Emmanuel U: Re-positioning Africa: The role of African-Americans in changing media treatment of Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies* 13:2 (1996: Fall), p51-60.
12. Duncan, J (2012): It's not just the unions that are cut off from the people but the media too. Paper presented to the Lineages of Freedom Symposium, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, October 2012.
13. Newspapers sampled: Business Day, The Star (including Business Report), The New Age, Citizen, Mail and Guardian, City Press, The Sunday Times and Times, Sowetan, Beeld, Die Burger, Sunday Independent, Financial Mail.
14. Horace Campbell (2012): *Kony2012: militarization and disinformation blowback*. <http://pambazuka.org/en/category/features/80989>
15. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, New York: Monthly Review 1988

---

## The Land Question, Land Grabbing and Agriculture in Africa\*

---

### Introduction

When we studied peasant agriculture in Africa from the seventies down to the nineties, our main concern was to see how peasant agriculture would first and foremost continue to provide livelihood for families that relied on very small plots of land for their farming, or had to lease land from large land owners who charged them exorbitant rents, or had to surrender their produce to state-owned or multinational firms which rendered them to work as a "proletariat working at home".<sup>1</sup> There was a concern regarding how global capitalism was exploiting peasant labor for global accumulation using the post-colonial state more or less as a prefect in this process. But the prefect, too, had to be paid for his services, and the bill always ended up at the peasant's door step: hence the double exploitation of the peasant commodity producer.

Excluded from profit sharing but included in the chain of production as the most critical cog in the machine, there was an assumption that the peasant would remain a permanent feature of global capitalist accumulation for a long time in Africa unless a process of "de-linking" occurred in the history of Africa's social formation.

**Peter Anyang' Nyong'o**  
African Research and  
Resource Forum,  
Nairobi, Kenya

But different models of agricultural production in Africa defined different methods of incorporating peasant agriculture in this wider global political economy. Hence studies of small peasant agriculture, medium peasant production set ups, out-growers and contract farming dominated the study of peasant agriculture in Africa as well as the Third World in general. While the peasants who benefited from the green revolution, in India in particular, improved their livelihoods through higher productivity, in Africa things tended to remain static with most peasant households sinking further into poverty and even disengaging from producing for the market altogether.<sup>2</sup> With declining productivity in subsistence households, and unable to feed themselves; with the dislocation of producers from their farms due to internal conflicts and even civil wars, governments and international organizations resorted to food imports

and food aid to feed previously self sufficient peasant households. Thus food imports and food aid has been growing in Africa, especially with climatic changes which have adversely affected rain fed agriculture in the tropics.

It is under these circumstances that governments in Africa, in collaboration with some western governments, recently embraced the idea of leasing or selling large tracts of land to commercial farming by western based companies to produce food or biofuels that could earn foreign exchange while also providing the domestic economy with food. This is somehow regarded as yet another way of modernizing African agriculture.

But modernization, as Samir Amin observes, has always combined constructive dimensions, namely the accumulation of capital and increasing productivity, with destructive aspects – reducing labor to the state of a commodity sold on the market, often destroying the natural ecological basis needed for the reproduction of life and production – and polarizing the distribution of wealth on a global level. Modernization has always simultaneously *integrated* some work force, as expanding markets created

employment, and *excluded* others who were not integrated in the new labor force after having lost their positions in the previous systems.<sup>3</sup> In its ascending phase, capitalist global expansion integrated many along with its excluding processes. *But now, in the third world peasant societies, it is excluding massive numbers of people while including relatively few.*<sup>4</sup>

Amin made these comments four years before the 2007-2008 global food prices crisis that beckoned the land grabbing phenomenon to begin in earnest. As several studies have now shown, current land grabbing is even more ruthless in excluding massive numbers of peasant farmers from production, making it necessary to ask whether the benefits assumed to ensue are, in the final analysis, mere marketing gimmicks or forms of delayed gratification. It is also possible that putting so-called idle land to commercial production for either food crops or biofuels should give a challenge to African governments to develop more realistic land reform programs that put all land to productive use without necessarily putting the peasants in jeopardy. But land grabbing is not new to Africa; it dates to colonial times. Thus, in order to address the phenomenon as it is emerging today, it must not be treated in isolation from the history of land ownership, alienation and grabbing that has been characteristic of struggles over land from colonial times to today.

### Colonial Agriculture and Land Grabbing

The former British settler colonies in Africa, particularly Kenya and Zimbabwe, for example, share something in common with the Republic of South Africa where the land issue is currently becoming almost explosive. In all three countries immigrant white farmers settled many years ago and acquired land for farming while using cheap black labor. By depriving African peasants of their land through grabbing and compelling them to work as cheap or even free labor on white farms, systems emerged in all the three countries where political power was used to the advantage of the white farming groups and to the gross disadvantage of the African masses, leading to decades of conflicts that culminated in wars of national liberation in all the three countries.<sup>5</sup> At the extreme right was the

apartheid regime in South Africa, followed closely by Northern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, where the white/black political and economic divide was no doubt fascist in almost every aspect of life. In Kenya, though land alienation from Africans was also the project of the colonial state, racial oppression and exploitation was not as severe as in the two southern African countries. Britain had made it clear in 1923 that Kenya would not go the same direction as Northern Rhodesia and South Africa. But conflicts over land ownership and land tenure systems intensified over time in all the three colonies, defining the character of the nationalist struggles almost along similar narratives.

While the British government has finally apologized to the Kenyan Mau Mau freedom fighters – or the Kenya Land Army – and compensated them (if only in token form) for the Mau Mau atrocities after more than 50 years of denial, in South Africa the Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU) has come out to deny any land theft on behalf of the Boer and Afrikaan farmers and accused the ANC of distorting the South African agrarian history.<sup>6</sup> As South Africans commemorate 100 years since the passing of the 1913 Land Act, TAU argues that this British Act was never the "cornerstone of apartheid", nor did it represent any "land theft" from black African people by white South Africans. According to TAU blacks did not have any concept of land tenure or land ownership, so nothing could be stolen from them. A titanic battle is therefore shaping up in the Republic of South Africa between the extreme right of the white farmers and the ANC nationalists, with the former accusing the ANC of representing what it calls "the black supremacists."

It was after the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 under British colonial rule that the 1913 Land Act was enacted mainly to give security to the white farmers by providing them with tenure on their farms while the Africans were relegated to marginal lands, ostensibly predisposing them to harsher conditions of subsistence farming and the poverty attendant therein. Seeking to perform cheap labor in white farms and mines was therefore not a choice but a necessary option to guarantee social reproduction of families and communities relegated to such unproductive land.<sup>7</sup> Black South Africans have been expecting these

historical injustices regarding land use, land access and land ownership to be addressed following the political demise of the apartheid regime in 1994 but very little has been done to date. Somehow the ANC government has been expected to take some queue from what has been happening in Zimbabwe without necessarily disrupting productivity in the South African agrarian economy.

But in a book edited by Sam Moyo and Walter Chambati to be published this year by CODESRIA entitled "Land and Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe: Beyond White Settler Capitalism", the narrative of the failure of the radical measures at land reform and land redistribution initiated over ten years ago by Mugabe may very soon be revised, if the data and arguments presented by Moyo and his colleagues are indeed tenable. If that is the case, then South Africa will obviously be on the spot on how it deals with the land question in post apartheid South Africa. Contrary to the impression created over the last ten years, the essays in this book advance the thesis that land redistribution has been successful. Although problems have been encountered along the way, the African farmers have been adapting to commercial farming reasonably well and productivity in such farms has been improving with time.

It has already been demonstrated in the Kenyan case that small holding agriculture can, with reference to certain crops, be more productive than large scale commercial farms. The Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) and Kenya's a million acre resettlement scheme proved that small holding agriculture was more productive than commercial large scale white settler farms which were inefficient and generally less intensive in land use. But small holder agriculture in Kenya is itself currently going through enormous stress, with the prices of farm inputs going beyond the ceiling, scarcity of labor increasing, affordability of labor becoming problematic, family labor no longer reliable as young ones increasingly abhor rural life and cost of living for peasants generally untenable.

### Farm Subsidies

Many governments in Africa have responded to this crisis of peasant-based agricultural production by proposing government subsidies to peasant agriculture. The case of Malawi under

Bingu wa Mutharika is often cited as a success worth emulating. But even before governments go the Mutharika way, basic questions need to be addressed and answered. Are all peasant farm sizes the same in all cases to be subsidized and what difference does it make in terms of returns to the peasant every season when subsidies are received? In each and every parcel of land cultivated by the peasant, what constitutes the major cost: labor, farm implements, cultivation (by hoe, ox-driven plough or tractor), fertilizers, weeding, harvesting or storage? What aspects of these will be subject to subsidy and what does such subsidy mean in the final analysis?

It is as a result of the consideration of these issues that Nyerere introduced *Ujamaa* in Tanzania. Eventually, however, this initiative was unsuccessful not so much because it was not rational, but more because its implementation came with various forms of political oppression and economic exploitation by state agents and agencies that the peasants rejected, and hence the so called failure of *Ujamaa*. But the cooperative movement organized by the peasants themselves can reproduce the *Ujamaa* concept without allowing the heavy hand of the state to distort the advantages of pooling resources together, rationalizing labor, organizing marketing and ensuring stable incomes for peasant farmers. The tea and coffee cooperatives in Kenya are worth looking into in this regard.

### **Biofuels, Land Grabbing and the African Peasantry**

Following the world food price crisis of 2007-2008, multinational corporations, foreign governments and international financial institutions started to acquire large tracts of land in Africa for purposes of growing food crops and biofuels in what has now come to be known as a land grabbing phenomenon.<sup>8</sup> Land grabbing is described in various ways. It is seen, for example, as getting large tracts of land cheaply from naïve and ignorant "local rulers" in Africa, be they chiefs (as in South Sudan) or government executives (as in Mozambique, Tanzania and Madagascar). This land may be bought or leased very cheaply for a number of years. The price of buying or leasing is quite often worked out without any reference to the prevailing market forces. If there is any force to determine the price

it is usually the cunningness of the buyer or the gullibility of the seller. In any case the transactions are usually shrouded in secrecy, and consequently the seller gains as an individual in terms of kickbacks while the community or nation from which the land is leased or sold suffers enormous loss. While the buyers argue that the land leased or sold is idle anyway and putting it to productive use is good for the local economy, critics have argued that land grabbing has not so far produced positive results: food production is negatively affected, the environment can be easily endangered and the profits earned by the so called investors are not usually 'ploughed back' to the domestic economy.

In an attempt to reduce American dependence on oil from the Middle East and Venezuela, for example, the George W. Bush administration offered huge financial incentives to Midwest farmers to turn their maize into biofuels (ethanol). This contributed significantly to the global food price crisis of 2007-2008, which led to riots and deaths in many countries. In addition, EU countries signed up to an undertaking to use a greater proportion of transport fuel from biofuels (10% by 2020), thereby contributing significantly to the global land grab by encouraging them to find land for biofuels production elsewhere, particularly in Africa, because they can't be produced within the EU.<sup>9</sup>

Such crops as *Jatropha* were the first to be touted as major sources of biofuels that could grow in the tropics easily, being reasonably resistant to the vagaries of the weather and poor soil conditions. Hence they would be planted in vast stretches of marginal lands without depriving either the peasants or the pastoralists of land. Recent evidence, however, shows that optimism on biofuels, such as *Jatropha*, is now fading in such places like Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. Nonetheless there is still growing literature from international NGOs and research institutes cautioning on "the land grabbing industry" in Africa, and its threat to food production, increase in poverty and marginalization of peasant farmers and pastoralists in Africa.

In an article published in the British daily, *The Guardian*, in June 2011, US universities were said to be involved in "land grabbing" in Africa.<sup>10</sup> Institutions including Harvard and Vanderbilt were

reported to be using huge funds to buy land in deals that could face farmers out. Using British hedge funds and European financial speculators to buy or lease vast areas of African farm land, these institutions were taking advantage of political regimes and elites eager to earn hard currency by "hawking" their lands cheaply in an international market created and controlled by few actors. For example, the American universities were going through London-based Emergent asset management firms running one of Africa's largest land acquisition funds by JP Morgan and Goldman and Sachs currency dealers.<sup>11</sup> By 2011, *The Guardian* estimated that close to \$500 million had been invested in such deals by this group with the expectation of getting 25 per cent return on investment.

The same article went on to point out that the largest land deal in Africa then was in South Sudan where as much as 9 per cent of the land is said by Norwegian analysts to have been bought between 2007 and 2011. This deal was negotiated between a Texas-based firm, Nile Trading and Development, and a local co-operative run by absent chiefs. The 49 year lease of 400,000 hectares of Central Equatoria for around \$25,000 allows the company to exploit all natural resources including oil and timber. The company, headed by former US Ambassador Howard Eugene Douglas, says it intends to apply for UN-backed carbon credits that could provide it with millions of dollars a year in revenues.

Research by the World Bank and others suggest that nearly 60 million hectares of land, an area the size of France, has been bought or leased by foreign companies in Africa in recent times. The figure may be growing. This could not cause any serious concern if, in the final analysis, it added positively to a green revolution that, in effect, improved agricultural productivity, provided employment to many unemployed youths in Africa, reduced poverty and created a value addition industry that progressively integrated agriculture to industry in Africa's development. As Olivier de Schutter, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food observes, "if it is to be truly responsible, agricultural investment must be investment that benefits the poor in the South, rather than leading to a transfer of resources to the rich in the North. It must be investment that truly

reduces hunger and malnutrition, rather than aggravating them."<sup>12</sup> De Schutter has been very consistent in cautioning European governments and multinational corporations to go slow on biofuels production in the Third World which has a tendency of impacting negatively on peasant agriculture and impinging on the "right to food". But he has also noted that growing crops for food and fuel together can work but farmers and policymakers must prioritize hungry people and think local.<sup>13</sup> In this regard, the peasant farmer need not necessarily be treated with kid gloves. If peasant small holdings are to survive, they need to be competitive and viable in producing for a domestic market that will ensure that all are fed even before any produce is exported in the commercial circuit.

### Looking Ahead: Some Questions to be Addressed

The main question we are currently facing in Africa, whether we are looking at land reform and redistribution in the former settler colonies or recent cases of land grabbing, is the tension between small holder farming and commercial large scale agriculture. Are African farms, of whatever size, commercially viable given their levels of productivity and global competitiveness? In any case, does African agriculture need to be commercially viable to be useful to the African people? To what extent have African peasants responded positively or negatively to the vagaries of the global agricultural markets? Or do they really need to respond to these markets to be viable? What happened to our previous concern for de-linking as a way of organizing African economies which would reproduce themselves on the basis of self reliance within national democratic and developmental states? Have African peasant producers always been victims of the unfavorable prices of factor inputs or are there other indigenous methods by which they at times circumvent these difficulties through crop diversification, crop rotation, straddling and "cheating the state"?

Suppose commercial viability of agriculture is important, then what reforms

in land tenure systems will be necessary to enhance the commercial viability of farming in Africa? If we stop at the level of commercial viability alone, then perhaps there would be little reason to break up the large scale commercial farms in South Africa as part of land redistribution to African small holders who, at the moment, have no land. Assumptions must be made that, like in the case of Kenya, the new land owners will produce more productively than their predecessor commercial farms. But it must be noted that, in the Kenyan case, the large scale white commercial farms were, in actual fact, rather inefficient. Without poorly paid or free labor they could not have survived since large parts of the farms often lay idle. What model will South Africa therefore follow in land reform: the Zimbabwe model or the Kenyan one, or none of the above? Is it possible to lease land rationally to foreign companies for commercial farming without necessarily distorting the local agrarian economy?

In the final analysis, it does not follow that land reforms will necessarily lead to enhanced agricultural productivity. Case studies show that land reforms could enhance, reduce or even have no impact whatsoever on agricultural productivity. In Mexico, Chile and China land reforms was followed by decline in agricultural production. But in Cuba, Egypt and now Zimbabwe, land reforms have led to increased agricultural production. All depends on the nature of the land reforms undertaken and the context in which such reforms are introduced and implemented. In Africa, most of the food is produced by small holder farms; and since this is likely to remain the same for some time to come, any land reform contemplated needs to secure the land holding of such groups, or a land tenure system in which small holding agriculture is fully catered for.

### Notes

\* *Address to the IDEP-UNISA-CODESRIA Roundtable Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 17-18 June, 2013*

1. Several studies published by The Third World Forum, CODESRIA and IDEP. See also P. Anyang' Nyong'o, ed. "The Peasant

Question in Kenya", *Review of African Political Economy* No. 20, 1980.

2. This has happened in the Sugar Belt in Kisumu County, Kenya, where peasant production of sugar under contract terms with the state-owned factories has declined drastically over the last 20 years, and most 10-acre farms either lie idle, or have been turned into grazing land or farmed for subsistence.
3. Samir Amin, "World Poverty, Pauperization and Capital Accumulation," *Monthly Review*, Vol. 55, No. 5, October 2003.
4. Ibid.
5. See, for example, Essy M. Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1987.
6. "Whites Never Stole Land from Black South Africans," *Before It's News*, Wednesday, June 5, 2013.
7. Letsoalo, Chapter 3.
8. See, for example, Borrás Jr., Saturnino M., Ruth Hall, Ian Scoones, Ben White and Wendy Wolford, "Towards a better understanding of global land grabbing: an editorial introduction," *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38 (2); Hall, R. "Land Grabbing in Southern Africa: the many faces of the investor rush", *Review of African Political Economy* 38 (128), June 2011; Leigh Brownhill, "Land Grabs as re-colonization in 21st century East Africa," *Kilimanjaro* 3 (1), January 2011;
9. Robin Palmer, *Land Grabbing in Africa*, [www.indcatholicnews.com/news](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news). (April 19, 2013).
10. *The Guardian*, "US Universities in Africa 'Land Grab'", June 08, 2011. See [www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/08/us](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/08/us).
11. Ibid.
12. See [www.guardian.co.uk/profile/olivier-de-schutter](http://www.guardian.co.uk/profile/olivier-de-schutter)
13. Olivier de Schutter, "In a World Hungry for Biofuels, Food Security Must Come First," *The Guardian*, October 12, 2012. [www.guardian.co.uk/global-development-development/poverty-matters](http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development-development/poverty-matters).

# Fractal Complexity in Mamokgethi Setati's Work on the Nexus between African Languages and Mathematics

## Introduction

That Mamokgethi Setati (née Mmutlana) has emerged as the preeminent scholar on the nexus between African languages and mathematics is hardly a matter of dispute. One need only do a Google search of the phrase "African languages and mathematics" to discover that the first name that comes up and also numerous is Setati's. It is therefore only fitting that when the Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP) selected Setati for a 2010-2011 National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF)-BHP Billiton Award in honor of her outstanding contributions to Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation, it had the following to say: "...for her innovative, quality research on teaching and learning mathematics in multilingual classrooms" ([www.nctfawards.org.za/](http://www.nctfawards.org.za/)).

From Setati's World Wide Web site, one also learns that, as of this writing, she has authored and coauthored 20 journal articles, four book chapters, four edited volumes, 24 conference publications, six research publications, and six publications in public print media ([www.kgethi.com/](http://www.kgethi.com/)). While my extensive search yielded approximately 8,030 citations of Setati's writings, I found no systematic analysis of them, even though such potential exists. This paper is an attempt to fill this void. Specifically, I employ the mathematical concept of Fractal Dimension and Complexity Theory to explore the idea of spectrum progressing from more orderly to less orderly or to pure disorder in the text. This called for the utilization of the Pluridisciplinary approach that helped me to mix linguistics and mathematical approaches—more precisely, Linguistic Presupposition and Fractal Methodology. Before discussing the results generated from the MATLAB computer runs, however, it makes sense to begin with an expose of the research methodology employed in this paper, followed by brief descriptions of the six solely authored journal articles that serve as the data sources for the analysis. A listing of the six articles and the justification for

**Abdul Karim Bangura**  
Howard University &  
American University's Center for  
Global Peace

employing them appear in the first paragraph of the data analysis section.

## Research Methodology

The major challenge for me was how to transform the linguistic pragmatic or deep-level meanings in the six journal articles examined for mathematical modeling. As I stated earlier, this called for the utilization of the Pluridisciplinary approach that helped me to mix linguistics and mathematical approaches: more precisely, Linguistic Presupposition and Fractal Methodology. Furthermore, it behooves me to state here that discussions of this methodology also appear in the following works: Abdul Karim Bangura (ed.), *Fractal Complexity in the Works of Major Black Thinkers, Volumes One and Two*, San Diego, CA: Cognella Press, 2013; Abdul Karim Bangura, "A Mathematical Exploration of Fractal Complexity among the Axioms on the African State in the *Journal of Third World Studies*: From John Mukum Mbaku to Pade Badru," *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. xxix, No. 2, Fall 2012:11-64; Abdul Karim Bangura, "Fractal Complexity in Cheikh Anta Diop's *Precolonial Black Africa*: A Pluridisciplinary Analysis," *CODESRIA Bulletin*, Nos. 1 & 2, 2012:10-19; and Abdul Karim Bangura, "Fractal Complexity in Mwalimu Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*: A Mathematical Exploration," *Critical Interventions*, Number 9/10, Spring 2012:106-121. The following is a discussion of these techniques.

## Pluridisciplinary Methodology

Pluridisciplinary Methodology can be generally defined as the systematic utilization of two or more disciplines or branches of learning to investigate a phenomenon, thereby in turn contributing to those disciplines. Noting that Diop had

called on African-centered researchers to become pluridisciplinarians, Clyde Ahmed Winters (1998) states that the Pluridisciplinary specialist is a person who is qualified to employ more than one discipline – for example, history, linguistics, etc. – when researching aspects of African history and Africology in general.

The history of the Pluridisciplinary Methodology can be traced back to the mid-1950s with the works of Diop and Jean Vercoutter. The approach was concretized by Alain Anselin and Clyde Ahmad Winters in the 1980s and early 1990s. A brief history of this development with brief backgrounds of these four pioneers is retold in the rest of this section.

G. Mokhtar in his book, *Ancient Civilizations of Africa* (1990), traces the development of Pluridisciplinary Methodology to the works of Diop and Vercoutter. Diop was born in Senegal on December 29, 1923 and died on February 7, 1986. He was a historian, anthropologist, physicist, and politician who investigated the origins of the human races and pre-colonial African culture. His education included African history, Egyptology, linguistics, anthropology, economics, and sociology. He is considered one of the greatest African intellectuals of the 20th Century. Jean Vercoutter was born in France on January 6, 1911 and died on July 6, 2000. He was a French Egyptologist.

According to Mokhtar, Diop and Vercoutter were in total agreement on the point that it is necessary to study as much detail as possible all the genes bordering on the Nile Valley which were likely to provide fresh information. Mokhtar notes that Vercoutter considered it necessary to give due weight to the palaeoecology of the Delta and to the vast region which had been termed by other researchers the Fertile African Crescent. Mokhtar points out that Diop advocated tracing the paths taken by peoples who migrated westwards from Dârfur, reaching the Atlantic seaboard by separate routes, to the south along the Zaïre Valley and to the north towards Senegal, on either side of the

Yoruba. He adds that Diop also pointed out how worthwhile it might be to study Egypt's relations with the rest of Africa in greater detail than had been done, and Diop further mentioned the discovery, in the province of Shaba, of a statuette of Osiris dating from the 7th Century before the Christian era. Similarly, argues Mokhtar, a general study might be made of the working hypothesis that the major events which affected the Nile, such as the sacking of Thebes by the Syrians, or the Persian invasion of -522, had far reaching repercussions on the African continent as a whole (Mokhtar 1990:55).

Furthermore, according to Winters, two major scholars who have advanced the Pluridisciplinary approach by combining anthropological, historical and linguistic methods to explain the heritage of African people, constituting a third school of Africancentric researchers (the first and second schools being the African American and the French-speaking African and African Caribbean, respectively), are Anselin and himself (Winters 1998). Anselin teaches ancient Egyptian linguistics at the University of Guyana Antilles. He is an anthropologist and also the founder of the *Journal of Caribbean Egyptology*. Winters is a lecturer at Governors State University at University Park in Illinois where he teaches curriculum design and research methods courses. He also is a 28-year teaching veteran of the Chicago Public Schools system.

Anselin is the author of three important Pluridisciplinary Africancentric books—(1) *Samba*, (2) *La Question Puele*, and (3) *Le Mythe d'Europe*—and numerous articles. In *Samba*, Anselin demonstrates how the corpus of Egyptian hieroglyphics explains both the Egyptian civilization and the entire world of the Paleo-Africans. He also makes it clear that Kemetic civilization originated in the Fertile African Crescent and that Black African and Kemetic civilization at its origination was unified from its foundations in the Sahara up to its contemporary manifestations in the languages and culture of Black Africans. In *La Question Puele*, Anselin examines the unity for Egyptian, West African and Dravidian languages, political traditions and culture. He also provides a detailed discussion of the "Black Ageans." The findings comprise a thorough representation of the affinities between the Aegan and Dravidian civilizations (Winters, 1998).

Winters is the only African American that attempts to confirm Diop's theories in relation to the genetic unity of the Egyptian, Black African, Elamite, Sumerian and Dravidian languages. Winters is mainly concerned with the unity of the ancient and new worlds' Black civilizations and the decipherment of ancient Black writing systems used by these Africans. This interest had led him to learn many languages, including French, Tamil, Malinke/Bambara, Chinese, Arabic, Otomi, and more (Winters 1998).

Winters had used Diop's genetic model in his research by combining anthropological, linguistic and historical methods to confirm that the center for the rise of the originators of the Egyptian and Manding civilizations, the Magyar or Hungarian civilization, the Dravidian civilization, and the Sumerian and Elamite civilizations was the Fertile Crescent of the highland regions of Middle/Saharan Africa. He also explains how Blacks founded civilizations in the Americas and East and Southeast Asia. A major finding from Winters' work is that the ancestors of the Dravidian and Manding-speaking people seem to have left Africa at the same time around 2600 BC, and that these people founded civilizations in Europe, Elam, India and ancient China (Winters 1998).

Like Diop before him, Winters also discusses the African sub-stream in European languages, the conflict between African people and Indo-European-speaking people, and the loss of early African settlements in Europe to the contemporary European people due to natural catastrophes and wars around 1000 BC. Winters provides valuable source material for the elaboration of the African influence on European languages and those of East and Central Asia (Winters 1998).

Winters had discovered that the Proto-Saharan people used a common writing system. He also was able to read the ancient inscriptions left by these people in the Sahara dating to 3000 BC. He was able to confirm this development by comparing the Manding and the Elamite languages, and the Sumerian and Dravidian languages. The evidence of a genetic relationship between the Manding languages, which Winters used to decipher the earliest Proto-Saharan writings and other languages spoken by the founders of civilization in India and Mesopotamia, led him to hypothesize that

the writing systems used by these ancient founders of civilization could be deciphered. The utilization of Diop's linguistic constancy theory allowed Winters to confirm his own hypothesis and read the common signs used to write the Harapant, Minoan and Olmec scripts (Winters 1998).

Winters' most significant finding is the cognate language of Meroitic. By employing the evidence presented by the Classical sources that the Kushites ruled empires in Africa and Asia, Winters is able to show that the cognate language of Meroitic was the Tokharian language spoken by the Kushana people of Central Asia. He has been able to decipher many Meroitic inscriptions by using the Kushana/Tokharian language (Winters 1998).

According to Dani Nabudere (2003), Pluridisciplinary Methodology involves the use of open and resource-based techniques available in an actual situation. Thus, it has to draw upon the indigenous knowledge materials available in the locality and make maximum use of them. Indigenous languages are therefore at the center of the effective use of this methodology.

What all this suggests, according to Nabudere, is that the researcher must revisit the indigenous techniques that take into consideration the epistemological, cosmological and methodological challenges. The researcher must be culture-specific and knowledge-source-specific in his/her orientation. Thus, the process of redefining the boundaries between the different disciplines in our thought process is the same as that of reclaiming, reordering and, in some cases, reconnecting those ways of knowing, which were submerged, subverted, hidden or driven underground by colonialism and slavery. The research should therefore reflect the daily dealings of society and the challenges of the daily lives of the people.

Towards this end, following Nabudere, at least the following six major questions should guide Pluridisciplinary research (2003:13):

- (1) How can the research increase indigenous knowledge in the general body of global human development?
- (2) How can the research create linkages between the sources of indigenous knowledge and the centers of learning on the continent and in the Diaspora?

- (3) How can centers of research in the communities ensure that these communities become "research societies"?
- (4) How can the research be linked to the production needs of the communities?
- (5) How can the research help to ensure that science and technology are generated in relevant ways to address problems of the rural communities where the majority of the people live and that this is done in indigenous languages?
- (6) How can the research help to reduce the gap between the elite and the communities from which they come by ensuring that the research results are available to everyone and that such knowledge is drawn from the communities?

The truism that indigenous knowledge is critical to Africa's development prompted a workshop titled "Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Intellectual Property in the Twenty-First Century: Perspectives from Southern Africa" convened at the University of Botswana from November 26 to 28, 2003 which culminated into a book with the same title published in 2007 by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) based in Dakar, Senegal. The tenor of the workshop and subsequent book is that the twin themes of indigenous knowledge systems and intellectual property rights have moved to the center of academic discourse within the context of innovation and the commercialization of knowledge. This is because wealth is no longer reckoned in terms of physical assets alone. Unfortunately, the traditional imbalance between the North and the South, which has for long manifested itself mainly through trade, is replicated even in tapping intellectual property given to residents of the developing world who remain largely unable to define their property rights. Once again, the West exploits Africa and the rest of the developing world by expropriating indigenous knowledge systems and patenting them in the West (Mazonde and Thomas 2007).

Various scholars have suggested many major concepts to underlie the Pluridisciplinary Methodology, but it is Dan Nabudere (2003) who has provided the most succinct definitions and discussions for most of these concepts. They are as follows:

- (a) *African Spirituality* refers to those aspects of people that have enabled them to survive as a human community throughout the centuries. It transcends European classical humanism with its class, socio-economic and geographical limitations based on Greece and the Athenian City-State, which is based on a system of slavery. African Spirituality leads to enlarged humanities and recaptures the original meaning of humanity which Western scholars, beginning with Plato, in their hollow and lopsided search for material progress, have abandoned (Nabudere 2003:3-4).
- (b) *Contemporary African Philosophy* is a critique of the Eurocentric "idea" and "general philosophy" in its metaphysical perception that European humanism is superior to that of the African people. This falsehood, which has been perpetuated by Europe to this day, hinges upon the belief that the rest of humanity has to be *forced* to believe like Europe in order to be "humanized" into a singular humanity. Contemporary African Philosophy seeks to "de-structure" this European pretext and emphasize humankind's "shared humanity" (Nabudere 2003:4).
- (c) *The African Renaissance* is the initiative to recapture the basic elements of African humanism (*ubuntu*, *eternal life*, and *immanent moral justice*) as the path to a new humanistic universalism. This initiative, according to Chancellor Williams, "is the spiritual and moral element, actualized in good will among men (and women), which Africa itself has preserved and can give to the world" (Nabudere 2003:4).
- (d) *The Pan-Afrikan University* does not begin in a vacuum, for it has a deep heritage of culture and "civilizational" values that must inform its recreation (e.g., the Sankore University in Timbuktu). These institutions are to be found within Africa's ancient achievements. They must be unearthed and reclaimed. If the Pan-Afrikan University is to respond to this historic challenge and be a part of the correction of its historical distortion and theft of African heritages, it has to provide deeply thought out and well-conceived vision and mission, with a well articulated strategy to achieve its objectives. For it to be successful, it must be a part of the creation of a counter-hegemonic discourse which

can enable the "triple agenda of deconstruction, reconstruction, and regeneration" to be undertaken at the same time. Consequently, the Pan-Afrikan University must develop the University as a new institution of higher education, which can help in reshaping the direction of education on the continent toward a more culture-specific and culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy of liberation. It must draw from those heritages and provide the students, adult learners and the communities with a space in which they can learn as well as carry out their research and be trained by their teachers, community experts, and consultants at the University campuses as well as in the community knowledge sites. Essentially, the Pan-Afrikan University must be people-centered and community-based in which everyone enjoys the freedom to learn and speak (Nabudere 2003:5-6, 14).

- (e) *African Epistemology and Cosmology* imply the development of an all-inclusive approach which recognizes all sources of human knowledge as valid within their own contexts. This calls for the adoption of hermeneutic philosophy in its African essence. This African-based epistemological and cosmological foundation is the prerequisite for the production and development of knowledge (Nabudere 2003:6-7).
- (f) *African Humanism/Ubuntu* is a concept from the Southern African Nguni language family (IsiNdebele, IsiSwati/IsiSwazi, IsiXhosa and IsiZulu) meaning humanity or fellow feeling; kindness. *Ubuntu* serves as the spiritual foundation of African societies. It is a unifying vision or worldview enshrined in the maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*: i.e. "a person is a person through other persons." This traditional African aphorism, which can be found in every corner of the continent, articulates a basic respect and compassion for others. It can be interpreted as both a factual description and a rule of conduct or social ethic. It both describes the human being as "being with others" and prescribes what that should be (Bangura 2005 & 2008).
- (g) *African Languages* are at the center of developing the Pan-Afrikan University at all knowledge sites. Language, as Amilcar Cabral correctly pointed out, is at the center of articulating a people's culture. He stated that the

African revolution would have been impossible without Africans resorting to their cultures to resist domination. Thus, culture is a revolutionary force in society. It is because language has remained an "unresolved issue" in Africa's development that present day education has remained an alien system. As Frantz Fanon put it, "to speak a language is to assume its world and carry the weight of its civilization." Kwesi K. Prah has argued consistently that the absence of African languages in the curriculum has been the "key missing link" in the continent's development. Consequently, the Pan-Afrikan University must build its curriculum on the basis of promoting African languages at the sites of knowledge and at the same time try to build libraries at those sites in the languages of the people living there. They must be promoted as languages of science and technology. This calls for the complete revamping of the epistemological and cosmological worldview of the current discourse. It also calls for the application of different methodological and pedagogical approaches to learning and research in African conditions (Nabudere 2003:10).

(h) *New Humanities* is to serve as the core department in the division of the Pan-Afrikan University concerned with research and advanced studies. In the words of Chancellor Williams, the New Humanities "will have the task of enlisting the services of the world's best thinkers of the work of developing a science of humanity through studies expressly aimed at better human relations. It is to be at the heart of the entire education system and, therefore, the nation." Williams believes that the central idea in this philosophy is life. He argues that since neither Western science nor religion has provided satisfactory answers to three questions (From where do we come? Why? And where are we bound?), it is imperative for the Pan-Afrikan University to provide the space for discussing these eternal questions. This approach calls for the reorganization of the disciplines of the social and human sciences as well as the natural sciences into a holistic learning process. The reorganization should lead to a breaking down of the over-compartmentalization and over-fragmentation of faculties, departments, and branches of knowledge.

It should explore the reunification of allied disciplines (which have been subdivided into sub-disciplines) into unified fields of study (Nabudere 2003:14).

- (i) *Hermeneutic Philosophy* recognizes the basic unity of human endeavor through "discourse" that expresses "the intelligibility of Being-in-the world" (Nabudere 2003:16).
- (j) *Integrated and Synthesized Knowledge* is based on the notion that privileging African-centered curriculum must transcend a narrow conception of what is purely African to include such knowledge within the wider synthesized framework of global knowledge (Nabudere 2003:17).
- (k) *Afrikan-based Pedagogy* draws inspiration and materials for learning from real life situations of the African people, especially in the rural areas, by adopting those pedagogical methods and techniques that inform their philosophy of life, their worldview, and their lived experiences and practices. The key to developing an Afrikan-based Pedagogy hinges upon the knowledge specific-sites where African experts of different branches of knowledge are located. These sites will inform both the content and the pedagogy. The pedagogy will incorporate "oracy," which contains forms of art and techniques to which they give expression, which is essential for adult learning. By mainstreaming this form of expression, its agents gain visibility and recognition in knowledge creation and production. This will enable indigenous tales, stories, proverbs, legends, myths, symbols and epics to be resuscitated, for these forms of knowledge incorporate people's philosophies of life, norms, values in a kind of "moving" and "living library" (Nabudere 2003:19).
- (l) *Life Long Learning*, which has recently become a mantra of many developed countries and international organizations as a novel approach to learning in the 21st Century, is deeply embedded within African culture and epistemology. Learning and "culturalization" in African societies were considered continuing processes that "took place from birth until death with the family unit, extended family, the village and the entire community participating" (Nabudere 2003:19). Life Long Learning will bring

adult learners to formal institutions of learning and remove the division between informal, non-formal, and formal education in line with African traditions and culture. It will also provide for the coo-peration in research between the Pan-Afrikan University and the communities, in addition to providing for the recognition of learning out-comes gained through their own contexts outside the formal education system (Nabudere 2003:20).

(m) *Kemetic Civilization* is a Black African civilization whose origination in the Fertile African Crescent was unified from its foundations in the Sahara up to its contemporary manifestations in the languages and culture of Black Africans (Winters 1998).

The favored methodological approach for Pluridisciplinary studies is Hermeneutics, an open-ended approach that permits cross-cultural communication and exchange of ideas and opinions to promote understanding between all knowledge systems in their diversities. This African philosophical-pedagogic approach hinges upon the acceptance of pluralism and cultural diversity. It stresses the need for the "fusion of historical horizons" as the best way of transmitting understanding between different lived histories or experiences of different communities as the basis of their existence. It insists on both the cultural context and the historical contingencies of events as necessities for a true comprehension of the different lived experiences. Furthermore, the approach has its roots in the African/Egyptian mythical figure of Hermes, the messenger of knowledge from the gods to mortals and the interpreter of the divine message to humankind, and that is why Hermeneutics is named after Hermes (Nabudere 2003:7-8).

Hermeneutics is to be employed on the premises that encourage self-directed learning, which engages with the knowledge, interests, and real life situations that learners bring to their learning situations. This notion of site-specific knowledge attempts to offer a corrective to the Eurocentric tendency of universalizing knowledge around Occidental centers and sites of knowledge which are privileged to the disadvantage of others, claiming to be the only sites of "rationality" and "scientific knowledge." Recognizing the other sites and centers

leads to a truly multi-polar world of global knowledge culled from all sources of human endeavor (Nabudere 2003:8).

### Linguistic Presupposition as the Unit of Analysis

As stated earlier, the unit of analysis for the present paper is linguistic presupposition, which can be defined as an implicit assumption about the world or background belief upon which the truth of a statement hinges. The linguistic presuppositions for this study are drawn out of the writer's (i.e. Setati's) topics in the texts examined. The writer's topics here are the a priori features, such as the clear and unquestionable change of subject focus, for defining types of linguistic presuppositions found in the texts examined. While there are many other formulations of 'topic' from which to choose, the writer's topics are employed for this paper because it is the writer of the texts who had topics, not the texts. The other formulations of 'topic' include sentential topics, discourse topics, presuppositional pools, relevance and speaking topically, topic boundary markers, paragraphs, paratones, representation of discourse content, position-based discourse content, and story. Thus, the notion of 'topic' in the present paper is considered as one related to representations of discourse content.

In choosing the writer's topic as the recording unit, the ease of identifying topics and correspondence between them and the content categories were seriously considered. Guiding this choice was the awareness that if the recording unit is too small, such as a word, each case will be unlikely to possess any of the content categories. Furthermore, small recording units may obscure the context in which a particular content appears. On the other hand, a large recording unit, such as a paragraph, will make it difficult to isolate the single category of a content that it possesses. For the current paper, two methods were appropriate. First, there is the clear and uncontested change of subject focus. Second, topicalization was found to have been used to introduce new characters, ideas, events, objects, etc.

Finally, in order to ascertain the reliability of the coding unit employed for the paper, attempts were made to show inter-coder reliability: that is, two or more analysts, using the same procedures and

definitions, agree on the content categories applied to the material analyzed. Two individuals, who had extensive training in discourse analysis and especially topic identification, were given copies of the texts studied to identify what they perceived as topics, or more specifically, where one topic ends and another begins. Although there were no differences between the two individuals and I, the identified topics and the texts were also given to a linguist who has done a great deal of work on topic analysis for comments and suggestions. This approach was quite useful for increasing my confidence that the meaning of the content is not heavily dependent on my analysis alone.

After identifying the presuppositions in the texts studied in terms of the topics identified, these propositions were placed into two categories (*order* versus *disorder*) based on the bottom-up processing approach common in linguistic analysis for further examination. This involved working out the meanings of the propositions already processed and building up composite meanings for them.

Because the texts examined are a representation of discourse in texts, the level of analysis is naturally the written text. Text is used here as a technical term – in Gillian Brown and George Yule's conceptualization, "the verbal record of a communicative act" (1983:6).

In order to ascertain the presuppositions and in the texts examined, the test known as Constancy under Negation Rule was employed. This test is important because, following Gottlob Frege (1892/1952) and Peter Strawson (1952), presuppositions are preserved in negative statements or sentences. A researcher can therefore simply take a sentence, negate it, and see what inferences survive: that is, are shared by both positive and negative forms of the sentence. But because, as Stephen Levinson (1983:185) is quite correct in pointing out, "constancy under negation is not in fact a rich enough definition to pick out a coherent, homogenous set of inferences," the tests for presuppositional defeasibility (the notion that presuppositions are liable to evaporate in certain contexts) and the projection problem of presuppositions (i.e. the behavior of presuppositions in complex sentences) were also employed.

Consequently, in order not to necessarily presume the conclusions to be drawn, cues to the intent of the author of the texts examined are 'deconstructed.' How, then, are these cues mapped out for the present paper? According to Herbert Paul Grice's (1975) characterization of meaning or non-natural meaning (which is equivalent to the notion of intentional communication), intent is achieved or satisfied by being recognized. A sender's communicative intent becomes mutual knowledge to sender and receiver: that is, S knows that H knows that S knows that H knows (and so ad infinitum) that S has this particular intention. So following Roger Shuy (1982), it is necessary to begin by asking "What did the writer do"? Thus, it is clearly necessary to look at specific topics developed by the author of the texts analyzed. This is particularly true because, according to Wallace Chafe (1972) and Carol Kates (1980), the structure of intentions can neither be defined by the grammatical relations of the terms, nor the semantic structure of a text. Therefore, mapping out the cues to the intent of the author contained in the texts analyzed called for: (a) identifying communicative functions, (b) using general socio-cultural knowledge, and (c) determining the inferences made.

### Fractal Methodology

It is only logical to begin any discussion of Fractal Methodology with a definition of what a fractal is. As I state in my book, *Chaos Theory and African Fractals* (Bangura 2000:6), the concept of fractal remains inexplicably defined. This shortcoming is pointed out by Philip Davis as follows, albeit he himself does not provide an explicit definition: "I consulted three books on fractals. Though there were pictures, there was no definition" (1993:22). The following is a small sample of the various ways the concept of fractal has been described as provided by Lynn Steen:

The concept of fractional dimension, or fractals, was developed in order to describe the shapes of natural objects....An interesting property of fractal objects is that as we magnify a figure, more details appear but the basic shape of the figure remains intact (1988:409).

In addition, according to Steen,

The word fractal – coined by (Benoit B.) Mandelbrot – is related to the Latin verb *frangere*, which means "to break." The ancient Romans who used *frangere* may have been thinking about the breaking of a stone, since the adjective derived from this action combines the two most obvious properties of broken stones – irregularity and fragmentation. The adjectival form is *fractus*, which Mandelbrot says led him to fractal (1988:420).

Furthermore, as Steen points out, "Fractal dimension (is) a measurement of the jaggedness of an object" (1988:413).

Keith Weeks (in Hargittai and Pickover, 1992) states:

[J. E.] Hutchinson laid the foundations of a certain concept of self-similarity, the basic notion being that of the object made up of a number of smaller images of the original object, and so on ad infinitum, typically resulting in detail at all levels of magnification, a trait commonly associated with objects referred to as *fractals* (1992:107).

From the preceding descriptions, I venture to offer a general definition of a *fractal* as a self-similar pattern: that is, a pattern that repeats itself on an ever diminishing scale.

As for Fractal Methodology, more popularly referred to as Fractal Analysis, itself, with its applications in the social sciences, Clifford Brown and Larry Liebovitch in their recent work appropriately titled *Fractal Analysis* (2010) published as part of the Sage Publications Quantitative Analysis of the Social Sciences series have a succinct exposé on the subject. The rest of the discussion in this section is based on their work.

Brown and Liebovitch begin by stating that several early applications of fractal mathematics emerged in the social sciences. These works include Vilfredo Pareto's 1897 study of the distribution of wealth; Lewis Fry Richardson's 1948 and 1960, but published posthumously, study of the intensity of wars; and George Zipf's 1949 studies of the distributions of word frequencies and city sizes. Brown and Liebovitch argue that while these ideas were known by experts in the field, they were isolated, quirky concepts until Mandelbrot developed the unifying idea

of fractals in the 1970s and 1980s. Since that time, however, in spite of the fact that Zipf and Pareto distributions represent fractal distribution, social scientists have lagged behind the physical and natural sciences in utilizing fractal mathematics in their works (Brown and Liebovitch 2010:ix).

Brown and Liebovitch observe, however, that in recent years, the application of fractal mathematics by social scientists in their studies has grown exponentially. Their variety, they note, has expanded as rapidly as their numbers. They cite the examples that fractal analysis had been employed by criminologists to investigate the timing of calls for assistance to police, by sociologists to investigate gender divisions in the labor force, and by actuaries to study disasters. The surprising range of fractal phenomena in the social sciences led Brown and Liebovitch to call for a comprehensive survey that would investigate the common threads that unite them, thereby leading to a broader understanding of their causes and occurrences (Brown and Liebovitch 2010:ix).

According to Brown and Liebovitch, if a researcher has rough data, strongly nonlinear data, irregular data, or data that display complex patterns that seem to defy conventional statistical analysis, then fractal analysis might be the solution to the researcher. They posit that the non-normal and irregularity of so much of social science data apparently are the result of the complexity of social dynamics. Thus, for them, fractal analysis offers an approach for analyzing many of these awkward data sets. And more important, they note, the method also offers a rational and parsimonious explanation for the irregularity and complexity of such data. They insist that the data are not behaving badly; instead, they are simply obeying unexpected but common rules of which we are unaware (Brown and Liebovitch 2010:1).

Brown and Liebovitch go on to conceptualize fractals as "*sets* defined by the three related principles of *self-similarity*, *scale invariance*, and *power law relations*." They postulate that when these principles converge, fractal patterns form. They note that the statistic called *fractal dimension* is employed to capture the essential characteristics of fractal patterns. They add that much empirical

work in fractal analysis focuses on two tasks: (1) showing that fractal characteristics are present in a particular data set and (2) estimating the fractal dimension of the data set. They also mention that there are various techniques for implementing these two tasks (Brown and Liebovitch 2010:2), the discussion of which is beyond the scope of the present paper. Nonetheless, it is necessary to provide brief definitions of the preceding five italicized concepts based on Brown and Liebovitch's work for the sake of clarity. The significant fact about *sets* is that almost all data sets can be fractal: that is, points, lines, surfaces, multidimensional data, and time series. Since fractals occur in different types of sets, various procedures are required to identify and analyze them, with the approach hinging upon the kind of data (Brown and Liebovitch 2010:2-3).

Brown and Liebovitch define *self-similarity* as a characteristic of an object when it is composed of smaller copies of itself, and each of the smaller copies in turn are made up of yet smaller copies of the whole, and so on, *ad infinitum*. The word *similar* connotes a geometrical meaning: that is, objects that have the same form but may be different in size (Brown and Liebovitch 2010:3).

*Scale invariance* for Brown and Liebovitch refers to a thing that has the same characteristics at every scale of observation. Thus, when one zooms on a fractal object, observing it at ever-increasing scale of magnification, it will still look the same (Brown and Liebovitch 2010:5).

According to Brown and Liebovitch, *power law relations* denote the rule that for a set to achieve the complexity and irregularity of a fractal, the number of self-similar pieces must be related to their size by a power law. Power law distributions are scale invariant because the shape of the function is the same at every magnitude (Brown and Liebovitch 2010:5).

Finally, Brown and Liebovitch characterize *fractal dimension* as the invariant parameter that characterizes a fractal set. An analyst uses the fractal dimension to describe the distribution of the data. It is akin to having a "normal" set of data and using the mean and variance to describe the location and dispersion of the data (Brown and Liebovitch 2010:15).

## Brief Descriptions of the Texts Analyzed

As mentioned earlier, six of Setati's solely authored journal articles serve as the basis for the analysis that follows in this section. Journal articles, especially when they are refereed, represent critical scholarly expertise and are reviewed by experts. And when such articles are solely authored, they mostly represent that writer's thoughts alone, as opposed to coauthored articles which represent more than one writer's thoughts. The six articles are briefly described in the chronological order in which they were published in the paragraphs that follow.

First, Setati in her article, "Code-switching in a Senior Primary Class of Second-language Mathematics Learners" (1998), probes the various ways a senior primary mathematics teacher employed code-switching when instructing mathematics to second-language learners with who she shared a first language. Setati points out that since linguistic diversity is a conspicuous aspect of South African society, it creates a number of educational challenges, particularly in the employment of languages in multilingual classrooms. Consequently, she notes, there has emerged considerable debate about this matter in the South African media. The discourse, she adds, has led to two opposing perspectives that are undergirded by identity and access to economic and political power. One postulate is that English is a viable language of wider communication in a multilingual society like South Africa. The other perspective is that schools should encourage the use of African languages in order to nurture and promote those languages.

Second, in her article titled "Researching Mathematics Education and Language in Multilingual South Africa" (2002), Setati analyzes policy, practice and research issues that are germane to the learning and teaching of mathematics in South Africa's multilingual classrooms. She begins with a brief history of language-in-education policy in South Africa to demonstrate how the stratagem is directed by both political and educational interests. She therefore proffers the argument that "Language-use in a multilingual educational context like South Africa is as much, if not more, a function of politics as it is of communication and thinking" (2002:6). By considering the nexus between language and mathe-

matical learning from a myriad points of view and culling from many studies in the field not limited to South Africa, Setati pays greater attention to code-switching because it is a topic that has received considerable attention in the country. Her substantive findings affirm that language has tremendous power in mathematics education settings. She therefore calls for more research on the connection between language and the learning and teaching of mathematics from a political point of view.

Third, writing on "'Re'-presenting Qualitative Data from Multilingual Mathematics Classrooms" (2003), Setati expocitates the notion of 're'-presenting qualitative data from multilingual mathematics classrooms. She draws upon a study on language practices in multilingual mathematics classrooms to investigate the different levels involved in 're'-presenting such data. She then employs the data to demonstrate that 're'-presenting multilingual data is more than just talk written down, as the process is influenced by the theory selected, the research questions probed, the analytical tools employed, and the aspirations for 're'-presenting the data.

Fourth, using data she gleaned from one lesson in a multilingual primary mathematics classroom in South Africa taught by a copiously qualified and experienced teacher, Setati examines in her article titled "Teaching Mathematics in a Primary Multilingual Classroom" (2005a) the complex link between language and mathematics education in multilingual classrooms in the society. Two major findings emerged from this investigation. The first finding is that since English was the dominant language in the classroom, its ascendancy was privileged by procedural mathematics discourse. The second finding is that while English functioned as the medium of mathematics, authority, and assessment, the learners' mother tongue functioned mainly as an instrument of solidarity. Setati therefore sounds the trumpet for researchers to espy and comprehend the political role of language when investigating the nexus between language and mathematics education in multilingual classrooms.

Fifth, in the article titled "Researching Teaching and Learning in School from "with" or "on" Teachers to "with" and "on" Teachers" (2005b), Setati discusses a number of issues concerning the ethical

and political aspects of investigating learning and teaching in schools. She points out that the precepts of working "with" instead of "on" teachers have become the focal point of the ethical and educational issues dealing with the relationship between researchers and teachers within educational research. She then challenges the practice of dissecting conducting research "on" and conducting research "with" teachers because of its undergirding tenet that power is unidirectional. She therefore advocates for a corresponding power relationship between researchers and teachers.

Finally, in her essay titled "Access to Mathematics versus Access to the Language of Power: The Struggle in Multilingual Mathematics Classrooms" (2008), Setati examines the manner in which learners and teachers situate themselves vis-à-vis the use of language(s) in multilingual mathematics classrooms in South Africa. The results from the investigation led to several conclusions. To begin with, learners and teachers who privilege English are concerned with access to the social goods that the language provides. Next, these learners and teachers do not focus on epistemological access but insist on English being the language of learning and teaching. In contrast, learners and teachers who support the use of their mother tongues position themselves in relation to mathematics and, concomitantly, epistemological access, thereby reverberating more antithetical discourses.

Indeed, the preceding texts comprise a closed set of statements within which it is easier to guess how and why new insights emerged, and what was overlooked. Occasionally, they show 'new' ideas are rediscoveries. But since today's studies about the nexus between language and mathematics are in process, to understand, let alone to evaluate them, is more difficult. Analysts abandon or redefine traditional terms and produce such a welter of innovations that it is not easy to find a neutral framework within which they can be compared.

What unifies the texts can appear rather banal. But many linguistic and mathematical insights are so obvious, so fundamental, that they are difficult to absorb, appreciate, and express with fresh clarity. Thus, the originality of the following analysis hinges upon the clarity with which familiar but uncontested facts about the texts analyzed are marshaled

into a simpler, linguistically and mathematically satisfying unity.

### Data Analysis

Before engaging in the fractal analysis of the data generated from the six texts described in the preceding section, I will begin with a discussion of the descriptive and inferential statistics employed to analyze them first. Before computing the univariate and bivariate statistics to do the descriptive and inferential analyses of the data teased out of the six texts, a two-dimensional ad hoc classificatory system was developed within which the data were categorized. The first of these categories entails the presuppositions of *order*: that is, presuppositions that suggest a condition of logical or comprehensible arrangement among the separate elements of a group. This type of presupposition is triggered by presuppositional discourse stretches such as "Linguistic diversity is an important feature of the South African nation," "One view is that in a multilingual country like South Africa, English is a viable language of wider communication," and "The other view is that there is a need to develop and promote African languages and one way of doing this is to encourage their use in schools" (these examples are from Setati 1998:34). The second category encompasses presuppositions of *disorder*: that is, presuppositions that suggest a condition of place of confusion, mess, disturbance, disarray, or muddle. This type of presupposition is triggered by presuppositional discourse stretches such as "Separating learners according to their first languages may be perceived as bringing apartheid back, whilst choosing one of the languages as a medium and not the others may also be interpreted as favouring one group over the others," "...at senior primary levels pupils are far less capable of handling content subjects through English than through their mother tongue," "...the language transition is not only the pupils' problem. It affects teachers and their methods, orientations and resources," and "It can, however, be predicted that most schools will not opt for mother tongue learning, since among speakers of African languages, mother-tongue policy has a bad image" (these examples are also from Setati 1998:34).

After computing the descriptive and inferential statistics, the data were then

plotted for oscillations between *order* and *disorder* in the six texts. This technique made it possible to show visually the attractor reconstruction for the various major themes in the texts.

As shown in Table 1, a total of 1,456 topic entries were teased out of the text. Of these, I categorize 864 or 59 percent as presuppositions of *order* and 592 or 41 percent as presuppositions of *disorder*. The mean for the *order* category is about 22 presuppositions, with a standard deviation of approximately 19 presuppositions; the mean for the *disorder* category is 15 presuppositions, with a standard deviation of approximately 14 propositions. The range for the *order* category is 72 presuppositions and that for the *disorder* category is 57 presuppositions, while the variance for *order* is about 349 presuppositions and that for *disorder* is approximately 209. This means that there are more, and statistically significant, topic entries for presuppositions of *order* than there are of those for *disorder*. Moreover there are significant variations among the themes for each category in terms of topic entries, as can be gleaned from the ranges.

The preceding results make it axiomatic to assert that Setati's treatise on the nexus between African languages and mathematics is gnoseologic. According to Guinean President Ahmed Sékou Touré, in his essay, "A Dialectical Approach to Culture," Gnoseology refers to the positive-intuitive thinking that is driven by the African's spiritual mind (1989:7). Indeed, Touré considers Black revolutionaries to have promoted an evolution of progressive qualification of reason that privileges gnoseology, which facilitates "the transition from ignorance to an increasingly deeper and more exact degree of knowledge" (1989:14). Thus, Touré argues that "Any anthology of African culture tending to situate it outside the realm of reason, of rational thought, of the law and of gnoseology tends to down-grade it and deviate it from its true end, which is to qualify mankind, and sacrifices it to the myth of singularity and specificity" (1989:14).

Yet still, given the significant number of presuppositions of *disorder* in the text, it is not tenable to assert that Setati engaged in either "romanticizing" about South African languages, as some critics like Stephen Howe (1999) and Tunde Adeleke

(2009) tend to say about Africans who write about the African condition, or the wholesale bashing of African leaders, as scholars such as George Ayittey (1993, 1999, 2011) tend to do. In essence, Setati is more optimistic than pessimistic about the role of languages in South Africa's mathematics education, albeit not uncritical about its politics.

A similar sentiment is echoed by Amílcar Cabral in his "Identity and Dignity in the Context of National Liberation Struggle" when he asserts that one of the essential characteristics of contemporary history is the people's struggle for national liberation and independence from imperialist rule. This struggle, he contends, hinges upon "returning to the source" and of identity and dignity in the context of the national liberation movement (Cabral 1995:73-74).

From Chief Albert John Luthuli, the President-General of the African National Congress from 1952 to 1957, we also get the following:

Who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately, and modestly as a closed and barred door? What have been the fruits of moderation? The past thirty years have seen the greatest number of laws restricting our rights and progress, until today we have reached a stage where we have almost no rights at all. It is with this background and with a full sense of responsibility that, under the auspices of the African National Congress, I have joined my people in the new spirit that moves them today, the spirit that revolts openly and boldly against injustice and expresses itself in a determined and non-violent manner. What the future has in store for me I do not know. It might be ridicule, imprisonment, concentration camp, flogging, banishment, and even death. I only pray to the Almighty to strengthen my resolve so that none of these grim possibilities may deter me from striving, for the sake of the good name of our beloved country, the Union of South Africa, to make it a true democracy and a true nation, in form and spirit, of all the communities in the land (Luthuli Museum 1952 speech):

<http://www.luthulimuseum.org.za/luthulis-life-/speeches>.

**Table 1:** Univariate Statistics by Types of Presuppositions in the Texts

Sections/Themes in Texts	Number of Topic Entries for Presuppositions of Order		Number of Topic Entries for Presuppositions of Disorder	
	N	%	N	%
<b>1. Code-switching...(1998)</b>				
Introduction	26	2	10	28
What exactly is code-switching?	9	69	4	31
The source of the data?	27	71	4	31
How often and why code-switching occur?	22	71	11	29
Types of switching	57	86	9	14
Discussion and notes	8	73	3	27
<b>2. Researching Mathematics...(2002)</b>				
Introduction	3	75	1	25
The history of language-in-education...	45	59	31	41
The school mathematics curriculum...	20	83	4	17
The relationship between language...	30	43	40	57
Teaching and learning mathematics...	8	50	58	50
The political role of language...	40	70	17	30
Conclusion	2	40	3	60
<b>3. 'Re'-presenting Qualitative...(2003)</b>				
ZDM-classification: D20	2	79	6	21
Researching multilingualism...	11	42	15	58
From the actual experience...	20	50	20	50
From transcription to translation	13	43	17	57
From translation to interpretation	31	60	21	40
Suggestion for a way forward	8	67	4	33
<b>4. Teaching Mathematics...(2005a)</b>				
Introduction	7	54	6	46
What do I mean by discourse?	18	58	13	42
The political role of language	27	59	19	41
Analysis of language(s) used, discourses...	74	64	41	36
Languages, discourses, and cultural...	3	25	9	75
Implications for curriculum, assessment...	11	58	8	42
Conclusion	7	54	6	46
<b>5. Researching Teaching...(2005b)</b>				
Introduction	8	43	24	57
Negotiating access	65	54	55	46
Providing feedback on analysis of data...	28	82	6	18
The nature of teachers' involvement...	62	44	27	38
Conclusion	2	66	1	34

**Table 1:** Univariate Statistics by Types of Presuppositions in the Texts (continued)

<b>6. Access to Mathematics...(2008)</b>				
Introduction	10	53	9	47
The political role of language and its use...	8	50	8	50
Theoretical framework	9	82	2	18
Data collection and procedure	7	70	3	30
Teachers' language choices	24	44	31	56
Learners' language choices	41	58	30	42
What does this mean for research...	6	43	8	57
Conclusion	3	50	3	50
<b>Totals Scores &amp; Mean Percents = 1,456 or 100</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>22.15</b>		<b>15.18</b>	
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>18.687</b>		<b>14.469</b>	
<b>Range</b>	<b>72</b>		<b>57</b>	
<b>Variance</b>	<b>349.186</b>		<b>209.362</b>	

**Source:** Self-generated data from the texts and computed using MATLAB

**Table 2:** T-Test: Paired Samples–Test and Correlation

<b>Pair 1: Order-Disorder</b>	<b>Paired Differences</b>
Mean	6.97
Standard Deviation	11.474
Standard Error Mean	1.837
95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Lower	3.25
Upper	10.69
t-Statistic	3.796
Degrees of Freedom	38
Significance (2-tailed)	0.001
<b>Pair 1: Order and Disorder</b>	<b>Paired Samples Correlation</b>
Correlation	0.789
Significance	0.0001

**Source:** Self-generated data from the texts and computed using MATLAB

Essential dignity of Blacks is also expressed in poetic forms such as in President of Senegal and father of *Negritude* Léopold Sédar Senghor's "For Khalan" (a guitar with three strings):

We delighted, my friend, in an African presence:

Furniture, from Guinea and the Congo, heavy and polished, dark and light.

Primitive and pure masks on distant walls yet so near.

Tabourets of honour for the hereditary hosts, the princes from the High-country.

Wild and proud perfumes from the thick tresses of silence,

Cushions of shadow and leisure like quiet well running.

Eternal words and the distant alternating chant as in the loin-cloths from the Sudan.

But then the friendly light of your blue kindness will soften the obsession of this presence in

Black, white and red, O red like the soil of Africa

([www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/webpages/DC/asjul58.22/asjul58.22.pdf](http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/webpages/DC/asjul58.22/asjul58.22.pdf)).

Indeed, Setati is quite unapologetic in advocating that the Essential Dignity of African languages be elevated and employed in learning and teaching

mathematics in South African schools, despite the dominance of English in the endeavor. As she puts it,

...the power of mathematics and English can work together in multilingual mathematics classrooms to reduce the mathematical opportunities for procedural discourse. Further, it appears that for substantial teaching and learning and engagement in conceptual discourse to occur, the learners' main languages are required. However, given the master model of *English is Inter-national*, it is not always possible to fulfill this requirement. The issue is not only that additional language learners learn mathematics in a language that is not their main one, but that the various languages used will privilege different discourses of mathematics (Setati 2002:18).

Setati also asserts that

The extensive use of Tswana may not be allowed, but it seems that it is the best means available to teachers to foster mathematical understanding in their pupils. Apart from being an educational resource, the use of the learners' first language is also a key to the world and culture of the learners

involved. It enables the participants to make relevant connections with their lives beyond the school (Setati 1998:40).

Setati further insists that

...in addition to encouraging the use of the learners' home language, there is also a need to consider multilingual assessment practices, where test items can be given in the LoLT [language of learning and teaching – i.e. English] and in the learners' home language(s) and learners can respond to the questions in a language they prefer. For this to happen, school language policies need to be more flexible to give teachers the freedom to assess in multiple languages...For learners in these [i.e. multilingual] classrooms to be successful in a reform curriculum it is important that their home languages be used as legitimate language(s) of interaction in a range of mathematical Discourses (Setati, 2005a:463-464).

Also, as can be seen in Figure 1, the data are plotted in a phase space. The plot is neither an orderly periodic oscillation, nor is it simply a random scattering. There is structure here, suggesting that this could be a slice through a higher dimensional attractor. Would this higher-dimensional

attractor correspond to a cognitive structure in the mind of Setati? Or, since I was the "signal director" for these data, would it be better to think of them as a "socio-cognitive" structure created through the interaction between the Setati and her targeted audience.

Furthermore, Figure 2 is the log-log plot (or log-log graph) generated to represent the observed units described by the two-dimensional variable encompassing *order* (y) and *disorder* (x) as a scatter plot/graph. The two axes display the logarithm of values of the two dimensions, not the values themselves. If the relationship between x and y is described by a power law,

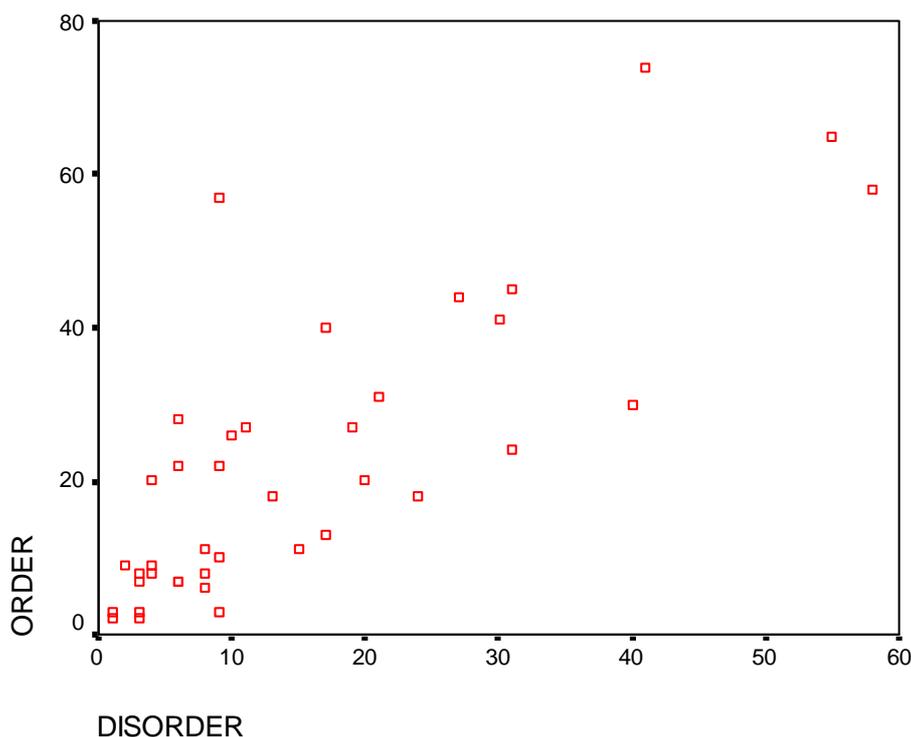
$$y = x^a;$$

then the (x, y) points on the log-log plot form a line with the slope equal to a. Log-log plots are widely used to represent data that are expected to be scale-invariant or fractal because, as stated before, fractal data usually follow a power law.

A logarithm is an exponent. It is illustrated in the following definition:

$$\text{For } b > 0, b \neq 1 \text{ and for } x > 0, \\ y = \log_b x \text{ if and only if } b^y = x$$

**Figure 1:** Phase Space Portrait Mapping Presuppositions of Order and Disorder



**Source:** Self-generated data from the texts and computed using MATLAB

Thus, since a logarithm is an exponent, it is easy to use exponent laws to establish mathematical generalizations.

Figure 2 illustrates the fractal dimension of the two-dimensionality of the variable. The binary logistic statistics reveal that the relationship between the two dimensions is statistically significant at the 0.0001 level. Visually, the text essentially moves halfway across the spectrum – it typically moves from periodic fractal, rather than stretching all the way to pure order or disorder. Thus, the results generated after the MATLAB computer runs suggest that the combination of negative and positive feedback loops, which form the basis of several African knowledge systems – as Ron Eglash (1999:173-4) suggests, also form a key mechanism of general self-organizing systems discussed in Setati's texts. Indeed, Setati's framing of the issue in her texts is reminiscent of African ways: i.e. despite the challenges and hardship, their thought processes never become completely chaotic.

In sum, there are at least two levels in which order and disorder are contrasted here. Within the statements of Setati, orderly and disorderly events come and go.

But there is a higher level of "orchestration" in which Setati produces meaning

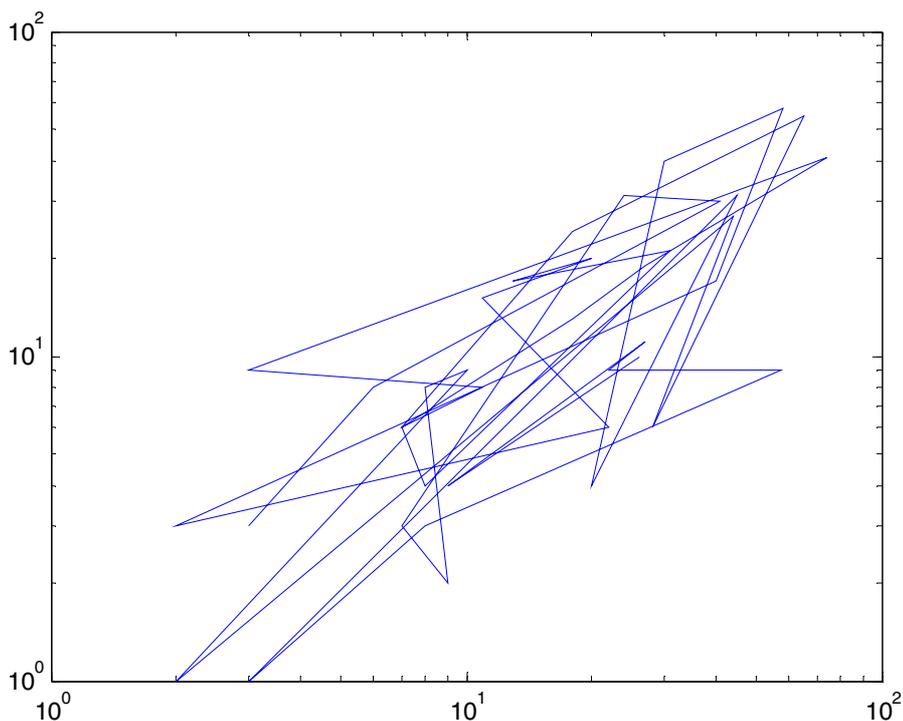
### Conclusion

The data gleaned from Setati's texts made it possible to explore a phase space created by two dimensions: (1) *presuppositions of order* and (2) *presuppositions of disorder*. This was done to investigate the possibility that a fractal structure could exist in the literary dynamics that drive the narratives, similar to the ways that fractal structure exist in attractors for certain nonlinear physical systems. The substantive findings, as stated earlier, reveal that it is indeed possible to generate a phase space portrait in which data are mapped to a structure that has the kind of mix between periodic and random variation that we would expect from chaotic dynamics. This is not conclusive proof by any means – a full experiment would need to compare the results from several readers, examine such data in closer detail (for example, perhaps, scoring every page rather than every thematic section), and look at other such presuppositions. But it does suggest that this kind of analysis could be extended further to investigations of literary dynamics.

If my speculation concerning this phase space portrait is correct – if there is indeed an underlying structure that could be characterized by fractal variation, this is noteworthy in that it could be a commonality within at least some bodies of African literature. Further experiments would be needed to test this hypothesis. Nonetheless, as Kofi Nyidevu Awoonor (1990) and I (Bangura, 2002) posit, the African life concept is holistic – i.e. it is based on an integrative world view. All life to the African is total; all human activities are closely interrelated. This has as its underlying principle the sanctity of the person, her/his spirituality and essentiality. This essentialist view of the person confers value to her/his personhood. All else – her/his labor and achievements – flow from this value system. Even personal shortcomings cannot invalidate it. This salubrity is evident in Setati's work which emphasizes the fact that politics shepherds the labyrinthine nexus between language and mathematics in South Africa's educational system. As she puts it succinctly,

My own experience as a multilingual teacher and researcher in multilingual mathematics classrooms suggests that we cannot describe

**Figure 2:** Log-log Plot Order vs Disorder in the Texts



Binary Logistic:  $y = 1.020 + 0.130$

$R^2 = 0.623$ ;  $p = 0.0001$

**Source:** Self-generated data from the texts and computed by using MATLAB

and explain language practices in a coherent and comprehensive way if we stop at the cognitive and the pedagogic aspects. We have to go beyond these aspects and explore the political aspects of language use in multilingual mathematics classrooms (Setati 2002:15).

Indubitably, in order for Setati to capture the essentiality of the nexus between African languages and mathematics, she had to attune herself extensively not only with the scholarly literature and media discourses on mathematics education, her field of expertise, but also with those on linguistics and political science.

In addition, Awoonor (1990) and I (Bangura, 2002) point out that for Africans, politics defines duties and responsibilities alongside obligations and rights. All these relate to the various activities that have to do with survival. The survival concept is continuing, dynamic and dialectical. The fundamental principle that is at the basis of this conception is a moral one. Moreover, the African moral order never defined rigid frontiers of good and evil, which exist in the same continuum. Whatever is good, by the very nature of its goodness, harbors a grain of evil. This is a guarantee against any exaggerated sense of moral superiority which goodness by itself may entail. The notion of perfection, therefore, is alien to African thought. Perfection in itself constitutes a temptation to danger, an invitation to arrogance and self-glorification. The principle of balance defines the relationship between good and evil. As life operates in a dialectics of struggle, so also does good balance evil and vice versa.

Thus, the essence of an African-centered approach is that it is imperative and urgent for Africans to be concerned about broader development and the linguistic-mathematical nexus as well as approaches to these phenomena that are undergirded by humanity or fellow feeling toward others. When African-centeredness is considered along with the idea of the socialization effects of developmental environments and the possibilities of a reinforcement of these notions and contexts, the implications for African development, linguistic and mathematical processes appear vital.

Although compassion, warmth, understanding, caring, sharing, humanness, etc. are underscored by all the major world orientations, African-centered thought

serves as a *distinctly African rationale* for these ways of relating to others. African-centeredness gives a distinctly African meaning to, and a reason or motivation for, a positive attitude towards the other. In light of the calls for an African Renaissance, African-centeredness urges Africans to be true to their promotion of good governance, democracy, peaceful relations and conflict resolution, educational and other developmental aspirations.

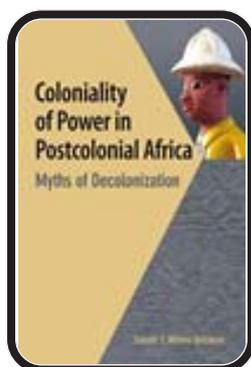
We ought never to falsify the cultural reality (life, art, literature) which is the goal of African-centeredness. Thus, we would have to oppose all sorts of simplified or supposedly simplified approaches and stress instead the methods which will achieve the best possible access to real life, language and philosophy.

## References

- Adeleke, Tunde. 2009. *The Case against Afrocentrism*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.
- Awoonor, Kofi Nyidevu. 1990. *Ghana: A Political History*. Accra, Ghana: Sedco Publishing Ltd. and Woeli Publishing Services.
- Ayittey, George B. N. 2011. *Defeating Dictators: Fighting Tyranny in Africa and around the World*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ayittey, George B. N. 1999. *Africa in Chaos*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ayittey, George B. N. 1993. *Africa Betrayed*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bangura, Abdul Karim (ed.). 2013. *Fractal Complexity in the Works of Major Black Thinkers, Volumes One and Two*. San Diego, CA: Cognella Press.
- Bangura, Abdul Karim. 2012. A mathematical exploration of fractal complexity among the axioms on the African state in the *Journal of Third World Studies*: From John Mukum Mbaku to Pade Badru. *Journal of Third World Studies* xxix, 2:11-64.
- Bangura, Abdul Karim. 2012. Fractal complexity in Cheikh Anta Diop's *Precolonial Black Africa*: A pluridisciplinary analysis. *CODESRIA Bulletin* 1&2:10-19.
- Bangura, Abdul Karim. 2012. Fractal complexity in Mwalimu Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*: A mathematical exploration. *Critical Interventions* 9/10:106-121.
- Bangura, Abdul Karim. 2008. *African Peace Paradigms*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

- Bangura, Abdul Karim. 2005. Ubuntugogy: An African educational paradigm that transcends pedagogy, andragogy, ergonagy, and heutagogy. *Journal of Third World Studies* xxii, 2:13-53.
- Bangura, Abdul Karim. 2002. *Sojourner-Douglass College=s Philosophy in Action: An African-Centered Creed*. San Jose, California: Writers Club Press.
- Bangura, Abdul Karim. 2000. *Chaos Theory and African Fractals*. Washington, DC: The African Institution.
- Brown, Clifford and Larry Liebovitch. 2010. *Fractal Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Brown, Gillian and George Yule. 1983. *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Cabral, Amicar. 1995. Identity and dignity in the context of the national liberation struggle. In F. L. Hord (Mzee Lasana Okpara) and J. S., eds. *I Am Because We Are: Readings in Black Philosophy*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Chafe, Wallace L. 1972. Discourse structure and human knowledge. In R. O. Freedle and J. B. Carroll (eds.). *Language Comprehension and the Acquisition of Knowledge*. Washington, DC: V. M. Winston.
- Cooper, Anna Julia. 1995. Womanhood: A vital element in the regeneration of progress. In F. L. Hord (Mzee Lasana Okpara) and J. S., eds. *I Am Because We Are: Readings in Black Philosophy*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Davis, Philip J. 1993. *Spirals: From Thedorus to Chaos*. Wellesley, MA: A. K. Peters.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta. 1981/trans. 1991. *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*. Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill Books.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta. 1974a. *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth and Reality*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill (Africa World Press edition).
- Diop, Cheikh Anta. 1974b. *Black Africa: The Economic Basis for a Federated State*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill (Africa World Press edition).
- Diop, Cheik Anta. 1962. *The Cultural Unity of Negro Africa*. Paris, France: Presence Africaine.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta. 1960/trans. 1987. *Precolonial Black Africa: A Comparative Study of the Political and Social Systems of Europe and Black Africa, from Antiquity to the Formation of Modern States* (translated

- from the French by Harold Salemson). Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books.
- Eglash, Ron. 1999. *African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Frege, Gottlob. 1892/1952. On sense and reference. In P. T. Geach and M. Black. *Translations from the Philosophic Writings of Gottlob Frege*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.
- Gangoueus, Chez. Dimanche 22 Juin 2008. Cheikh Anta Diop: L'Afrique noir précoloniale. Retrieved on January 23, 2012 from <http://gangoueus.blogspot.com/2008/06/cheikh-anta-diop-lafrique-noire...>
- Grice, Herbert Paul. 1975. Logic and conversation. In P. Cole. (ed.). *Syntax and Semantics: vol. 3: Speech Acts*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Hargittai, István and Cliff A. Pickover. (eds.). 1992. *Spiral Symmetry*. Singapore, Malaysia: World Scientific Publishing Company.
- Howe, Stephen. 1999. *Afrocentricism: Mythical Past and Imagined Homes*. New York, NY: Verso Books.
- Kates, Carol A. 1980. *Pragmatics and Semantics: An Empiricist Theory*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Levinson, Stephen. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Luthuli, Chief Albert John. 1952 speech. *Speeches and Statements by Luthuli*. Stanger, KwaDukuya, South Africa. Retrieved on January 13, 2013 from <http://www.luthulimuseum.org.za/luthulis-life-/speeches>
- Mazonde, Isaac and Pradip Thomas (eds.). 2007. *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Intellectual Property in the Twenty-First Century: Perspectives from Southern Africa*. Dakar, Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) Publications.
- Mokhtar, G. 1990. *Ancient Civilizations of Africa*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Nabudere, Dani W. 2003. Towards the establishment of a Pan-African university: A strategic concept paper. *African Journal of Political Science* 8, 1:1-30.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. n.d. *The Poetry of Sédar-Senghor—DISA*. Retrieved on January 13, 2013 from <http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/webpages/DC/asjul58.22/asjul58.22.pdf>
- Setati, Mamokgethi. 2008. Access to mathematics versus access to the language of power: The struggle in multilingual mathematics classrooms. *South African Journal of Education* 28:103-116.
- Setati, Mamokgethi. 2005a. Teaching mathematics in a primary multilingual classroom. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* 36, 5:447-466.
- Setati, Mamokgethi. 2005b. Researching teaching and learning from "with" or "on" teachers to "with" and "on" teachers. *Perspectives in Education* 23, 1:91-101.
- Setati, Mamokgethi. 2003. 'Re'-presenting qualitative data from multilingual mathematics classrooms. *ZDM (Zentralblatt für Didaktik der Mathematik): The International Journal on Mathematics Education* 35, 6:294-300.
- Setati, Mamokgethi. 2002. Researching mathematics education and language in multilingual South Africa. *The Mathematics Educator* 12, 2:6-20.
- Setati, Mamokgethi. 1998. Code-switching in a senior primary class of second-language mathematics learners. *For the Learning of Mathematics* 18, 1:34-40.
- Shuy, Roger W. 1982. Topic as the unit of analysis in a criminal law case. In D. Tannen. (ed.). *Analyzing Discourse: Text and Talk*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Steen, Lynn A. (ed.). 1988. *Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics*. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Strawson, Peter F. 1952. *Introduction to Logical Theory*. London, England: Methuen.
- Touré, Sékou. 1989. A dialectical approach to culture. In R. Chrisman and N. Hare, eds. *Contemporary Black Thought*. Indianapolis, IN and New York, NY: The Bobbs-Merrill Co, Inc./MacMillan Press.
- Winters, Clyde Ahmad. 1998. The Afrocentric . *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 22.



### Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni / ISBN: 978-2-86978-578-6 — pages : 308 p.

This lively book interrogates the African postcolonial condition with a focus on the thematics of liberation predicament and the long standing crisis of dependence (epistemological, cultural, economic, and political) created by colonialism and coloniality. A sophisticated deployment of historical, philosophical, and political knowledge in combination with the *equi-primordial* concepts of coloniality of power, coloniality of being, and coloniality of knowledge yields a comprehensive and truly refreshing understanding of African realities of subalternity. What distinguishes this book is its decolonial entry that enables a critical examination of the grammar of decolonization that is often wrongly conflated with that of emancipation; bold engagement with the intractable question of what and who is an African; systematic explication of the role of coloniality in sustaining Euro-American hegemony; and

unmasking of how the 'postcolonial' is interlocked with the 'neocolonial' paradoxically. It is within this context that the postcolonial African state emerges as a leviathan, and the 'postcolonial' reality becomes a terrain of contradictions mediated by the logic of violence. No doubt, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni's handling of complex concepts and difficult questions of the day is remarkable, particularly the decoding and mixing of complex theoretical interventions from Africa and Latin America to enlighten the present, without losing historical perspicacity. To buttress the theoretical arguments, detailed empirical case studies of South Africa, Zimbabwe, DRC and Namibia completes this timely contribution to African Studies.

# Afrikology and Community Conversations on Restorative Cultural practices in the Mt. Elgon area

## Introduction

*Natural resources supply raw material for getting the work of the world done. Cultural resources organize co-operation among people for getting the work of the world done.*

Dani Nabudere, 2006.

The foundation of our talk in this chapter is the timeless supposition that we are culturally more together than we are alone. Our theme aims to explore the practicalities of culture in peace creation and the workings of **Afrikology** as an epistemology in East African communities, or to put it simply, **Afrikology** and cultural clusterism in action. What does **Afrikology** look like? What is the DNA composition of cultural clusters in Mt Elgon's cross-border communities?

To begin with, the first articulation of **Afrikology** declares that: "it is a true philosophy of knowledge and wisdom based on African cosmogonies. It is *afri*-because it is inspired by the ideas originally produced from the cradle of humankind located East Africa. It is not **Afrikology** because it is African, but it is *afri*-because it emanates from the source of the Universal system of knowledge originating in Africa. The philosophic product is therefore not relativistic to Africa but universal in essence with its base in Africa. It is also *-(ko)logy* because it is based on the *logos*-the word, which was uttered to set in motion the Universe in its originality. It was from that word that human consciousness first emerged and it was from that consciousness that humanity emerged as thinking and acting agent with language from the word as the active cultural achievement. As Dani Nabudere, the epistemological and philosophical grandmaster of **Afrikology**, in one of his last books (before his sudden death) *Afrikology: Philosophy and Wholeness* (2011) illustrates:

**Afrikology** is not African-centric or Afrocentric. It is a universal scientific epistemology that goes beyond Eurocentricism, or other ethnocentrism. It recognises all sources of

**Ronald Elly Wanda<sup>1</sup>**

Marcus Garvey Panafrican Institute,  
Mbale, Uganda

knowledge as valid within their historical, cultural or social contexts and seeks to engage them into a dialogue that can lead to better knowledge for all. It recognises peoples' traditions as a fundamental pillar in the creation of such cross-cultural understandings in which the Africans can stand out as having been the fore-bearers of much of what is called Greek or European heritage as fact of history that ought to be recognised, because from this fact alone, it can be shown that cross-cultural interactions has been a fact of historical reality.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Nabudere argues meticulously that for centuries the African personality has been bedeviled by the burden of foreign domination that has thus affected her self-understanding. Subsequently, Nabudere urges that the process of re-awakening and recovery in Africa has to be one of a historical deconstruction, what he calls "consciousness raising," not by others, but by Africans themselves tracing the origins and achievements of their civilizations. This, he insists, requires the adoption of **Afrikology** as an epistemology that recognises orality as a valid source of knowledge. He therefore, encourages researchers and practitioners alike to adopt a holistic approach towards recognising that orality can only be interpreted under a platform that accommodates multi- and interdisciplinary approaches. Appropriately enough, this is what he calls 'act locally, think globally.' Implicit in this epigram is the belief that it is local struggles in the villages that can guarantee African-rebirth, resurgence and renaissance and ensure that local communities reject neo-traditionalism that had been instituted by the colonial state. However, Nabudere at the same time warns that this should not be seen in isolation but in solidarity with

other local groups elsewhere in the world. The argument here seems to be that if the driving force towards globalization is domination, then globalised resistance based on "global consciousness" ought to be its antithesis. The imperative, as such, for the authentic liberation of Africa, as argued by another revered philosopher Mogobe Ramose, requires neither a supplicative apologia nor an interminable obsequies in defense of being African. "The African must simply be an African, that is, a human being second to none in our contingent but complex universe"<sup>3</sup> The brutal and systematic assault on communities across Africa and the subsequent systems (cultural, religious, epistemological, curricula's, governance etc) imposed on communities denotes that this is essential.

## The dialectical impact of colonialism in Africa

For Africans the world over, the advent of colonialism by Europeans was a tragic experience. In 1885 during the so-called 'Berlin Conference', Africa was scrambled up among occupying powers with the sole aim of violently looting as much as they could in their areas of influence. Thus African states were created to facilitate and ease the efficiency of rapid colonial exploitation. The colony became a laboratory of caprice where all sorts of clinical trials (political, social, and cultural) were performed, causing untold suffering to African communities- effects of which still remain visible this present moment.<sup>4</sup> The dialectical inter-phase that occurred during colonization also left Africa ruined psychologically and intellectually. The experience left two broad "legacies" on Africa; first was the denial of African identity and second was the foisting of western thought and cultural realities and perspectives on Africans. In Egypt for instance, the late Palestinian-American academic Edward Said has observed that when the British ruling class tried to assume political power over Egypt, it did so by first establishing British '*knowledge of Egypt*'.<sup>5</sup> Said further elaborates that:

The British were initially not concerned principally with military or economic power over Egypt, but their knowledge of the Orient, including Egypt, was conceived as a form of power. The objective was to have such knowledge about the "distant other" in order to be able "to dominate it and (exert) authority over it." This in effect meant denying autonomy of knowledge over the object of domination since to do so would have recognised the existence of knowledge of the object over itself. The object's existence could only be recognised, in the words of the Colonial representatives, in as much "as we know it."<sup>5</sup>

As such, the current cultural value crisis among Africans is the result of the impact of liberal philosophy and its associated discourses. For so long the liberal paradigm has undermined the hermeneutic power of Africans to interpret the world through their symbols. One common factor among liberal theories is the value that they place on individual freedom to pursue interests and goals. This is perhaps why classical liberals such as the British Philosophers John Locke and John Stewart Mills placed strong emphasis on freedoms from social control. From this foundational value of freedom follows the welfare state, wealth, and power manifestations of a mindset centered on individualism. Therefore, the concept of the world and manner of living which informs Western societies can best be described as materialistic. This way of life has captivated the Western civilization ever since and has been aggressively exported to all parts of the world where their civilization has gone in search for material resources and fulfilling its expansionist philosophy.

### Epistemological dependency culture in Africa

Today in East Africa, in spite of flag independence in the early 1960s, the state is still dependent on Western political constructs, socio-legal ideas, and judicial and epistemological philosophies. Like elsewhere in Africa, this is because the structures of all nation-states (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi) oozes from an engineered political metaphysical past, where people never dialogued their differences as a basis for federating. They were simply conscripted into geopolitical constructs that they neither chose nor bargained for. Therefore, colonialism as such, designed

and inspired many of the problems our communities face today; this includes those now being rotated as universal rights and the deliberate portrayal of women in Africa as victims of traditional culture and in need of rescue.

The identification of African women as subordinate victims, devoid of any form of agency to resist or challenge oppression, has roots in historical, economic, social, cultural and political structures designed and defended by Eurocentric philosophies. Ugandan scholar Mukasa Luutu has argued elsewhere that this perception of African justice systems implies that indigenous Africa was insensitive to human rights and as such, the concept of human rights and its protection originated from Western civilization. On the same basis, human rights have been misappropriated and patented as an organic attribute of Western society and values; this has portrayed the West as the mode, the yardstick and arbiter over human rights concerns in the world.<sup>6</sup>

One other key problem characterizing the post-colonial state in East Africa has been its tendency to fragment its own communities into hostile factions. Instead of politically uniting its people within and across its borders, the African political elites have resorted to colonial tactics of 'divide and rule' and the ideology of 'neo-tribalism' by exploiting the ethnic diversities of their communities to their benefit and to the detriment of unity in the so called 'state'. It is common place in East Africa to be asked by state operatives: *We, toa kipande or kitu kidogo* or at times if you are very unlucky *toa kitu yote* (produce your identity card, or money). Instead of utilizing the rich ethnic and cultural diversities of communities as building blocks to a people's African unity, they use these diversities to divide the people even further in order to, yet again, enrich themselves. In so doing they perpetuate neo-colonial domination and fall prey to powerful global force. They are therefore deliberately failing to deconstruct the exogenously hegemonic agendas wearing economic, religious, charitable and other guises programmed into the colonial state, preferring instead to reconstruct it in every way the former colonialist would have wanted - one that supports them and not communities.

Under the liberal heritage (that has guided European thought on development and

human rights for the last four hundred years) that has since been hurriedly imposed on African communities, by exogenous forces in collaboration with local elites, African thought and society has subsequently experienced a crisis of meaning, of life, persons, and community. This is because this liberal heritage imposed on Africans its notion of the world, values, and manner of living. According to this heritage, social evolution constitutes the basic principle of the world and its main assumption is that technical knowledge is therefore the only key to human development. This Western view of development is based on the idea that humanity moves in a linear fashion and that this movement or progress is unidirectional and irreversible. One implication of this view is that there is and can only be one path or direction that humanity can take, and that this is the one provided by advanced Western countries.<sup>7</sup> And as Malawian Philosopher Harvey Sindima has pointed out, this is the understanding behind the concepts of 'modernity' and 'progress'.<sup>8</sup> Professor Sindima rightly concludes, that "centuries have shown that the alliance between progress, science, and technology has not eliminated misery; on the contrary destitution has emerged and the future of all creation hangs in the balance".<sup>9</sup>

### The legacy of liberalism on African 'intellectuals' and policy makers

Nowadays in East Africa, Eurocentric ideas are still very prevalent and their liberal notions pervade all aspects of life, particularly in urban areas. 'Modernity' or 'catching up' with the West: its technology, infrastructure and even way of life seem to be the primary objective towards which many countries are busy striving towards. This precarious mentality has been worsened by a brigade of natives under diverse name tags such as "intellectuals," "change agents," or even "modernists," euro-centrally trained, it seems, in the fine art of social, political, and worst of all cultural banditry. They tend to reject and at times even deny Africa's own cultural and intellectual achievements. In another arena, one critic captures this self-denial psyche well: "It was African scholars who were affected by Eurocentric education or who had not been exposed to the rich cultural history of Africa that denied the existence of African philosophy during the "Great

Debate" of the seventies and eighties."<sup>10</sup> Sadly, there are certain writers such as the Ghanaian Kwasi Wiredu in his 1980 publication *Philosophy and an African Culture*, who have busied themselves with the appalling task of watering down the insulting language of Eurocentric writers and their condescending attitudes towards African tradition - by supporting their fundamental insinuation that Western tradition of thought is essentially superior to the African tradition of thought. They have gone even further by saying much more than this. Their conclusion is that Africans may never develop any respectable tradition of thought unless and until they can copy western paradigms.

### **Cultural rootless leadership and community fragmentation in East Africa**

Today, one pertinent problem that continues to characterize our so-called states in East Africa is their tendency to fragment their own communities into hostile factions. Instead of politically uniting their its people within and across its borders, our political elites have resorted to colonial tactics of 'divide and rule' and the ideology of 'neo-tribalism' by exploiting the ethnic diversities of our communities to their benefit and to the detriment of unity in the so called 'state'. In so doing they perpetuate neo-colonial domination and fall prey to a powerful global force.

It is fair to point out, as such, that the current economic, political and intellectual elites suffer from an acute sense of cultural relevance before the generality of their people. Thus they espouse visions and programs of modernity and development driven by imported cultural benchmarks. This is a direct result of the impact of western ways of thinking and doing things and its associated discourses on them, which instils an allergic instinct against African cultural rootedness which is fashionably castigated as 'backwardness', 'ignorance', 'superstition', 'primitive', 'parochial' etc. In a word, the African state can be summed up as what Professor Patrick Chabal has called 'non-organic state'. Chabal argues that the African state is both 'overdeveloped and soft'. It is overdeveloped because it was fastidiously and artificially put into place. All the textbook institutions of a state and its government are present. It is soft

because, although powerful, it cannot administer welfare. This observation later gave rise to his other book *Africa Works* (1999) that Chabal penned with Jean-Pascal Daloz, in which he argued that, after all, there might be a way of perceiving Africa as quite efficient – if only we were to remove a western lens.<sup>11</sup>

### **The changing global political culture: from globalisation to glocalisation**

All over the world today, there is something taking place, a 'wind of change' of some sort if you like. We are seeing a large shift of socio-cultural and socio-political attitudes where communities by and large are retreating to the local as the only source of security in a world where little seems to make sense anymore. With society at the international and national level seen as abstract and unrealistic, the local is increasingly being viewed as real and practical. In a world where once every local phenomenon was examined from the point of view of its national and international ramifications, the reverse is likely to be the case today. British political sociologist Frank Furedi captures this change well: "ironically, the more the world is becoming internationalized, with every region brought into an intimate relationship with the world market forces, the more the singularity of the experience of the parish-pump is insisted upon".<sup>12</sup>

### **Social movements and community interactivity**

In the Mt. Elgon area of East Africa, this restorative exodus has also caught on. As if responding to Herbert Stein, the American economist's caustic aphorism "If something cannot go on forever, it will stop",<sup>13</sup> Community Sites of Knowledge (CSK – depositories of indigenous knowledge systems) are increasingly becoming nurseries for alternatives socio-cultural and political leadership leading to organic restorative practices, at the centre of which one finds efforts to address persistent questions of marginalization, discrimination and social and cultural exclusions. This is in large measure a response to the declining political and cultural capacity of the state and triggered by the realization slowly taking place in the region that democratization will not come from periodic elections, which political parties have for so long mistakenly viewed as their exclusive

domain of operation. Political parties across East Africa, instead of being a force for democratisation, have instead been empty vehicles for tribal barons or cabals of kleptocrats without a committed agenda for cultural restoration or political or social reform. Political parties have been instruments of convenience for powerful individual politicians. Rather than help forge cultural consciousness they've led to further fragmentation of the state that has in turn led to further violence at the heartbeat of communities'.<sup>14</sup>

Newton Garver in his tidy article *What Violence Is* (1968)<sup>15</sup> has suggested that violence is not only a matter of physical force but rather that it is also psychological in that it affects ones ability to make their own decisions. He went on to show that each kind of violence has both personal and institutional forms. It is not my aim to take issue here with Garver's account but merely to tap into his observations that I think are relevant in the context of our present conversation. Garver's account is valuable as it stands. It gives a useful way of viewing a vast range of very diverse and often spectacular human behaviour, a way which enables us to see through the diversity and spectacle to certain essential features in respect to *Afrikology* and its application in communities.

Garver roots his account of violence in a specific moral practice, namely, the evaluation of behaviour in terms of fundamental human rights. He argues that we get an even greater resolution of diversity if we focus on the question of what is common to these two basic kinds of violence. Much of who we are depends on our ability to act in concert with each other. This is true of our physical survival. Few of us could live for more than a few days, and none of us would have matured into adults, without the ongoing support of various forms of interactions. This interdependence, according to Garver, is also true of our community and cultural life. Our language, our knowledge, our arts, all of our social structures, and even much of our sense of self are a function of our capacity for interactions. I think it is fair to say that most of what we value in life is creatively woven out of our capacity for complex, diverse, sustained and systematic interactions. One fundamental purpose of *Afrikology* is to enhance our ability to interact with each other so as to improve our lives. It enriches us by

amplifying our ability to satisfy our desires, power, through concerted activity. It is just as clear that diminishing each other's ability to participate in such forms of interactivity impoverishes us all, sometimes as is the case in most places in East Africa, in violent ways. *Afrikology* is the art of interactions.

### **Afrikology in communities**

Over the past few years, all the major social science paradigms from structuralism to Marxism, world systems theory and globalization that had sought to explain the predicament of African societies in terms of structures and epistemologies have been countered and critiqued by a perspective that places primacy and emphasis on the human heart, creativity and resilience, in a word – *Afrikology*. One of the most important features of *Afrikology* to the epistemological struggle in the academic understanding of social and cultural change in Africa has been its capacity to explode often victimizing approaches in exchange for a much more balanced understanding of communities at work in Africa. Commenting directly on the heritage of the social science and humanities' enterprises in Africa, Nabudere, as part of his intellectual trajectory for the twenty first century, and in direct reference to *Afrikology*, has referred to two diametrically opposed orientations. He characterized one as Eurocentric and subservient to European social sciences and the other as Afrocentric in that it is steeped in African knowledge from the past. He however, makes it clear, as the following case studies will attempt to show, that *Afrikology* is universal and it is at the core of the creative process of social transformation and cultural restoration, understanding perceptions, ideas, and needs.

### **About the case studies**

As a way into this conversation, what comes to mind and heart immediately are three recent compelling community accounts. The first is a dialogue in search of meaning that focused on '*language, culture and women's rights*'<sup>16</sup> that took place deep in the villages at the heart of communities across Uganda and Kenya. It was through this afrikological podium that we discovered a discourse in which the old traditions and cultures were able to interrogate modernity and vice-versa within their own contexts, which were

varied. Such a dialogue between the two worlds had been an on-going struggle and counter-struggle that has to be recognized and understood. The two constituted a dialectical relationship and this relationship had to be interrogated. We came to the conclusion that modernity had not fully managed to contain and destroy tradition, but that on the contrary in some cases the latter had outlasted the former although with the odd modification. This interrogation proceeded along the path that sought to highlight the strategies of survival adopted by traditionalism against the destructive impact of a globalizing and universalizing modernization – which offered no new benefits to those affected by modernization.

The second narrative comes from *Iwokodan* community site of knowledge based in Palisa, Uganda as it searches for judicial balance through the workings of restorative justice in redressing inter and intra-community transgressions. This arises out of realisation of the fact that western analytical philosophical paradigms, which inform social sciences and the humanities, tend to polarise situations. This is in a way what dialectics has meant for western thought right from Plato and Hegel. Philosophically, the *Iwokodan* restorative approach has led the community organised as a clan to rediscover its sense of *utu* or humanness cultivated in an Afrikological epistemology that recognises unities and complementarities in relationships between humans and nature in general. The African beliefs, which we find represented in the basic idea of 'Ubuntu,' or the need to take into account 'reciprocal relations' that guide peoples' perceptions of themselves are crucially important in defining a comprehensive solution to global and local situations, which in African conditions, happen predominantly in rural conditions such as is the case in the *Iwokodan* community site of knowledge.

The third account captures afrikological efforts by cross-border communities around the Mt. Elgon area in search of collective identities through cultural clusterism organized through a *peace and cultural animation festival* that took place in November 2012 in Kapchorwa on the slopes of Mt Elgon. Cross-border conflicts in the Mt. Elgon area have had many dimensions with various correlated causes and factors. Although land has been a major contributing factor to the

conflicts, other social and economic underlying factors have also played a role in fuelling the conflicts. In addition, the conflicts have had negative social, cultural, and economic impacts on all cross-border communities living in the area among them: displacement, physical harm to individuals; the destruction of property; death resulting in a high incidence of orphans and widows; rape and other forms of sexual violence and exploitation; and the resulting food and general insecurity. Furthermore, these problems have presented the cross-border communities already dealing with conflicts of multiple types, from mineral extraction to cattle rustling, to drought, to post-conflict inter-ethnic violence, to the creation of national parks for tourism in both sides of the mountain in Kenya and Uganda. However, until now, there has been no comprehensive effort in focusing on culture as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism as well as restorative practices of cross-border communities as a soluble alternative in promoting peace and regional security in Africa. After all, the concepts of 'culture', 'peace', 'security' and 'development' are indeed, intimately related.

### **Case Study 1: Community Dialogues on 'Language, Culture and Women's Rights' in Uganda and Kenya**

Having identified the verbal dependency of most African intellectuals and social activists on Western processes of development and its concepts of rights as a major obstacle to Africa's development, and because of the prejudicial biases that exists within their 'modern' inclined psyches, the purposes of our journeys in communities in rural northern and eastern Uganda and rural western Kenya were an attempt to bring about a meaningful, and productive dialogue between modernity and traditional conceptions and misconceptions of human rights by engaging the so called 'intellectuals' representing the modernist view and the 'uncertificated/uneducated' rural masses/natives representing their own traditional view.

The objective in part, was to create an afrikological podium that would diffuse the hostility that exists between modernists and traditionalists, both of whom view each other's motives with suspicion. Modernists tend to view traditionalists as 'illiterate and backwards,'

whilst traditionalists on the other hand, tend to look at modernists as *muzungu* (foreign) minded, with imported ideas and in a rush to rid tradition and replace it with modernity. In a sense, similar to Western assumptions where the "barbarian" is inferior to the "civilized", the rural dweller is accordingly seen as subservient to the developed urban intellectual. Therefore, the verbal distance that exists between the two is, among other things, manifested by their ways of understanding, perceiving, interpreting, and evaluating as well as in their modes of articulation and communication of issues of human rights. The lack of meaningful interface between the two groups appears to be a problem deriving from the issue of language, culture, and meaning.

Thus, this afrikological community conversation was a direct attempt at scratching the fabric and personality of *Afrikology*, in order to try and understand what is in the heart, not just the mind of those engaged in the conversations. It adopted the use of dialogue as opposed to debate; this is because dialogue unlike debate emphasizes listening to deepen understanding. A dialogue draws participants from as many parts of the community as possible to exchange information face-to-face, share personal stories and experiences, honestly express perspectives, clarify viewpoints, and develop solutions to community concerns. Dialogues go beyond sharing and understanding to transforming participants. While the process begins with the individual, it eventually involves groups and institutions. It develops common values and allows participants to express their own interests. It expects that participants will grow in understanding and may decide to act together with common goals. In dialogue, participants can question and re-evaluate their assumptions. Through this process, people are learning to work together to improve relations. Ultimately, dialogues can affect how policies are made. This in effect is restorative learning and unlearning that can only be cultivated by the use of an afrikological epistemology.

The idea of the project, the late Professor Nabudere explained in 2011, came as a result of a regional conference on *Restorative Justice and International Humanitarian Law* that he had helped organise back in 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya.

He informed the conference that he opposed the idea raised by some participants that the question of women and human rights in East Africa were confined to the tradition vs. modernity dichotomy. He instead argued that it was a question of language and culture. "There is lack of interfacing between the researcher and the researched. The 'NGO expert' ought to meet with the community and converse the issue of meaning" added Nabudere.

Nabudere argued that language is a guide to social reality, and that it is the medium of expression for African societies. Therefore, from this perspective, experience is largely determined by the language habits of the community, and that each separate structure represents a separate reality. Mukasa Luutu, the Vice Chancellor of MPAU has supplemented Nabudere by adding that language is a modelling system, and that "no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre, the structure of natural language". This is apparent in the use of vocabulary and the semantics of words. Clearly, from Nabudere's point of view, there is no particular language or culture that names everything or catalogues the whole compass of knowledge of the world. Underlying a word, therefore, is its relationship with other words, and the goal of analysis is to discover vocabulary sets that carry the underlying semantic components of the language and a people's culture.

Luutu has pointed that all education in East Africa has been colonially oriented; it had delinked people from their communities and societies. "Education as such has been presented to us as modernity, which has created a further distance between individuals and their rural community". These days, the script is clear. The state through the constitution imposes cultural restrictions under the auspices of the human rights law - i.e. you are allowed to do all you want culturally as long as it is not repugnant, in some cultures homosexuality is considered repugnant. The law criminalises this. Good conscience is considered good Christian values. Polygamous relations are prohibited but having many mistresses is allowed.

A community dialogue, with 12 community researchers, was held in the Acholi region to focus on two key issues, viz (a) Bride Price and (b) Gender Based Violence.

This dialogue was of particular importance because of the northern armed conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony's (now a fugitive from international justice) and Uganda's national army that ended in 2006 as a result of a peace agreement signed in Juba, in the then Republic of Sudan. It was one of the longest armed rebellions in Uganda's history and one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. It began soon after President Yoweri Museveni usurped power in 1986 also through a five year armed-guerrilla war. It led to the deaths of thousands while at the same time leaving around two million people internally displaced. The 23 year civil war also led to a near collapse of family and traditional structures; communities in this area registered high levels of poverty and crime rates, they became dependent on the state and the donor community. It also led to the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the area. As is mostly the case in conflict situations, of all the structural and physical violence that this community experienced, it was women and children who suffered the most.

A first dialogue question was "who was Kony's mother?" asked by a local woman Councillor, in perhaps trying to understand Joseph Kony's background, and maybe to also reach her own sense of closure. This triggered a heated discussion on African femininity and the role of mothers in conflict resolutions. Rhyming well with an observation made earlier by Nabudere that one cardinal requirement of *Afrikology* is the feminine principle in African consciousness and existence. This has been an aspect, he has pointed out, which Western epistemology has tried to undermine and sideline in advancing their patrilineal cultural values in Africa. The discussions continued into women's participation in decision-making about war and peace, it was agreed by most participants that Acholi women were part and parcel to the initiatives that led to the end of the war and that their role has been pivotal in post conflict reconstruction of their community.

Calls to involve women in matters of war and peace have begun being taken seriously in other societies around the world as well; this follows the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which returned women's role to the forefront of peace activities. The conference suggested that

governments should be encouraged to increase the participation of women in the peace process at the decision-making level, including them as part of delegations to negotiate international agreements relating to peace and disarmament.

Violence as such produces enormous insecurity and requires one to tread carefully when asking questions concerning those affected such as those in the Gulu forum. People living in contexts of open violence as have community members in this dialogue tend to watch constantly for their personal and collective security. They search for ways to feel and be safe, and to find protection as insecurity has the capacity to create the permanency of feeling uncertain.

It was explained that uncertainty goes hand in hand with the experience of unpredictability. In seeking safety, we have tended to suspend trust in what was happening around us. To be insecure has meant that no longer having a clear sense of self and having to suspend trust in others. This is the plight facing Acholi children today, especially those born at the apex of the conflict, as well as those who grew up in the camps. "Our youths especially males are very bitter".

It is widely recognised that periods of war or disaster can produce ruptures or crises within societies from which new orders can emerge. The Acholi community has clearly not been an exception. Through the dialogue, it was agreed that War, urban displacement, inter-tribal and international presence, NGO interventions, government development projects, women's and children's rights promotion – were all identified as having had a dramatic impact on the Acholi community in particular *kwo town* – the Acholi community living in and around Gulu town, and how they perceive issues of rights.

There were mixed reactions from some participants when it came to discussing the catalysts of the cultural transformation that has taken place in their community, this led to some ambivalence and controversy over the meaning of the social changes that have taken place in their community. For example, one person took a modernist view and argued that for some, especially women and young men, town life, despite its material hardships, has been the foundation for a world that is modern and

global, unlike restricted rights for women under traditional and local arrangements. In spite of a cry from elderly men in the dialogue, rising to object her views, she argued that Acholi elders and chiefs have largely lost their power of social regulation, as Acholi women are liberating themselves. Economically, women have gained access to loans, both individually and through groups. They own property in town, such as buildings, vehicles, and land, and businesses. Women also express satisfaction at having learned to sell agricultural produce and save money. Socially and politically, women pointed out the number of women who are now in positions of authority in prominent NGOs and in the local government system. Women are achieving higher levels of education and undergoing training by NGOs and government on health and other issues concerning their rights.

Three women in particular objected to these modernist observations, accusing them of exaggerations. Modernity, they observed, has had a significantly negative impact on women's quality of life. Because many men have died, joined armed organisations or abandoned their wives, women in large part have been left with the primary responsibility for providing for their families, which have often expanded to include a number of dependents in addition to their own children. Water, firewood and grass for roofing are hard to come by, women are now forced to go out and earn money so that they buy land and or rent a house, they must also pay for their children's school fees and other medical facilities that are often inadequate and very expensive. Another negative consequence brought about by "town life", they pointed out, was the methods of making money that have emerged in the context of, and which they constantly drew attention to, specifically prostitution for women and thievery for men.

For many older Acholi participants, however, this dominance of 'NGO moneyed culture' in town was an unmitigated evil, a corruption of Acholi society and its cultural values. As one elderly man pointed out, "before the war, wealth was not held in money, but in cattle". As a result, money itself was widely perceived as a symptom and agent of the destruction of Acholi society, as it replaced tangible, rooted resources. All money-oriented economic activity was

seen by some elders who spoke in the dialogue as a betrayal of the values of Acholi culture: "Gulu town had given birth to a lost generation of Acholi, addicted to material riches, disconnected from their roots in the land and without even basic cultural knowledge".

In pre-war Acholi society, significant authority was held by a lineage- and clan-based structure of patriarchal, generally gerontocratic. This structure was brought into crisis by the civil-war and displacement. Many elders died, and the civil war presented bigger problems for 'traditional' leadership to resolve. The authority of this lineage-based structure has also been undermined by the creation of the Local Council system, which has taken over many of the conflict resolution roles previously held by 'traditional' authorities. Their disempowerment has been further intensified by NGO initiatives which tend to favour women and youth. Finally, displacement itself has had a significantly negative impact on lineage-based leaders, as clans have been dispersed; restrictions on movement have made clan meetings difficult and land also difficult to access, the dialogue noted.

The dialogue then returned to the primary subject matter and delved into the issue of meaning. The Acholi community attaches so much significance to the marriage ritual, that failure to marry is considered a curse (or an abnormality) and it is common for the elders to be called in to monitor events. Childlessness is also counted as one of the most serious misfortunes to befall a couple, with women typically taking all the blame. In such cases, the marriage could be dissolved or the husband be allowed to marry another wife. Polygamy is regarded as a normal arrangement.

A young man chiefly depends upon his lineage to get both the permission to marry a girl and the ability to provide the material goods required to pay her indispensable *ot-lim* (bride price). Although marriages were sometimes organized without the consent of the boy and the girl in the past, such scenarios are increasingly rare today, with most people embracing the modern ideal of freedom of choice. Because it was often the father's wealth that afforded the boy the *ot-lim*, there was little he could change. The items to be delivered as *ot-lim* (which is a practical way of saying thank you to the girl's mother) are discussed and a specific date

set for the delivery. Instalments are often accepted. *Ot-lim* can take the form of cattle, goats, sheep, household items or money. Often, the girl's *ot-lim* is not spent but saved to offset her brothers' *ot-lim* when it is their turn to marry and pay. Refunds are made in the event of a divorce.

Participants then engaged in discussions centering on *ot-lim*, what it meant from a traditional point of view and how it is being perceived in modern times. It was observed that *ot-lim* is too expensive and this is why we are seeing our boys running away from their responsibilities by impregnating girls and absconding". A participant argued that parent demand a hefty *ot-lim* if their girl is 'educated'. A girl ought to be a girl in spite of educational attainment, he stressed. Another thought that the problem with *ot-lim* was the distorted meaning. "*Ot-lim* traditionally meant appreciation; but nowadays it literally means paying or buying a wife (bride-price). This traditional custom established good relations among families and legitimized the children born in the marriage. But today, some women are given away to the man who pays more. This, in a way, can be seen as the commodification of women or forced marriage, which was not the original intention of *ot-lim*."

Another argued that the problem in part lies with old men that are modernized – urbanized, "these men", she observed, "tend to demand a lot for *ot-lim* and they also impose items that are not supposed to be part and parcel of the *ot-lim*". And "*ot-lim* is not bride price, we should strive to remind those confused about this definition that *ot-lim* is a token of appreciation to the bride's family and in particular the mother. We are not selling our daughters! In the old days *ot-lim* used to be shared communally. These days it all commercialized, people even do electronic cash transfers and people start businesses with it". One blamed Acholi community in the diaspora. "They are the problem as they are the ones disorganizing our community. They disregard our traditional customs when marrying and see things in terms of modern rights and law", he said.

The dialogue then turned its attention to the issue of divorce and inheritance. It was observed that the purpose of marriage was unity, and argued that in Acholi culture divorce was very much discouraged - all things possible were

initiated to prevent a couple from getting divorced.

Drawing from the community conversations, it is logical that governments in East Africa, in one way or another, try and make decisions about the legal and political position of both tradition and modernity in their social and legal systems. Most of the crises that local communities are facing have been expounded by the recommendations that these communities have received from foreign and local "experts" on human rights and development. The concept of development has its roots in the notion of progress, which is fundamentally a materialist philosophy bent on unlimited growth or exploitation and accumulation. The African bureaucrats and political elites have been unable to draw on their concept of community when taking decisions on national policies.

Women's rights, no matter how we eventually refine the concept, demand that residents old and young, male and female in the urban as well as in the rural areas are heard, and not pushed aside. Rural people, commonly referred to as the "illiterates" or the "uneducated" in modernist lingo, who make up the majority of the African communities, need to gain a 'voice' in the parlance of contemporary community, cultural or political studies speak. Whether we use the older language of "empowerment" or the current speak of the epistemology of the 'heart' as defined by *Afrikology*, the philosophical language of the moment, the message is clear. People cannot plan and or speak for others; people must be given a chance to participate in meaningful ways in resolving the challenges of discrimination whether man-made or natural. Solutions must be inclusive not exclusive. As a result, these dialogues about modernist verses tradition conceptions of women's rights have depended on thinking about the world in organic, incremental, bottom-up terms rather overarching, top-down abstractions. It has also been about accommodation and accumulation of small-scale change that adds value to our communities in how community members view women and the discourses concerning their rights. To paraphrase the late professor Nabudere's horizontal concept, there can be no single 'centre' that will determine the existence of all human beings everywhere because 'one-size fits all' will no longer be allowed to dictate global or local development. All human

beings have to assume responsibility for their own survival and abandon the unilinear epistemology of looking at complex and diverse realities in a one-dimensional manner.

In the course of these dialogues, a consensus built up in most participants that traditional role models of men and women defined their behaviour and how they perceived rights and entitlements. This was a help for both of them. For instance, it was agreed that most disagreements could be settled in the homestead, rather than making the matter public and going to court. The rules in the village were simple for everybody. The statement: "in the old days, there were not so many options in life as there are today", as one participant in the dialogue put it, indicated that participants and the community at large was suspicious of the new freedoms perpetuated by modernist advocates.

Women participants in the dialogue recognised the importance of women's organisations in raising their voice and providing them with a space in which to come together and discuss their problems. Most of the organisations they referred to are those oriented around small income-generating activities or give out loans. As one woman group leader in the dialogue explained, women's voices are now heard in public, whereas before 'women were not supposed to have a voice', demonstrating the value placed by women on having a voice, being heard, both as an individual and collectively as a community. In all the dialogues most women resonated the need to have a voice as a key feature to the resilience of a community and its sense of identity. Having a voice, for them, means defining their own future, thereby repositioning the feminine principle as a core constituent of *Afrikology*.

#### Case Study 2: Iwokodan Community Site of Knowledge

Post-conflict communities are increasingly turning their attention to the legacy of indigenous practices of dispute settlement and reconciliation. The argument is that traditional and informal justice systems may be adopted or adapted to develop an appropriate response to a history of civil war and oppression. *Iwokodan* community site of knowledge based in Palisa, eastern Uganda captures well this change.

At this site, organised as a clan, the community has incorporated strong elements of modernity in order to preserve their traditional justice system and traditional clan governance structure. The Iwokodan Clan is modelled on a modern government structure, it has a written constitution, with modern governance structures. It has opted for restorative justice in the event of conflict adjudication, recognising that modern courts are not able to deal with an increasing number of criminal cases. This has led to increased cost and delay with self-evident injustice being caused to individuals and hence a feeling of injustice. The other problem Iwokodan's local government minister Mr. Joseph Okwalinga pointed out is that criminal litigation is particularly dependent on individual memory. Documents that can objectively refresh memory ordinarily play a small part in the usual kind of criminal case. Witnesses must rely solely on their recollection. When it takes more than a year, and sometimes three years, for a case to come to trial, memory becomes suspect. There are a number of inter and intra-communities murder cases that the Clan has resolved cordially without reference to the high courts. Consequently, there is an increasing demand for *Afrikology's* holistic approach to justice among communities across the east African region, which seeks to shift the focus of the trial from the battle between the lawyers to the discovery of truth by modifying the complex rules of evidence, encouraging the defendant to contribute to the search for truth, and requiring full and open discovery for the prosecutor. For defence lawyers, under the current adversarial system, courtroom victory usually translates into obtaining an acquittal, and consequently they regard discovery of the truth as incidental or even irrelevant to this pursuit. There is a dichotomy that is normally created between the need for justice and the need for reconciliation. Yet these processes are in fact two sides of the same coin. The answer this, as the Iwokodan cases vividly demonstrates, is a new afrikological system that can ensure speed of trial while ensuring that the truth will prevail and the restorative justice approach offers the best result that can integrate the process. The modern courts alone cannot ensure that justice prevails in all cases as experience has shown that modern courts tend to be overwhelmed by criminal cases. It is the primary responsibility of the people

who have caused conflict or harm to each other or to society to face the consequences of their actions and try to address the harm done. It is the duty of society at large to provide them with the opportunities and institutional arrangements to enable them to do so. This is what the Iwokodan community site of knowledge is attempting to do.

Case Study 3: The first Mt. Elgon Cross-border Community Festival: The Road to Cross-Border Peace – Overcoming the Legacy of Bordered Identities, Cultural fragmentation and Unresolved Conflicts.

Today's real borders are not between nations, but between powerful and powerless, free and fettered, privileged and humiliated. Today no walls can separate humanitarian or human rights crises in one part of the world from a national security crisis in another...<sup>17</sup> Dr. Kofi Anan

Cross-border communities in the Mt Elgon area of East Africa, as is the case elsewhere in Africa, have gone through such untold violence and indescribable grief that the clamour of the victims is still heard, and the sounds of the silenced-guns, sharp-spears and *pangas* (machetes) still reverberate in the minds of the ex-fighters as well as those who lived through the conflict experience. The scars of the conflicts are still visible not only on the bodies and souls of the older generations but also on the young – the continuing stigmatization of widowed women as 'husband snatchers' and their children as cultural orphans is one case in point. Community conflicts in the area have had many dimensions with various correlated causes and factors. Although land has been a major contributing factor to the conflicts, other social and economic underlying factors have also played a role in fuelling the conflicts. In addition, the conflicts have had negative social, cultural, and economic impacts on all cross-border communities living in the area among them: displacement, physical harm to individuals; the destruction of property; death-resulting in a high incidence of orphans and widows; rape and other forms of sexual violence and exploitation; and the resulting food and general insecurity. Furthermore, these problems have presented the cross-border communities already dealing with conflicts of multiple types, from mineral extraction to cattle rustling, to drought, to post-conflict inter-ethnic violence, to

the creation of national parks for tourism in both sides of the mountain in Kenya and Uganda.

As Kenyan scholar Robert Simiyu<sup>18</sup> has pointed out, the rhythmic nature of land-related violence in the Mt Elgon area, as often coinciding with general elections and other critical moments in Kenya's national politics, indicates that there may be more to it than just land disputes or pure intercommunity hatred. He argues that there is a possible political motive for the chaos. This is borne out by the fact that in some instances, state agencies have been implicated in the conflicts, while in others the state has remained ambivalent. The result, Simiyu argues, is that many conflicts remain unresolved, some years after they first started. It is important to note that the land problem has persisted since colonialism, and successive regimes have been unable to permanently resolve the land question to the satisfaction of all community members. In short, the valleys and slopes of Mt Elgon bare testimonies of the severity of the conflicts faced by cross-border communities that have been caged in imagined political boundaries.

To overcome these cross-border divisions created in the area, which threaten further fragmentation of communities and clans, we tapped into professor Nabudere's wisdom and created a situation in which we encouraged cross-border cultural-linguistic communities to regroup as much as possible into 'clusters'- for instance, linking the *Bamasaba* with the *Samia* and *Babukusu* or the *Sabiny* with the *Sabaoti* and *Pokot* or the *Iteso* with the *Karamojong* and so forth, so that they become strong nations capable of defending and voicing their local interests and concerns globally.

It is against this background that the *Afrika Study Centre* (ASC) and the *Mt Elgon Residents Association* (MERA) with the help of *Marcus Garvey Pan-African Institute/University* and other stakeholders organised the Cross-Border Peace and Cultural festival that took place in November 2012 in Kapchorwa town on the slopes of Mt Elgon in Eastern Uganda.

The social concept and cultural context in which we undertook the cross-border cultural 'integration' tried to imagine and invent new ways to enable communities to break out of their encirclement first by the global system and then by African elites who control state power that conti-

nue to marginalize communities. The festival is an ongoing afrikological endeavour by the ASC and local cross-border communities to deal with the destabilising effects and consequences of western colonization and domination. After all, there has been no comprehensive effort in focusing on culture as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism as well as restorative practices of cross-border communities as a soluble alternative in promoting peace and regional security in Africa.

For cross-border communities to undertake this transformation, ASC selected four members (two female and two males) in April 2012 from each cross-border community in both Uganda and Kenya (they included: Bukusu, Samia, Sabaot, Sebei, Benet, Iteso, Bamasaba, Pokot and the Karamajong) to undergo a one month intensive 'Cultural Animation Training Programme' at the Marcus Garvey Pan Afrikan Institute/University in Mbale, Uganda. Course participants (animators) underwent a process of self conscientisation through restorative cultural learning and unlearning paradigms and cultural memory methodologies.

Upon completion of the training, animators returned to their respective communities to mobilize, learn and prepare their communities for the festival. They were tasked with the responsibility of observing their cultures with deeper interest, learn and contribute to the revival and strengthening aspects that communities were keen on. Overall they were also expected to initiate some learning and documentation centre that will gather materials archived in practices and procedures of their cultures and languages. This way, a socio-cultural treasury of grassroots experiences, mechanisms and technologies of sustainable environment, food and human security systems would be gathered and showcased at the cultural festival and beyond it.

In this, they followed the following principles: Learning by seeing, listening and observing-then practicing; Adopting a doing, using and interacting approach; Acquainting oneself with holistic understanding; Critically adopting transdisciplinary skills in learning; Adopting [Afrikology](#) as a transdisciplinary way of knowing, being and relating to the demand for knowledge, truth and justice; Learning to work with culture at the University Campus and the community; Learning

and innovating as you work in the community.

The three-day festival was the culmination of a 'People to People Reconciliation' linkages and activities that begun in 2006. The basic objective of the festival activities has been to enable each of the cross-border communities to present their culture including foods, traditional medicines, handicrafts, songs, dances, social practices, building technologies and other material cultures in one another. This constituted a learning experience and demonstrated to them the similarities and breaks in their cultural heritages and therefore became a firm basis for restorative peace and transformation. The festival explored the following themes: (a) 'Food (in) security' and regional security; (b) 'Cross-cultural spirituality' and African traditional cultures; (c) Remembering Dani Nabudere, the "people's Professor". These themes were spread over a three day festival activity schedule.

Day One was dedicated to matters of 'Food (in) security' and regional security-showcasing different cultural foods from each of the Mt Elgon communities. The overall objective was to stimulate interest and revive the culture of traditional 'granary model' needs; indicating the common convergence of strategies to respond to and address the common problem of food vulnerabilities and approaches to common collaborative culture of sharing of produce and seeds within the communities.

Day Two was dedicated to matters of 'Cross-cultural spirituality' and African traditional cultures, thus creating a space for the recognition of cultural jurisdiction at play in which dialogue about intentions, values, and assumptions were brought out and negotiated. This included awareness building and understanding in which at last dialogue on issues of the 'African feminine principle' were revitalized and knowledge and benefits discussed. This was intended to help find ways of better linking modern sciences to the broader heritage of human kind and indeed contribute to scientific knowledge of universal value.

The final day of the festival was dedicated to remembering the "people's Professor", the late Dani Nabudere without whom, the festival would not have taken place. The day thus reflected among other activities, Professor Nabudere's commu-

nity work in the region, the continent and beyond, it featured: Food security; Peace; Cross-border solidarities; International political economy; Pan-Africanism of peoples; Defence of the commons; Cognitive justice and Community Sites of Knowledge; Restorative governance, economy and justice.

### **What room for Pluralism in the African Cultural World?**

It is our considered view, in this section that any discussion on cultural pluralism ought to be centered on the suspicious enterprise of modernity whose dogmatic track is that any cultural progress that comes later is inherently better than what was there before. The concepts of rationality, objectivity, and generalization can be considered to be the theoretical bases on which the current plural project is erected.

Subsequently, we affirm the following as considerations to be given weight. Firstly, pluralism appears to be a cultural franchise of globalization aimed at bringing together previously isolated people together voluntarily and involuntarily into new and ever closer neighborhoods by the increasing integration of markets, the emergence of new regional political alliances, remarkable advances in telecommunications, and transportation that have prompted unprecedented demographic cultural shifts. The resulting confluence of peoples and cultures is an increasingly global, multicultural world brimming with tension, confusion and conflict in the process of its adjustment to pluralism.

Secondly, as radical witnesses of centuries of alienation and what has been termed the legacy of one-sided cultural solutions to life and sanitised stereotypes we are beginning to see the link between what is a mono-cultural model being propagated as pluralism. For instance, Rothkopf<sup>19</sup> in 1997, examining the cultural ambit of education's relation to foreign policy pointed out that the very real prospect of education is now serving as a fourth pillar of Western cultures, in particular American foreign policy in which foreign policy says no to revolutions or any change that is not favourable to U.S while aggressively marketing the culture of the west as cool, as the most just, the most tolerant, the most willing to constantly reassess and improve itself, and the best model for the future. Furthermore, for communities in

Africa, the school environment has been the cultural site at which one begins being cultivated by the systematic denigration of one's identity, the site at which one learns how to laugh at his own gods while being instructed to worship other people's gods. School education, although now a human right issue and as such compulsory, is considered to be the place in which the fostering of plural 'cultural democracy' is promoted and advanced widely. So, contemporary education in its simplest form can be seen as foreign cultural capital being transmitted via instructions in schools, and institutionalized by the certificates issued by the educational systems. But, despite these shortcomings, as we have discussed earlier, communities especially in the Mt. Elgon area are moving away from the perspective of African "victimhood" and cultural pluralism by experimenting with cultural clusterism fused to the fabric of epistemology's 'thinking from the heart' as an approach towards renewed community-centred empowerment and restorative cultural forwardness.

Thirdly, the wide gap between the pace of economic globalization sitting atop a pile of unresolved historical grievances on the one hand, and the reality of a tense, mistrustful, and anxiety-haunted African society on the other, thrusts into our conscience a new, pungent, and ambivalence-filled human situation we can no longer escape. A leading indigenous knowledge systems expert and culturalist Professor Catherine Odora Hoppers has painted an acute picture when she observed:

As nations and communities big and small rummage about in this confusion, one detects various degrees of hankering for a lost age of social harmony, cultural homogeneity and commonly-shared values – occasionally confusing the past state of things for a vision for the future. In the meantime, the perceived fragmentation of society, concerns about crime, persistent undercurrents of racism, and growing distrust of neighbour and government, have strengthened the attraction of many to the numerous affinity groups mushrooming everywhere.<sup>20</sup>

Odora argues that in situations in which large immigrant communities find themselves surrounded by a mainstream culture, the percolation tends to encourage antipathy toward those

outside the 'shared loyalty' while fermenting a hankering for the familiar though geographically distant safe-haven of a back-home of a fictitious undisturbed social harmony. Out of this emerge a form, content as well as rationale for the sustenance of a parallel, quasi resistance, proto-protest sub-culture right in the heartland of a mainstream culture.

The forth aspect of pluralism we take battle with is its promotion of individualism at the expense of wholeness as understood in *Afrikology* or from the cultural personhood of an African being that constitutes his or her identity. The African concept of a person as wholeness does not deny human individuality as an ontological fact, or as what the legendary professor Michel Foucault called an 'analytic finitude'<sup>21</sup> but ascribes ontological primacy to the community through which the human individual comes to know both himself and the world around him. On this Afrikological reasoning, it can be said that there is a greater wholeness to which the single individual person belongs, though in themselves individual can be seen as partial cultural wholes. Holism is therefore the starting point of the African concept of a person. This derivative concept of a person is apparently alien to those advancing the pluralist canon. This distinction comes as a result of the difference between the holistic and the individualistic conceptions of a cultural person or community. Pluralism accords primacy to individualistic derivative whilst 'cultural clusterism' that we are advancing here places importance on *Afrikology's* wholeness. The traditional African view of a person denies that a person can be defined by focusing on his or her physical or psychological characteristics alone. It instead places emphasis on how he is defined in relation to his or her cultural world. This primacy is meant to apply not only ontologically, but also in regards to his epistemic accessibility. The reality of personhood in most communities in East Africa as such is therefore one but it has got many aspects to it. In cultural and philosophical terms, emphasis has been placed on the primacy of the greater environing wholeness over that of cultural individualism or for that pluralism.

That said, the global climate of cultural change and acute cultural vulnerability

has raised new challenges for all communities in our ongoing pursuit of universal human, animal, environmental and cultural rights. Appreciably, In the wider sociological sense, tolerance as advanced by pluralism carries with it the understanding that intolerance breeds violence and social instability, and has therefore become the social term of choice to define the practical rationale of permitting uncommon social practice and cultural diversity.

## Conclusion

As has been illustrated in this article, the first step on the road to constructing cultural defences of the mind, outlined through our cultural conversations in this chapter, is the creation of other concepts and meanings besides what colonialism has bestowed. The ordeals of imagination undergone by culturally violated communities that have survived colonialism, cultural genocides and slavery and imperialisms should find space and inform our understanding of human solidarity under impossible conditions. By incorporating Afrikological notions of human solidarity which are based on the assumption that all people share a common underlying humanity, we looked further and pictured the symbolic cultural and social resources such as clusterism for negotiating a politer human identity. As we take this further, a more profound form of tolerance emerges which resides in the capacity to develop respect, understanding and mutual recognition of others because it simply makes good cultural sense.

Our attention would not normally be drawn towards community narratives as holding the promise, potential or epistemological lessons of *Afrikology* and restorative cultural action in communities. Yet our experiences, these settings and people hold seeds, buried and unnoticed, but pregnant with life-giving energy that instructs our cultural and epistemological inquiry. The very nature of a seed, we have tried to demonstrate, is a living-dormant container that simultaneously is fruit and promise, draws our attention towards the natural characteristics of *Afrikology's* collective well-being and the qualities of cultural resilience that contribute to healthy communities not only in East Africa but all over the world.

These conversations have been a long travel down the community-lane in realising the falsity of dichotomisation of

complex human relations, by certain restraining epistemologies; this as we have attempted to demonstrate, can only be corrected under a system of restorative justice, restorative agriculture, and restorative cultural practices that **Afrikology** offers aplenty. Through practical means and community-centred interactions, we have demonstrated that communities are moving away from the perspective of African "victimhood" by adopting the epistemology of thinking from the heart' as an approach towards community-centred intellectualism and social as well as cultural activism.

**Afrikology** stands for manoeuvring space within and interaction with social, economic and political structures that are external to and at the same time part of the community itself. **Afrikology** is about doing justice to communities' capabilities to reflect and act without losing sight of the structural circumstances that enable and at times constrain them. It is about the people's strength. It is about making a difference. It is about creating an indigenous dialectical space for communities to reflect on its social and cultural values and thereby create a connecting relationship between itself that allows room for reflexivity and reflectivity that then reveals the inner soul of the community to the world at large. In the Upanishads of Nabudere, the epistemological grandmaster of **Afrikology**, we can equate the fundamental nature and universalism of **Afrikology** as a passage that speaks to how those who become wise lose the Great Oneness, the Way Rivers all flow into the sea. In the transformation from the solitary to the communal, there is a mysterious physics that each generation has to relearn and advance regarding how we are more together than alone. In the hard-earned experience of Oneness, we all have the chance to discover, through love and suffering, that we are at heart the same. The task for us today is to restore connections that history has shattered. Making cultural education a lived experience for many cross-border learners

around the Mt Elgon area is not possible in the present regime of culturally isolated knowledge production. The symbolic languages used in current educational systems are not learnt at an early age by a large percentage of children in the area. For them, education especially cultural, its language, its methods and its packaging represents an alienating experience both culturally and epistemologically.

### Notes

1. The author is a transdisciplinary fellow based at the *Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute* (currently being constituted into a University) in Mbale, eastern Uganda, where he coordinates the Institute's research and academic programmes. He is also the executive director of *Afrika Study Centre* (ASC), a regional community site of knowledge engaged in cross-border restorative cultural research and studies. Email: ronald2wanda@yahoo.co.uk
2. Nabudere, D., *Afrikology: Philosophy and Wholeness*, (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa) 2011, p.92
3. Ramose, M., *African Philosophy though Ubuntu*. (Mond Book Publishers, Harare) 2005. P.4
4. Wanda, R. E., *Comprehensive Report on Community Sites of Knowledge*, (Unpublished work), MPAU, Mbale, Uganda, November 2010, p.4
5. Said, E., [1992] *Orientalism*, Penguin, London. See also Said, E [1994] *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage, London in Dani Nabudere, *Archie Mafeje: Scholar, Activist and Thinker*, Africa Institute of South Africa, 2011, p.2.
6. Luutu, B.M., International Human Rights and African Traditions of justice: *The quest for Connection and meaning, East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights, No 8, (2002) p.142.*
7. Arif, Nasr ibid p.6
8. Sindima, J. H., *Africa's Agenda: The Legacy of Liberalism and Colonialism in the Crisis of African Values*, (Greenwood Press: London)- 1995 p.2

9. Sindima, ibid p.30
10. Nwala, T. U., *Critical Review of the Great Debate on African Philosophy (1970-1990)* (Nsukka: William Amo Centre for African Philosophy UNN 1992) p.5
11. Chan, S., *Grasping Africa: A Tale of Tragedy and Achievement*. Pp33-34
12. Furedi, F., *Mythical Past, Elusive Future: History and Science in Anxious Age* (Pluto Press: London) p.239
13. Stern, Herbert. See <http://www.imf.org/external/np/speeches/2001/010601.htm>
14. Wanda, R.E, *The Big Question*. (2010) BBC Focus on Africa. BBC World Service, London. Pp 24-25
15. Garver, Newton. *What Violence is*, The Nation. No 209. 24th June 1968.
16. There were eight dialogues across Uganda and Kenya, but for the sake of brevity, we have only highlighted the Acholi dialogue that took place in Gulu, northern Uganda.
17. Annan, K., *Building a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World*, UN Report (can be accessed at <http://www.un.org>).
18. Simiyu, R., 2008, *Militarisation of resource conflicts: The case of land-based conflict in the Mount Elgon region of Western Kenya*, ISS Monograph No. 152, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria.
19. Rothkopf, D. (1997). In Praise of Cultural Imperialism?. *Foreign Policy*, 107, 38-53.
20. Odora Hoppers, C.A. (2005). *Managing Diversity: A Challenge for Europe*. Keynote address to the Conference on «Managing Diversity: A Challenge For Global Participation. City Hall of The Hague 24 June 2005. Stockholm: Stockholm University, Institute of International Education.
21. Foucault, M., *The Order of Things*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1970 p.315.

## CODESRIA Reports

---

---

# An Advanced Research Project on Peace, Security and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: A Reflection on a New CODESRIA's Social Science Initiative and Its Policy Implications

---

This reflective essay is a critical commentary on the nature of the issues raised, and pertinent questions posed regarding CODESRIA's ongoing initiative on Peace, Security and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Another targeted objective is to inform CODESRIA's constituencies and African political communities and their associates about the intended goal of African researchers' contributions toward sustainable peace and security, a sine qua non for progress to occur. By and large, this article aims to share information and to also seek feedback on the project, as we continue to think about this initiative and its impact and policy implications in the long run.

In the field of international relations, we often tend to presuppose that peoples who do not have any tangible common interest – imagined, invented or real – are very much unlikely to go to war against one another. In the Great Lakes Region of Africa, a complex nexus of factors is shared by its peoples including their histories, cultures, and politics, the dysfunctionality of the contemporary nation-states, the contradictions related to the functioning of global capitalism in its peripheral extremism, and the local power struggles framed in absurd liberal democratic jingoism. The nature of the conflicts reflects the layers of assumptions, claims and practices associated with the dynamics of geopolitics. The major questions are: What does this region represent for itself and in itself and its peoples in terms of progress? And what does it represent in terms of global capitalism and the imperatives of unipolar global liberalism?

Without sustainable peace and a pragmatic and programmatic collectively agreed upon security arrangement in the

**Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo**  
Facilitator of the Project  
Cornell University  
USA

Great Lakes Region, there will not be any genuine progress, despite some legal and political efforts at peace. Dialogues, sovereign national conferences, or *les concertations nationales* among the political elites will continue to only be the maneuvering arenas of power sharing, power struggle, and essentially empty avenues for the ordinary people.

There is no tangible historical evidence that supports the assumption and the claims that the conflicts related to or caused by, the structures of the contemporary state or nation-state and its capitalistic economy can possibly be solved either by *enchancements*, general ritualism, or by the psychology of denial. The so-called postmodernist theories, for instance, of explaining the conflicting world and their embodied solutions have little relevance, as they are not grounded in the specific historical and materialistic foundation of the society.

Furthermore, the conflicts cannot be solved by simply describing their symptoms. The conflicts in this region should be dealt with from structuralist perspectives of state-societal relations, and from the state and international relations' perspective of cost-benefit analysis through which the real causes are identified and examined. These conflicts can also be maintained for many years if preventive transformative measures are not structurally factored in as part of the agreements. The conflicts of the Great Lakes Region are not exceptions from the above reasoning and

general principles. It is necessary to search for a multipolar peace arrangement within the perspectives of global capitalism that more strongly re-enforces its expressed ideology of unipolar liberalism but also advocating functional regionalism.

I was privileged to be selected as the facilitator of this advanced research project on peace, security and post-conflict reconstruction in the Great Lakes Region of Africa – the initiative of the Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), which is managed by Bernard Mumpasi Lututala, the Deputy Executive Secretary of CODESRIA and with the support of Ebrima Sall, the Executive Secretary. Both would agree with me that given the importance of this project – as a search for durable peaceful solutions in the region – its potential impact toward the implementation of peace and security, and the special composition of the researchers, a reflective comment on its values needs to be articulated and shared. What are the ultimate objectives and expectations associated with this complex advanced research project? How will this team of African researchers deliver the outcome of their works? And what should be done with their findings and policy recommendations upon the completion of their research projects?

A dynamic group of knowledgeable researchers was selected from a rigorous process, which emphasizes the high quality of the research projects, that of the candidates' publications and the professional engagements of the candidates in development of the region.

Understanding the context of the region is of critical importance in comprehending the nature of the issues in this project.

The context and the issues should be examined structurally and historically, though I am not proposing a historiography here. Many efforts toward peace have failed and the social devastation and the degradation of the environment continue, as well as distrust among peoples, governments and militia groups. In short, life continues to be a nightmare for the majority of people. What should be done?

Based on the mission of CODESRIA, I categorize this initiative to be essentially a social scientific, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary project to produce socially defined critical knowledge and paradigms. Based on the agendas of the participants, it can also be added that this project offers an African-centered perspective on protracted conflict and post-conflict reconstruction processes. In terms of its potentiality, it can also be called a grand reconstructive project. What do all these categorizations mean as it relates to bringing real peace, security and progress as part of post-conflict developments in the Great Lakes Region? Within these categorizations, we have to deal with the nature of the actors involved, the structures of their interests and actions, and the forces behind these political and social theaters.

This region is one the most politically unstable, economically unproductive, and socially unprogressive subregions in Africa. In many cases, the symptoms of this debilitation have appeared over the past three decades or so. The people, especially the poor peasants and farmers in rural areas, women, and children have been seriously suffering from the devastating effects of wars without any clear prospect for getting out of them. As discussed below, the rise of militia politics, decay and the dysfunctionality of the African political regimes, and dominance of a world system that exploits the institutional weaknesses without any pity or apology, have led to paralysis and *désenchantement*. Most of the bilateral, multilateral and international efforts and agreements toward the establishment of a perceived durable peace and consistent dialogues have either been truncated, failed or remained immature without any collective or individual political will toward the production of tangible peaceful actions needed in the Great Lakes Region. If complex and rigorous analyses of the situation and the conditions are not structurally made with complex recom-

mendations, we might compare the political landscape of this region to scenarios in the Japanese Kabuki Theater in which the actors/dancers come and go on the stage but the songs used are the same, originated from the same menu.

Thus, this new CODESRIA initiative is one the most important endeavors that it has undertaken, armed with brilliance, social commitment for knowledge making, intellectual engagement and leadership for policy input into solutions to end the tragedy of the Great Lakes' states and peoples. This initiative is founded on the strong conviction that genuine efforts to propose any sustainable peaceful solutions and physical and social security to the nature of the crisis and post-conflict reconstruction requires a comprehensive and structuralist understanding of the multifaceted nature of this crisis itself and that knowledge matters, and finally that the truth is socially relevant in rethinking the Great Lakes Region.

The selection committee, constituted by Bernard Mumpasi Lututala, Joseph Gahama, Rémy Bazenguissa and this author as the Chair, selected highly capable researchers based on the high quality of their research projects methodologically speaking, the clarity of their objectives, the feasibility of the research projects, the nature of projected policy implications of these projects, and the place and the role of these research projects in their overall professional development in their individual disciplines.

All these researchers are faculty members with strong research credentials. They are all highly motivated and enthusiastic about the continuous role of African researchers towards African progress. This project is both a challenge and an opportunity to propose alternatives about changes from the African researchers' perspectives. It is a challenge partially because it has to produce new knowledge that ought to be both strongly empirical and interpretative. Thus, a dialogue between researchers and political regimes and governments is strongly expressed. Another challenge is that we have to imagine, reclaim, or project the new Great Lakes Region based on concrete outcomes of research projects and not based on generalized speculations and within regional projects. Thus, any reductionism to be projected in this work has to be measured by the laws of probability based on the cost-benefit analysis.

Despite some recent economic growth in some countries of the Great Lakes Region and some presidential, parliamentary and local elections, at large, the region is known for producing some of the deepest political violence in Africa with the rise of militia politics that initially produced presidents who were not elected by anyone and regimes that were either totalitarian with some elements of nationalism or militaristic regimes without any national vision. The gross national income (GNI) per capita has been significantly declining in conjunction with all the implied consequences. Thus, according to the World Human Report of 2013 and the African Human Development Report of 2012 (the first), comparatively, Africans at large have become economically poorer today than they were 30 years ago. Social and economic conflicts due to poverty and underdevelopment have been deepening.

These militia politics have been consolidated in various forms by a combination of the power of guns, sporadic and planned elections and international support. This sub-region with its officially recognized 11 countries, including, Burundi, Angola, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia, has produced tremendous violence in the history of post-colonial state and its political economy. However, not all the countries have had similar reasons for, and manifestations of, political and economic instability. For instance, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere of Tanzania was a noted African leader in the region who believed in self-reliance and in gradual pan-Africanism. Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia with his African humanism produced a vision of combining Africanity and socialism. Some earlier Afro-Marxist-Leninist experiments were produced in this subregion as well.

The dynamics of the Great Lakes Region of Africa, its layered historical and social configurations in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras, the power struggles within geo-politics during and after the Cold War era and the uncontrolled expansionism of the savage capitalism and the weaknesses of the peripheral states have produced major wars, social disruptions, and quasi-permanent political instability in this region.

One country in the region, Rwanda produced a genocide in which the Hutu purposefully massacred the Tutsi and the so-called moderate Hutu of about 800,000 people in a matter of a few months in 1994. The consequences of this genocide and its impact in the region can be compared with the consequences of the United States dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. Biological and medical scientists are still studying the consequences of such a tragedy in physiological and psychological terms.

In 1994, two presidents from Rwanda and Burundi were killed at the same time by a plane crash. This also created another national and regional trauma. The violence continues in Uganda by the militias who have been fighting the regime in Kampala. South Sudanese nationalist movements fought the government of Khartoum. Their negotiations led to the comprehensive peace agreement through which the South Sudanese gained independence based on a voting yes in a referendum on the question. Once, the extreme military dictatorship in "Zaire" led to the near disappearance of the secular state for many years when president Mobutu became himself the divined, individualized and personalized state. Secular state's institutions vanished.

The conflict in this region led to wars in which some people have been buried alive in some cases. Though he had a long history of national revolution, President Laurent-Désiré Kabila of the DRC came to power through the means of a heteroclitite coalition of guerrilla and militia politics, and was killed, adding a new dimension of power struggle and politics of invasion into the equation of the conflict in the region. The war in the East of DRC with peripheral capitalist dimensions has killed more than 5 million people in the DRC alone. Militia groups continue to kill and terrorize the people in the Central African Republic. The movement of refugees has become endemic. The phenomenon of the child soldier has exploded with devastating consequences in the society. Furthermore, the victimization of women and level of brutality against females has been alarming in the region.

The contributions of researchers collectively in examining and understanding the true causes of the conflicts, their social, local and regional ramifications, and their policy implications cannot be understated. The policy recommendations of the

researchers toward the transformation of conflict into peace are thus the ultimate aims that we pursue in this project. The researchers should make a difference in approaching the conflict and the reconstruction from knowledge based perspective. Understanding the reality of the situation requires questioning the existing perceptions of the subject matter, and the creation or appropriation of tools to be used for any critical analysis. Researchers must deconstruct the perceived realities based on the objectivity of facts and a combination of the principles of positivism and empiricism. However, it should be noted that the process of forming social theories of post-conflict reconstruction has to be influenced by philosophical questions about what kinds of state, economic systems, and cultural choices, despite the imperatives of liberal globalization, people would prefer or choose and what kinds of mechanisms and institutions of peace should be established.

The workshop of August 2013 that brought together the team in Arusha, Tanzania, was unique for the following reasons: (1) The high level of the intellectual commitment of the researchers as reflected in their direct involvement in what is taking place in the region. All the researchers directly or indirectly have been touched personally or through their research works (teaching, research or policy) by the conflict; (2) All the researchers are members of teaching and research units in institutions of higher learning in this sub-region; (3) The interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of their works transcends the parochialism of specific disciplinary approaches; (4) the dialogical relationship between and among the disciplines; and (5) the importance of both empiricism and policy implications.

The workshop was enlightened by the brilliant researchers' specific presentations of their own research projects, participants' comments on the presentation, shaped and guided by Joseph Gahama's presentations from a historian's comprehensive perspective and also commented and elaborated by critical and practical views of each presentation with an emphasis on methodologies and policies by Bernard Mumpassi Lututala. He not only commented on each presentation, identifying the major elements of the problematic, but also insisted on how to go forward in connecting research and government. This author had interventions on almost each major aspect of the project, inclu-

ding theories, conceptualization, and politics and policy outcome and interrogated the reviews of the existing literature and discourses on the topics. The presentation and the discussion on historiography and scholarship on gender by Magdalena Rwebangira shaped the epistemological foundation of our methodologies and theories in this workshop by creating a dialogue on the role of gender, women, and men-dominated institutions in the peacemaking processes. A critical reflection on what remains to be done within interdisciplinary framework by F. E. M. Senkoro, a member of the Executive Committee of CODESRIA, provided another key element of our intellectual guide. Senkoro also commented on the values of indigenous knowledge systems as an asset in this new way of thinking.

This research project is taking another level of critical dialogue between theory and practice as scholars interrogate the complex roles of political ideology, economics, ethnicity, gender, legal systems, women, multinationals, political parties and civil society, labor and the youth in post-conflict reconstruction processes in the region and in Africa at large. These factors and actors are being examined from a holistic perspective. This implies structuralist and historical perspectives within the world system as it functions in Africa.

We are examining the nature of these actors, beyond the identification of their behaviors, in their relationship to one another, the internal and external base of their motivations, the structures of their actions, and domestic and international sponsorships. Policy recommendations will promote necessary constructive dialogues between researchers and policy makers.

A conference on peace will be held as the first step toward the conceptualization of the implementation of all the aspects of this advanced research project on peace, security and post-conflict reconstruction. Finally, this advanced project addresses the issues about the nature of the connectivity and that of progress of peoples and the states within the imperatives of the Great Lakes' cultural, geographical, political, and economic borders and their potential and real capital, as well as their constraints.

For regional peace to be created, the existing borders and their current meanings both theoretically and practically must be



challenged. Furthermore, within a world of states with their claimed sovereignty, the concept of multipolar peace should be explored as it opens up a possible dialogue between the states, local forces, and the peoples on the question of relocation of the peace base. Peace should not be located only in the state's institutions and appropriated only by these institutions. It ought to also be located within the local peasant and farmer's institutions and their values as well. If 28 European states and their internal colonization histories, deep cultural hatred and wars among their small political entities and various levels of industrialization, have been finally capable to unite under the European Union institutions, there are many lessons to learn from this pragmatic unity within cultural and ideological diversities. Where there are a strong will, trust and confidence, everything is possible. There is no natural law (or physiocratic norm) of gravity that determines the place of violent conflict in the Great Lakes Region.

I project that the final product of our research be articulated on the basis of a call and the need for consolidating a new Pax-Africana agenda, one that has to be regionally, politically, economically and culturally imagined within the existing African objective conditions. The role of the African Diaspora is significant in this rethinking as sources of human and material resources and as citizens in their respective countries. The new peace and security can be the instruments of political decolonization and a unifier across transnational space. Such a project has to be essentially scientific, ideological, and political before it can become practically economic. Each country and its people have more to gain collectively through the establishment of peace and security than some individualistic gains associated with peripheral state and capitalism, and corporate militarism. In this project, we are rethinking the Great Lakes Region, a requirement for self-definition and self-identity.

I think that a multipolar peace approach with multi variables base should be privileged, as it is conceptually holistic in its philosophy and decentralized in its pragmatism within the framework of Pax-Africana. CODESRIA's initiative can be considered as a panacea toward the new remapping of the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

The expression "progress" as used in this context is not part of an evolutionary assumption of "developmentalism" advanced by so-called modernity on a planetary scale, a classification that is predetermined, unidirectional and cumulative. Peace, like progress, cannot be produced only through a simple formula of signing agreements. It can be produced through the understanding and changing of the complexity of existing relationships between imagined and invented realities. This is a lesson that can be obtained from all sciences and the humanities.

---

## Archives of Post-Independence Africa and its Diaspora

---

### Introduction

Seventy participants from Europe, North America, and the African continent gathered on Gorée Island for the "*Archives of Post-Independence Africa and its Diaspora*", 20-23 June 2012. Located off the coast of Dakar, Gorée Island is best known for its infamous role in the Atlantic slave trade, underscoring the Diasporic theme of the conference. The participants were so immersed in the proceedings that power outages, though limiting, did not diminish the enthusiasm and engagement of the participants.<sup>1</sup>

This academic conference was the outcome of collaborative efforts over a three-year period. Originally launched by Peter J. Bloom and Stephan F. Miescher as co-directors of the University of California (UC) African Studies Multicampus Research Group (MRG), this initiative grew out of a series of meetings in Dakar, Berkeley, Leiden, and Rabat. The project soon became a truly collaborative endeavor once we began working directly with the Center for African Studies at UC-Berkeley (CAS), the African Studies Centre, Leiden (ASC), CODESRIA, and

**Peter J. Bloom &  
Stephan F. Miescher**  
University of California,  
Santa Barbara

the International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam (IISH). Our various collaborators included, Ebrima Sall, Bernard Mumpasi Lututala, and Olivier Sagna of CODESRIA; Percy Hintzen of CAS at UC Berkeley; Benjamin Soares, Mirjam de Bruijn, and Jos Damen of the ASC; and Stefano Bellucci of the IISH.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to this extended series of meetings and encounters, we were able to build an interdisciplinary and transnational scholarly network culminating in the conference. A call for papers was circulated in September 2011, and the themes continued to develop at a roundtable discussion at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association in San Francisco, November 2011, and the CODESRIA 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Rabat, Morocco, December 2011. In Rabat, we organized two panels focused on "Archival Practices" and "Theorizing the Archive" in Afri-

ca and the Diaspora. The insights from these papers along with the commentary by the commentators and respondents expanded the themes for the Gorée Island conference. These themes included Archival Absences and Surrogate Collections of the African State, Performing the Archive, Post-Independence Media Formations, Spatialization of Art and the Archive, and Administering the Archive. The discussion to follow provides a brief overview of how conference participants engaged with these themes at Gorée Island.

### Archival Absences

In the aftermath of independence, African states were charged with administering the colonial archive within the emerging context of nation building.<sup>3</sup> Intermittent social, political, and economic crises militated against responsible custodianship. By the 1970s, an array of collections had emerged and supplanted the primacy of national archives. While some well-funded government agencies established their own collections, non-governmental organizations, such as Oxfam, created archives that continue to serve as "surrogates of the state" (Jennings 2008). In

addition, scholars turned to archival holdings of multinational corporations whose collections frequently straddle the colonial and the postcolonial period. Private libraries and foundations created resource centers, several of which are located in Europe and North America, but others exist on the African continent, particularly important Arabic manuscript collections in Timbuktu (Jeppie and Diagne 2008).

Françoise Blum (CNRS, France) and Fabrice Melka's (CNRS) approach to the African archives of French unions draws on their examination of the correspondence of Gérard Espéret with various interlocutors in Africa. Espéret was head of the Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens (CFTC) [French Confederation of Christian workers], which became the Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT) in 1964. Blum and Melka addressed the *franco-african* quality of political activism in the context of unionization as a universal democratic right through their work as purveyors of the collection, known as the Fonds Maurice Gastaud, which is held at the French Confédération générale du travail (CGT) in Paris.<sup>4</sup> Describing their working methods with a wide array of documents they focused on the nature and quality of correspondence as an important archival source in understanding the foundational political debates and figures for the late colonial and post-independence era in Africa.

These records of French labor unions emphasize how European corporate and national archival collections often serve as an important source for social history. Bianca Murillo (Willamette University, USA) presented aspects of her extensive research from the Unilever archive at Port Sunlight in the United Kingdom. This archive includes the files of the United Africa Company (UAC), one of the major European merchant companies in former British Africa. Jean Rahier (Florida International University, USA) examined the archives of colonial ephemera related to mixed racial identity in the Belgian Congo by reference to the history of the *Bulletin de l'Union des Femmes Coloniales* among other publications housed at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren and the Catholic University of Louvain, both in Belgium. Toby Warner (UCLA, USA) analyzed the pre-history of the French colonial archive

by unearthing the forgotten travel notebooks of David Boilat, a mid-nineteenth-century Senegalese métis intellectual, now held at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. Further, the remarkable history of social work in South Africa, as reflected in the African and European settler colonial archives located at the University of Witwatersrand, was described by its lead archivist, Gabrielle Mohale (University of Witwatersrand, South Africa). She emphasized the nature of social work conceptions of identity and subjectivity.

Two additional papers within this context of archival absences examined the context for marginalia and rumor in Islamic archives in West Africa. Susana Molins Lliteras (University of Cape Town, South Africa) spoke about the Fondo Ka'ti Library, a private collection under threat by radical Islamic rebels in northern Mali at the time of the conference.<sup>5</sup> Her contribution provided an analysis of marginalia that contains a family genealogy in a fifteenth-century Qu'ranic manuscript. Erin Pettigrew (Stanford University, USA), whose paper explored the context for rumor, focused on accusations of bloodsucking or organ-eating derived from colonial documents that she has consulted in the National Archives of Senegal and Mauritania. She described how access to archives, particularly family-managed libraries in Nouakchott along with her work with healers, led to an examination of how the secrets implied by the history of divination practices are handed on to practitioners. These papers examine alternative traces within traditional archives.

Similarly, Noémi Tousignant, John Mantou, and Guillaume Lachenal (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom, and Université Paris Diderot, France) explored questions of how to read archives "along the grain" following their logic of inscription in Ann Laura Stoler's (2009) words, when the grain appears to have crumbled. They presented three case studies about the histories and archival sites of medical science and care in Senegal, Cameroon, and Nigeria and examined traces created by scientific, medical and caring practices. These objects and imprints were once animated by the short-term memory of resident staff that enabling these institutions to function. The recovery of traces

makes possible certain kinds of stories about institutions, knowledge, and care.

The effect of changing institutional practices in archival settings was described by Brenton Maart (University of Cape Town, South Africa) in his discussion on the transfer of government documents as part cultural policies in post-apartheid South Africa. In the Eastern Cape, the Mthala provincial archive was reassigned as one of the three sites of the Nelson Mandela Museum. Maart lamented the near complete disintegration of this archive, as it was an important repository from the colonial period documenting the history of ideological oppression that wrenched apart the Xhosa community. Instances of the destruction of archives in the figure of absence became an important source of discussion throughout the conference given the frequently uneven, or non-existent, archival holdings on the continent leading researchers to seek out types of sources but also alternative methods.

### Performing the Archive

Another site of inquiry under discussion included the archival context for performance on the African continent. As a living archive equally spoken and performed, it is defined by its relevance and immediacy in creating a space for reception and social action.<sup>6</sup> A series of presentations that addressed the history of post-independence Pan-African festivals began with Dominique Malaquais's (CNRS) discussion of the initial stages of a multimedia digital archiving project on the Pan-African festivals of the 1960s and 1970s. The initiative includes the First World Festival of Negro Arts (*FESMAN*) staged in Dakar in 1966; the First Pan African Festival (*PANAF*) held in Algiers in 1969; Zaire '74 held in Kinshasa; and the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (*FESTAC*) held in Lagos in 1977. The project promises to make archival sources available through web platforms hosted by the South African-based *Chimurenga Magazine*, along with a number of exhibitions, colloquiums, and publications.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Malaquais screened the film, *The First World Festival of Negro Arts* (dir. William Greaves, 1966, 40'), enriched by comments from Manthia Diawara (NYU, USA) about the depicted cultural style and its political implications of the era.

This subsequent discussion was supplemented by Diawara's keynote about recent interviews for his film project on the history of the political party *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA).

In his presentation about the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Festival in Algiers, Sam Anderson (UCLA, USA) thematized the way in which various events became a source for postcolonial cultural politics both in Africa and within a broader transnational context. Brian Quinn (UCLA) described the 1966 *First World Festival of Negro Arts* in Dakar by reference to theatrical presentations at the event itself. In particular, he pointed to Seydou Badian's adaptation of the Shaka figure in "La mort de Chaka" as a starting point for understanding symbolic complexities implied by the transfer of cultural power through an exploration of the colonial archive.

The resonance of the colonial archive for the post-independence Panafrikan festivals was powerfully analyzed by Tamara Levitz (UCLA) in her presentation of musical stylizations at the 1931 Colonial Exhibition in Paris (see also Levitz 2006). For Levitz, the colonial exhibitions were part of an emerging sonorous atlas. It became a source for releasing not only recorded music, but the presence of voices and an expanding context for storytelling that has enabled continuities with Pan-African festivals since the 1960s. In a complementary fashion, Sheron Wray's (UC Irvine, USA) examination of dance improvisation accented the historically intertwined nature of West African performance traditions as a series of bodily techniques embodied by various kinds of African American dance performance that is part of her own performance practice.<sup>8</sup> It is the intersection between music and dance as featured in a festival setting that foregrounds how the staging of performance has become an integral part of the post-independence African state.

Three papers focused on the role of song and music as an essential dimension to state power. Nancy Masasabi (Maseno University, Kenya) presented her work on the significance of patriotic song in Kenya after the death of Jomo Kenyatta. She described how these songs functioned as a resource for nation building during Daniel Arap Moi's presidency, particularly their relationship

to his preoccupation with the Nyayo philosophy of peace, love, and unity to rule. By distinguishing between "art" music and "traditional" performance, Masasabi described how ethnic identities have been archived as part of patriotic songs in the service of nation building.

In a similar manner, Nate Plageman (Wake Forest University, USA) focused on Ghanaian highlife as a means of understanding Ghanaian history and the stakes of creating an online archive that seeks to catalogue this important musical legacy. By foregrounding the prominence of highlife from the 1950s to the 1970s, this archive could offer a corrective to the standard narrative of Ghana's post-independence history privileging political events. Preservation loomed large in Plageman's discussion, while also pointing to methodological questions of how to make a vanishing source accessible to a wider public.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the paper by Mhoze Chikwero (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA) addressed how an examination of songs may form an archive to reconstruct grievances and aspirations of colonized people in South Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe). In Zimbabwe, songs do not only form a bridge between the first and the second *Chimurenga* (resistance to colonial conquest and liberation struggle) but also offer a "usable past" for nation building. The notion of usable pasts *pace* Ranger (1976) was picked up on by Martin Mourre (Université de Montréal, Canada) who argued for the archival resonance of Thiaroye, the site of the 1944 massacre of Senegalese troops outside of Dakar (Senegal), by presenting various artistic expressions of this historical event in Senegalese high schools and other venues to foreground a context for a contemporary "ethnographic reception" among local audiences.

### Post-Independence Media Formations

In the independence era, film, print, and radio were conceived as an extension of state power. Several papers examined the multi-directional quality of post-independence media challenging established practices of "mass media." New digital techniques in particular may reposition the relationship between intellectual property rights holders and citizens. Recent scholarship has begun to examine the context for new media in Africa (De Brui-

jnet et al. 2009; Burrell 2012), given the ubiquity of mobile communication devices and the Internet, while also validating the persistence of radio (Gunner et al. 2011), as well as the contemporary resonance of late colonial and early independence African film and radio (see Bloom et al. forthcoming).

From this standpoint, Érika Nimis (Université du Québec, Montréal, Canada) addressed the stakes of digital access. She demonstrated how digitization has allowed for increasing accessibility, along with forms of re-appropriation by a new generation of contemporary African photographers from South Africa, Algeria, and D.R. Congo. In his presentation, Olusola Isola (University of Ibadan, Nigeria) celebrated the introduction of new digital technologies, particularly social media, as a more democratic form of access allied with the changing structure of ownership in Nigeria. Social and new interactive media, he argued, limits government intervention. He asserted that new media, given its presence on the Internet, may be a more accountable custodian of public archives than a state apparatus that merely ignores the archive unless it is seen to be a political liability.

Prisca-Nadège Bibila-N'Kouma (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur les Analyses et Politiques Economiques, Congo-Brazzaville) contributed to an understanding of the utility of alternative media archives through her examination of mobile phones as a privileged site of communication in Brazzaville, enabling new kinds of virtual archives. Her discussion, among others, supported the argument that disarray in a number of African archival settings may be addressed through new communication technologies that circumvent state control.

Another example of how political prerogatives over determine questions of preservation and access was addressed by Jennifer Blaylock (University of California, Berkeley, USA) in a presentation that described the deteriorating state of the 16mm film archive of the Ghana Information Services Department. Politically sensitive films remain hidden in this archive. Such films, marked with an "X," denote that they were not for public viewing. In her discussion of one of these films, *Freedom for Ghana* (dir. Sean Graham, 1957), she explores the

logic of the archive and censorship restrictions relative to successive government administrations.

By the same token, Francis Fogue (University of Ngaoundere, Cameroon) presented a fascinating account of his archival research at Radio Garouain in Northern Cameroon, established in 1958, and provided insight into this Fulani region along with attendant national political tensions. In the 1980s, rivalries between President Biya and his predecessor, Ahmadou Ahidjo, resulted in the destruction of archival holdings at Radio Garouain. Some documents remain in private collections, allowing for contemporary reconstructions.

Within the realm of popular sports, Susann Baller (University of Basel, Switzerland) examined the history of football (i.e., soccer) in Senegal focusing on an archive of match reports. This type of research addresses the nature of informal and formal archives as a widely popular public attraction, which has contributed, she argued, to the professionalization of football. Sporting records as an archival context lead us to reconsider the relationship between popular attractions and the significance of the archive. These contributions, along with Ferdinand de Jong's (University of East Anglia, United Kingdom) paper on the negative archive of Cheikh Amada Bamba as a postcolonial saint in Senegal, reveal how film and social media are captive to government prerogative. It is the private sphere, including the NGO sector, which may be the most reliable source for reawakening an archival consciousness.

### Spatialization of Art and the Archive

In the independence era, public monuments, temples, cemeteries, and other edifices have served as important sites of nationhood and state power that speak to a reterritorialization of the public sphere. The broader context of monumentalizing the state addresses the effect of branding and creating a context for tourism both within Africa and from without. Several papers accented how public heritage sites function as selective archives of memory, which aestheticize and assert contested narratives allied with national identity. In her keynote address, Sokhna Guèye (IFAN, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal) examined monuments on

Gorée Island as a commemoration of the Atlantic slave trade. Taking as examples the well-known Maison des Esclaves (House of Slaves) and the Musée de la Femme Henriette Bathily with its emphasis on the role of the *signares*, Gueye pointed to the creation of a tourist imaginary organized in relation to the history of the Atlantic slave trade.

In similar fashion, Melanie Boehi (University of Basel, Switzerland) connected two territorial landmarks as part of a differential tourist imagery: the Adderly Street flower market and the Kirstenbosch National Botanic Garden that became monuments constitutive of identity in Cape Town, South Africa. While tourist brochures have celebrated the "colored" female sellers of the Adderly Street flower market, Boehi showed how flower sellers were subjected to apartheid policies. Moreover, these women have been engaged in the production of their own history by declaring their market a heritage site. Boehi suggested that floral spaces can be studied as material manifestations of the past and may serve as archives of the urban sphere.

Monuments such as Heroes Acres in Harare, Zimbabwe, completed in 1996 to commemorate the *Chimurenga* struggle against settler colonialism, have served as sites of contestation. As Norah Makoni (University of Science and Technology Bulawayo, Zimbabwe) explained, controversy about the monument emerged because of its partisan nature, given that it mainly served as burial grounds for men, and a few women, closely affiliated with the ruling ZANU PF party. As a result, this national shrine has polarized the collective memory and national identity of Zimbabweans. Along a similar trajectory, Arsène Elongo (Université Marien Ngouabi, Congo-Brazzaville), described the legacy of French colonial and postcolonial Congolese national monuments of various figures that provide an ideological context as living archive directly moored to contemporary political realities. A comparative discussion of King Sobhuza II Memorial Park in the kingdom of Swaziland and the Mungo Reunification Bridge in Cameroon by Nicodemus Fru Awasom (University of Swaziland, Swaziland) brought to light founding national figures and unresolved ethnic conflict.

In Awasom's analysis of King Sobhuza's statue, he described the regal predators included by his side, that of a bull and lion, which serve to reinforce his role as the symbolic father and, nearly in the sphere of the uncanny, the biological parent of the nation. Awasom contrasted the centrality of Sobhuza's role as founder of the nation with the collapse of the Cameroonian Mungo Reunification Bridge in 2004 following the explosion of a fuel tanker. The bridge was first constructed in 1969 to commemorate the unification between French Northern and British Southern Cameroons. Its current state of disrepair, Awasom contended, demonstrates how independent Cameroon continues to be contested by rival communities (see Awasom 2000). Finally, the spatialization of politics through national monuments, tourist attractions, and the refashioning of communities are shown to serve political narratives moored to state power.

### Physical Archives

There has been a growing need to preserve local collections across the African continent. These may include archives of professional organizations, genealogical imagery, personal photo albums and manuscripts (tin-trunk literacy), customary regalia and court records, vinyl records and other recording formats.<sup>10</sup>

In the Zambian National Archives, as Marja Hinfelfaar (National Archive of Zambia) and Miles Larmer (University of Sheffield, United Kingdom) explained, systematic record collection and archiving was interrupted with the introduction of the one-party state, under the United National Independence Party (UNIP), in 1972. Since then, documents from ministries have only been collected haphazardly, kept in a transit facility, and remain unavailable to researchers. Historians of postcolonial Zambia have been forced to become archivists by creating their own archives of private papers by former politicians, other autobiographical writings, and most prominently the UNIP archive.<sup>11</sup> Such initiatives, laudable as they are, are mainly driven by the research interests of foreign scholars, and may not address the concerns of Zambians seeking to learn about their own history.

A similar case was presented by Olutayo Adesina (University of Ibadan, Nigeria). Since the 1970s, the National Archives of Nigeria has experienced a continuing decline due to lack of funding and poor management. This situation has led to an officially approved commercialization project to generate funds for maintaining the institution. Moreover, the commercialization has created a "black market" of archival material. If users are willing to pay, archival files will be delivered to their doorstep. For Adesina, there is no doubt that African national archives are an endangered species. The current crisis might be addressed by fully digitizing collections in order to make them newly accessible. A more encouraging assessment of ongoing state practices in maintaining and developing archival collections was presented by Mwayi Lusaka (National Museum of Malawi, Malawi) in her discussion of the history of the Malawi National Library and Museum as bulwark of nation building.

Jean Allman (Washington University, USA), in her presentation, asked whether the postcolonial archive simply reproduced its colonial predecessors. In Ghana, the national archives housed in the central repository of Public Records Administration and Archives Department in Accra are fragmentary, accidental, and dispersed, as systematic record management ceased with the coup against Nkrumah in 1966, and many government agencies under subsequent military and civilian regimes failed to release their files. For the period of Nkrumah's rule, Allman identifies a "transnational shadow archive" that points to new history writing opportunities that are less determined by the archiving of the colonial state. Based on the example of the surprising relationship between Nkrumah and the former Nazi test pilot Hanna Reitsch who had established a flight school in Ghana, Allman shows how this shadow archive allows a reconstruction of this crucial period in Ghanaian history that is quite different from one drawn from official records.<sup>12</sup>

Some papers dealt with archival collections located outside the African continent. Dag Henrichsen reported about the challenge of simultaneously rectifying existing colonial archives and building up new post-independence collections at the Basler Afrika Bibliographien, the Namibia Resource Centre and Southern Africa Li-

brary in Basel, Switzerland, where he currently serves as head archivist. While this archive systematically collects published works in and about Namibia, recent initiatives have consisted of acquiring private papers of colonial European academics and journalists, as well as visual ephemera of post-independence origins. The latter contains a large collection of posters, dating from the emergence of the liberation struggle, and everyday objects including shopping bags.<sup>13</sup>

Two papers addressed private West African collections of photographs. Walter Gam Nkwi (University of Buea, Cameroon), as relayed by Mirjam De Bruijn (ASC and University of Leiden, The Netherlands), elaborated on the role of memory in relation to family photos, kept in albums or hanging on walls, from the Bamenda Grassfields. These photographs are not disembodied images of the past but refer to inscriptions of their sense of self and the past along with social relations. Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie (University of California, Santa Barbara) described an archive project documenting the photographs of the Ezechime clan, who hail from nine towns in mid-Western Nigeria. As this multi-ethnic clan has used iconography to mediate questions of philosophy and identity, its archive consists of thousands of family albums with over 300,000 photographs dating back to 1900.

Finally, Jamie Monson (Macalester College, USA) presented alternative archives that commemorate the construction of the East African TAZARA railway by workers from China, Tanzania, and Zambia. Her contribution addressed the diverse meanings of photo albums containing the same photographs among retired workers in China and in East Africa, as well as how Chinese-made machines form a material memory of technological mobility across the global south in the Cold War context.

### Digital Archives

Conference participants reflected on the challenges faced by archives on the African continent in relation to the digital revolution. This transformation implies shifting scholarly practices and questions who benefits from the structure of these digital innovations. The extent to which these efforts have privatized African archives was also evoked. Many commented on the growing digital divide

between the global North and Africa. Ogbechie also pointed to the emerging digital divide within Africa itself, as the vast majority of donor initiatives, such as those sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation, have focused on digitizing archival holdings of institutions based in South Africa to the exclusion of other parts of Africa.

On the African continent, there have been a number of significant digital archive initiatives. Khadidiatou Diallo (UNIVAL and ISRA at Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire [IFAN], Senegal) examines recent efforts of digitization of early historical collections at IFAN including the BIENS CULTURELS and FACT IST projects with international funding structures. Larmer and Hinfelfaar presented another example of digitization. With the support of British grant, they succeeded in digitizing the Zambia UNIP archives, now accessible from London. Based in Paris, Anaïs Wion (CNRS, Centre d'Etudes des Mondes Africains, France) presented the ongoing collaborative international Ethiopian archives manuscript project in which historians and philologists have been digitizing a wide array of Ethiopian manuscripts since the twelfth century. As a member of this team of researchers, Wion described the history of how these documents have been scattered as a result of historical events.<sup>14</sup>

For many African archives located in Europe, digitization has been a priority in order to make collections more widely available, especially to researchers on the African continent. Guy Thomas (University of Basel, Switzerland), head of archives and library at mission 21 (Basel Mission), referred to the open archive initiative, which seeks to make archival collections about Africa more accessible by digitizing their finding aids. Mission 21 has been a pioneer in digitization, as its rich collection of historical photographs now includes more than 30,000 images, which is currently available online.<sup>15</sup>

An early attempt to collect and preserve African newspapers, serials, and ephemera has been the Cooperative African Microform Project (CAMP), founded in 1963 as a result of discussions between the U.S. African Studies Association, the Midwest Interlibrary Center (now the Center for Research Libraries), and African libraries. In 2012, due to the rise in

digital information and preservation formats, CAMP renamed itself Cooperative Africana Material Projects. Jason Schultz (University of California, Berkeley) examined recent capacity building efforts between CAMP and African archives. He argued that issues concerning access, collection, and preservation of African archival material reflect the legacy of colonialism and capitalism, as ultimately African archives form a commodity exchanged unequally between the global North and South. Schultz noted that advocacy by CAMP librarians and scholars must continue to challenge the rising tide of commodification of African archival holdings. Similarly, Francis Garaba (University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa) warned that current initiatives in digitizing the archives of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa have led to the commodification of a cultural heritage that mainly benefits the global north.<sup>16</sup> Once digitized, institutions in the global South tend to lose copyright control. Finally, digitization is not the solution for preservation as digital resources remain fragile, vulnerable, and in constant need of attention for long term storage.

Jonathon Cole (University of California, Berkeley) offered an overview of digital humanities initiatives that show the potential application of Internet technologies for rethinking the African archive. These technologies provide avenues for increased collaboration through tools such as Google Docs, and for participation in the archival process through online collections such as *Voyages*, which is the trans-Atlantic slave trade database, and *Slave Biographies*, which maintains information on slave lives in the New World, along with open-access platforms such as *Omeka* and *Kora*. *Omeka*, Cole suggests, could be used to hold private collections of letters, cards, photos, as well songs, poems, and other "tin-trunk literacy" materials. But there are questions about copyright infringement, cultural imperialism, heritage plundering, and equitable access to Internet sources. A related initiative introduced by Francesco Corrales (CNRS) was the BiVIOS project, a virtual library of unpublished Western Sahara sources that seeks to make accessible archival access in Europe and Africa thus circumventing dominant representations of this region. Plageman has also been concerned with similar issues about access, power, and control of these

emerging digital archives in his discussion of a proposed Ghanaian highlife music web-based archive.

Finally, Jos Damen (ASC) and Stefano Bellucci (IISH) organized two workshops about the role of non-state archives and new archival methods such as encoded archival description. They emphasized the importance of cultural heritage preservation. Workshop participants addressed numerous case-specific examples that included the preservation of a Senegalese prison archive, also discussed in illuminating detail in the contribution by Ibra Sène (Wooster College, USA), privacy issues related to medical archives as complemented by the research reported by Tousignant et al. described above, and how the context for digitizing archives is subject to significant political and cultural variations.

### Conclusion

Lastly, a central theme of the conference focused on how more democratic and open forms of archival access remain an elusive goal but is being taken up as a priority in the international academic community. Two sets of closing remarks were presented by Anne Hugon (Université de Paris I, France), in French, and by Percy Hintzen, in English, marking the bilingual proceedings for which there was intermittent simultaneous translation provided by CODESRIA.

Hugon's discussion accented archival methods of contravention through strategies of counter politics and an ethics of contamination (which are described in greater length in her publication included with this report). Percy Hintzen's closing remarks, on the other hand, revolved around unpacking the syllogistic reasoning structure of "How can we know what we know." Intended as a provocation with regard to understanding the underlying structure of state power and the political uses of the archive, Hintzen drew on Donald Rumsfeld's ignominious 2002 dictum used to fabricate the threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction. It was the power of the so-called "known knowns" that Hintzen pointed to as the maligned logic of nation states to withhold and selectively interpret evidence from the archive. Hintzen's remarks focused on the ultimate manipulative potential of the archive as an instance of the concentration of power. No matter how complete or competently digitized, Hintzen contended, archives

that are ultimately aligned with a hegemonic alliance of state and private interests may simply be a diversion of detailed scholarly effort. His interest in thematizing the archive through an epistemology of power and the invisible, citing the interventions by Manthia Diawara and Duncan Yoon (UCLA), drew a cacophonous response among participants precisely because of his challenge to processes of verification and the integrity of the archive itself as index of scholarly intervention. His emphasis on the point that affect, identity, and the political may in fact contradict the logic of archival traces was then taken up by Ebrima Sall in his final remarks. Sall expressed the need for future collaborative efforts beyond the dint of an archival reckoning as part of a collective form of action on the African continent itself with its international partners. The final conference dinner was held in a restaurant overlooking Gorée Island harbor. Those planning to return to Dakar at the end of the proceedings were serendipitously delayed because of the overreaction by police to disperse a small protest by Gorée Island residents for the ongoing power outages leading to the suspension of the ferry for a few hours.

### Notes

1. Two previous conference reports have been published Jos Damen and Benjamin Soares <http://www.ascleiden.nl/?q=content/conference-report-archives-post-independence-africa>, as well as by Brenton Maart <http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/gazette/current/?id=72&t=int>. Further, a complete set of abstracts and the conference program may be found at <https://sites.google.com/site/archivesconferencedakar/alphabetized-links-to-papers>.
2. We are grateful for financial support from CODESRIA; University of California African Studies Multicampus Research Group; University of California, Santa Barbara; Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor, College of Letters and Science, and Division of Humanities and Fine Arts; Center for African Studies, University of California, Berkeley; African Studies Centre, Leiden; International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam; WOTRO Science for Global Development, The Netherlands; Royal Netherlands Embassy, Dakar. The following individuals provided invaluable administrative support: Marie Ndiaye, CODESRIA; Kate Purdy UC African Studies MRG; Martha Saavedra CAS, UC Berkeley; and Kim van Drie and Gitty Petit, ASC, Leiden.

3. For critical assessments and alternative approaches, see Hamilton et al. 2002; Barber 2006; Stoler 2009; Peterson and Macola 2009.
  4. For an important formulation of *l'état franco-african*, see Dozon 2002a, 2002b, 2003.
  5. The political events in Mali were also taken up in an impromptu session in which Susanna Molins Lliteras, Benjamin Soares, and Mirjam de Bruijn discussed the current situation in Timbuktu given their familiarity with the region. Benjamin Soares later published a *New York Times* editorial entitled, "Mali's Tomb Raiders," 8 July 2012. Manthia Diawara offered commentary about the situation in Mali during his keynote address, but also published two articles in the online journal *Slate Afrique*, see <http://www.slateafrique.com/auteur/531> (accessed 1 June 2013).
  6. See Ebron 2002.
  7. For FESTAC, see Apter 2005. In fact, Malaquais's article "Anti-Teleology: Re-Mapping the Imag(in)ed City" has served as an important point of reference relative to the conference theme (Malaquais 2011).
  8. See her article "Misnomer: Reflections on Dance Performance," in Bloom, Manuh, and Miescher 2009/10.
  9. Plageman's recent book on the history of highlife (2013) includes links to the website, [www.ethnomultimedia.org](http://www.ethnomultimedia.org), which features an archive of audio, video, and still images.
  10. For tin-trunk literacy, see Barber 2006; Mboj-Pouye 2013.
  11. See Larmer's work on the former Zambian politician Valentine Musakanya (Larmer 2010a, 2010b).
  12. See Allman 2013.
  13. See Henrichsen et al. 2009.
  14. Some of these records are now available at: [www.cn-telma.fr/publication/zekra-nagar-ema/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/publication/zekra-nagar-ema/).
  15. See [www.bmarchives.org](http://www.bmarchives.org).
  16. The Aluka project on the history of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa has triggered some important debates. See: Isaacman, Premesh, Nygren 2005; Premesh 2007.
- References**
- Allman, Jean. 2013. "Phantoms of the Archive: Kwame Nkrumah, a Nazi Pilot Named Hanna, and the Contingencies of Postcolonial History Writing." *American Historical Review* 118, no. 1: 104-29.
- Apter, Andrew. 2005. *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Awasom, Nicodemus Fru. 2000. "The Reunification Question in Cameroon History: Was the Bride an Enthusiastic or a Reluctant One?" *Africa Today* 47, no. 2 (Spring): 90-119
- Barber, Karin, ed. 2006. *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bloom, Peter J., Takiyawa Manuh, and Stephan F. Miescher, eds. Forthcoming. *Spectacles of Modernization in Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Burrell, Jenna. 2012. *Invisible Users: Youth in the Internet Cafés of Urban Ghana*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- De Bruijn, Mirjam, Francis Nyamnjoh, and Inge Brinkman, eds. 2009. *Mobile Phones: The new talking drums of everyday Africa*. Leiden, The Netherlands: African Studies Centre; Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group.
- Dozon, Jean-Pierre. 2002a. "L'État franco-africain." *Les Temps modernes* (Afrique du Monde), nos. 620-621 (August-November): 261-288.
- Dozon, Jean-Pierre. 2002b. "L'État français contemporain et son double, l'État franco-africain." *Cahiers du Centre de recherches historiques* 30 (October): 21-27.
- Dozon, Jean-Pierre. 2003. "Les États contemporains africains dans l'épistémè africaniste française." *Journal des anthropologues* (Actualité politique dans l'étude des sociétés contemporaines), no. 92-93: 13-29.
- Ebron, Paula. 2002. *Performing Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gunner, Liz, Dina Ligaga, and Dumisani Moyo, eds. 2011. *Radio in Africa: Publics, Cultures, Communities*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: James Currey.
- Hamilton, Carolyn et al., eds. 2002. *Refiguring the Archive*. Cape Town: David Phillip.
- Henrichsen, Dag, Giorgio Miescher, Lorena Rizzo, Jeremy Silvester. 2013. "Posters Act: Namibian Poster Action and the Photographic Archive." *Kronos* 35: 160-74.
- Isaacman, Allen F., PremeshLalu, and Thomas I. Nygren. 2005. "Digitization, History, and the Making of a Postcolonial Archive of South African Liberation Struggles: The Aluka Project." *Africa Today* 52, no. 2: 55-77.
- Jennings, Michael. 2008. *Surrogates of the State: NGOs, Development, and the Ujamaa in Tanzania*. Bloomfield, Conn.: Kumarian Press.
- Jeppie, Shamil, and SouleymaneBachirDiagne, eds. 2008. *The Meanings of Timbuktu*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Lalu, Premesh. 2007. "The Virtual Stampede for Africa: Digitisation, Postcoloniality and Archives of Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa." *Innovation: Journal of Appropriate Librarianship and Information Work in Southern Africa* 34: 28-44.
- Larmer, Miles. 2010a. "Chronicles of a Coup Foretold: Valentine Musakwanya and the 1980 Coup Attempt in Zambia." *Journal of African History* 51, no. 3: 391-409.
- Larmer, ed. 2010b. *The Musakwanya Papers*. Lusaka: Lembani Trust.
- Levitz, Tamara. 2006. The Aestheticization of Ethnicity: Imagining the Dogon at the Musée du quai Branly," *The Musical Quarterly* 89, no. 4: 600- 42.
- Malaquais, Dominique. 2011. "Anti-Teleology: Re-Mapping the Imag(in) ed City." In *African Cities Reader II: Mobilities and Fixtures*, ed. Edgar Pieterse and Ntone Edjabe. Vlaeberg, South Africa: Chimurenga: African Centre for Cities, pp.7-23.
- Mobdj-Pouye, Aissatou. 2013. "Writing the Self in Rural Mali: Domestic Archives and Genres of Personal Writing." *Africa* 83, no. 2: 205-26.
- Peterson, Derek R. and Giacomo Macola, eds. 2009. *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Plageman, Nate. 2013. *Highlife Saturday Night: Popular Music and Social Change in Urban Ghana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Ranger, Terence O. 1976. "Towards a Useable African Past." In *African Studies Since 1945: A Tribute to Basil Davidson*, ed. Christopher Fyfe. London: Longman, 17-30.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. 2009. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wray, Sheron. 2009/10. "Misnomer: Reflections on a Dance Performance," in *Ghana Studies* 12/13. Special Issue: Revisiting Modernization, ed. Peter J. Bloom, Stephan F. Takiyawa Manuh, 249-63

## Post-Independence Archives in Africa : A Summary

The task entrusted to me – to prepare a summary concluding note, after three days of intense exchanges on post-Independence archives in Africa – is both a great honour and a heavy responsibility. So I would like to thank the organisers of this seminar for the confidence they placed in me.

I would like to insist on the proliferation of examples provided here, which are characterised by a diversity of scales (national examples, bi-national comparisons, and transnational experiences with archives) but also a diversity of perspectives (case studies presented by researchers, archival holdings presented by specialists in the design or management of archives). One of the interests of this seminar was to make it possible to compare several different approaches and to establish communication between archives' managers and users, professionals working in the archives and research fields. Meaning, between people who do not hold the same position in the "archives chain" which goes from the production to the use of a document through multiple stages that have been described here (preservation, cataloguing, digitisation...).

Personally, I will express just one (let me specify minor), regret: no specific paper was presented on oral sources, while we would have expected many contributions on their collection and on the establishment of archives based on these sources. The researchers who use the collections of oral sources in Africa contribute to the production of documents (audio and/or written, when there is transcription), which are themselves liable to become archives if they are subsequently entrusted to a centre in order to be used by others. How these documents are developed, stored and processed? This question was dealt with in one or two contributions, but was not the subject of specific papers, and I must confess I was a bit disappointed on this.

However, the grounds for satisfaction outweigh – and by far – this regret, as the seminar effectively made it possible to deepen the reflection on the status of archives.

Anne Hugon  
Université Paris 1,  
Panthéon-Sorbonne

I will first ponder over the status – and even the nature – of archives. Let us briefly recall the polysemy of the word which, in French at least, refers both to the services and the places devoted to their preservation.

Concerning post-independence Africa, it is salutary, even essential, to depart from the exclusive and reducing notion of archives as production of state power, intended for its own reproduction. Because this meaning suggests that the sole archives are national archives; however, in the post-independence African states, there are complex relations between postcolonial states and production or preservation of archives. Many papers thus evoked public indifference towards the storage of documents, as well as the frequent will of the state to destroy certain records.

It is therefore necessary to broaden the notion of archive, and the specialists of African history know it well: often faced with a more or less organised lack of public archives, we are compelled to invent new sources, to diversify our research places and methods. However, it seems to me counterproductive to use a very broad definition of the notion of archives. During those three days, the word was used with great flexibility, often as a casual synonymous with documents, sources, materials, traces, photographs, images, artefacts, monuments, work of art, places of memory, an expression of power and even of body language... This loose sense, however, risks a lot of ambiguity and misinterpretation. Indeed, that each of these terms has to do with the notion of archive seems to me quite doubtless; however, that everything can be considered as archive seems doubtful. I am working (among others) on the history of midwives in Ghana, and when I find, in a midwife's bag that has remained unopened for 50 years a pharmacy note

dating from 1946, my heart beats: I am in front of a treasure. For all that, am I in the presence of an archive? I am not convinced, because this isolated document, which survived relocations and other vagaries of personal or national history, was not preserved voluntarily but fortuitously. However, as I will expand on this later, the archive is established as such, while the document can be fortuitous.

Of course, for social scientists (historians but also art historians, sociologists, political scientists, demographers, town planners, anthropologists...), all is *material*, as social science research can feed on any substance. But it is not automatic that any material *can* become an archive. If I may be allowed this wink to a famous phrase,<sup>1</sup> I would say '*on ne naît pas archive: on le devient*', meaning that archives are not born such, but rather can become archives – sometimes. Hence the absolute need to clarify, to reflect both on our relations with the archive and what we mean by this word. For three days, we "juggled" various more or less broad meanings of the archives. Did we make progress in our definition of an archive? Collectively, this is not certain. But each of the contributions provided food for thought to each and every one of us on what he/she meant precisely by that – and if the seminar only served that purpose, it would already be a lot. This should be understood less as criticism – because once again, a broad definition is stimulating – than as a proposal of requirement for the intelligibility of what we talked about.

Second, I will consider the political dimension or rather dimensions of archives. Here, I take the political term in its broader meaning, i.e., the expression of power relations, but also in the dual English meaning of *politics* and *policy*.

Firstly, the links between archives and politics are readily apparent, as the call for papers reminded. Archives as state production (or production of governing bodies) are eminently political both in their nature and use: what is stored as well as what is destroyed obeys the *raison*

*d'État* and denotes the logic of power. Many interventions have thus insisted on the instrumentalisation of archives by the powers, whether for propaganda or to destroy them in order to reduce the expression of counter-powers. Others have addressed the use of documents of the past, or even, literally, archival documents, in a more or less openly militant meaning: by artists or curators, like the curator of the Slave House on Gorée Island, Joseph Ndiaye. Similarly, we could see that the failed states and their inability (or indifference) regarding the production of archives could paradoxically turn out to be a blessing, in allowing (under certain conditions) access to alternative archives that give *another* idea of the state... Besides, we can assume that power and counter-power are not necessarily diametrically opposed, as confirmed by the fate of the Slave House whose militant dimension eventually becomes the official history, with figures that are indeed fanciful, but nowadays resumed, stamped, in sum officialised by UNESCO.

Secondly, more related to economic realities (which are themselves political realities), to North-South imbalances, to power relations between *the West and the Rest*, a number of papers dealt with the challenges of preservation, promotion or digitisation. Several participants presented, pictures to prove it, telling examples of challenges which are not necessarily peculiar to Africa, but are widespread on the continent. Some presentations considered digitisation as the solution to all problems was rather a technicist illusion, as technology progresses faster than our capacity to anticipate it, thus creating difficulties not only upstream (financing, machinery, personnel...) but also downstream. Finally, the examples showing that archivists also implement or follow specific policies for the creation or management of their collections were many. Thus, there are no archives without politics.

Thirdly and lastly, we had a lot of exchanges on the issue of the use or usage of archives, their users, their purposes, their methods... and of course, on the political dimension of these usages. Although there were many historians attending the seminar, I would like to note that they do not have the monopoly of their use: we know that artists, researchers of other disciplines, but also citizens in search of proofs, for

example for a judicial procedure, are also interested parties.

Regarding the political dimensions of the usage of archives, I would like to come back to the compared destinies of two museums in Gorée: the Slave House (*Maison des Esclaves*) and the Museum for Women (*Musée de la Femme*). In effect, these two museums, exactly facing each other but having different degrees of success in terms of visitors, perfectly bear witness to the political nature of the usage of a "built heritage" (indeed, a museum is not, strictly speaking, an archive). The anticipated disappearance of the Museum for Women cannot be understood as happening by accident, but rather, as the result of political dynamics: all pupils in Dakar make a visit or several visits in their lifetime to the Slave House; not the Museum for Women... (this is also true for tourists). African women and slaves: two subordinate categories, obviously. But clearly, some subordinates are "trendier" than others, as a consequence of political dynamics which make the market of the history of slavery more promising than that of the history of African women – and this regardless of their respective degree of staging, instrumentalisation and fetishization.

To conclude, I would like to say a few words on the impact of archives on our own research, on how the archives we use shape – sometimes insidiously – our questioning. The criticism of colonial archives, as well as the "colonial library", is not anymore to do. However, I would like to share one of my experiences and the lessons I drew from it. I have been working for long on motherhood in the colonial period in Ghana, and I have studied the archives of the colonial medical administration. In these documents, they only deal with the issue of replacing the harmful methods of African birth attendants with the modern and safe methods of European doctors. However, at some point, I realised that imperceptibly, I had (at least partly) embraced the ideological bias of these sources. Of course, I was concerned to complement or rather, to compare them with interviews and so, I had conducted thirty interviews with Ghanaian midwives trained during the colonial period, as well as twenty interviews with women whose children were born during the same period. Among the latter, I interviewed a

woman who, having many children, had given birth successively at home, in hospital and in a midwife's private clinic. Enthusiastic about this providential encounter, and convinced that I had the ideal witness who would give me information on her different experiences, I wanted to hear what she would say about the delivery position, the instruments, objects, people... However, I was quite surprised when she said basically: there was no difference. Somewhat destabilised, I reformulated my questions to make them clear: the position was the same, your family circle's behaviour was the same, their actions were the same? She said no, of course, all that was different; but in each case, mother and baby had survived – and that was the essential element. I understood then how deeply I was influenced by the thinking that shaped the documents to which I had access: like colonial doctors, I was obsessed by change, when my interlocutor could only see similarities; because I was thinking in terms of modalities, while she was reasoning in terms of results.

Thus, the need imposed on me, in our post-independence era, to decolonise the spirits, including mine – something I thought was already granted... But the archives have sometimes an unexpected power which, while contributing to the "*goût de l'archive*",<sup>2</sup> should encourage us to constant and careful detachment.

To conclude, I think that as far as archives are concerned, it is not improper to say that they are all about politics: from their making to their utilisation, through their conservation and promotion. This is probably what distinguishes archives from simple documents. But also what makes them interesting... and determines their limits?

## Notes

1. Translator's note: Reference to the best-known sentence of Simone de Beauvoir in *Le Deuxième Sexe* (The Second Sex): *On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*—translated as "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman".
2. Translator's note: See *Le goût de l'archive*, a short book by Arlette Farge, a specialist of 18th century French social History. The book is a wonderful methodology lesson on how to treat archives.

# Managing African Commons: Defragmenting management and Responsive Forest Governance Policy Forum

## Introduction

The International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) Africa Region meeting was held in Cape Town from 9 to 11 April 2013. The meeting was organized jointly by the Defragmenting Resource Management in Africa (DARMA) project (an EU funded project under the ACP Science and Technology Programme) and the Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) of CODESRIA, UIUC and IUCN (funded by SIDA). The objective of the meeting was to bring together multi-disciplinary researchers, academics, policy makers and users working on African commons and forest governance to present their work and discuss issues regarding integrated commons management and democratic (responsive and locally accountable) forest governance in Africa. Over eighty people from across Africa and beyond attended this three-day forum. This Policy Brief summarises the key issues emerging from the forum

## Rationale

Research has shown that success in dealing with problems facing African commons management may lie in addressing fragmentation of the knowledge base, policy, legislation and institutions. Conventionally, management has been undertaken by government agencies that focus on their particular mandated sector, e.g. fisheries, agriculture or forestry, using knowledge from scientists that specialize in that sector, sometimes working with community groups to create and enforce rules developed for that sector. With the advent of the ecosystem approach to natural resource management, there is growing appreciation of the dynamic interrelatedness between all components of an ecosystem as a Social Ecological System (SES). This calls for inter- and multi-disciplinarity in sustainable management of natural resource complexes for livelihoods and development – the research theme that DARMA focused on.

Nations worldwide have introduced decentralization reforms aspiring to create representative local governments that are responsive and accountable to citizen

**J. Murombedzi**  
CODESRIA, Dakar  
**L. Magole**  
University of Botswana, Maun  
**M. Hara**  
University of the Western Cape, Bellville  
**S. Turner**  
Independent Consultant, Manchester  
**J. Ribot**  
University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign

needs and aspirations. Natural resources, especially forests, play an important role in these decentralizations. They provide local governments and local people with needed revenue, wealth, and subsistence – that government needs in order to function and that people need to survive. Responsive local governments can provide forest resource-dependent populations the flexibility they need to manage, adapt to and remain resilient in their changing environment. To date, however, environmental and natural resource management professionals from government and civil society have rarely worked through representative local government. This avoidance is a travesty since local governments are institutionally sustainable (being permanent) and have full geographic coverage (essential for scaling up). Environmental professionals often lack the technical and organizational capacities or capabilities to assess the potentials of democratic local government, to structure forestry decentralization to deliver equity and efficiency benefits, to meet implementation challenges, and to identify and take advantage of the opportunities it presents. There are examples of success in many countries, yet decentralization in forestry remains far from achieving its promise.

The RFGI assesses whether decentralized local government decision making of interventions in the forestry sector such as the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), Climate Change Adaptation, Payments for Environment Services (PES) and similar schemes are supporting or undermining local democracy.

## Emerging issues from the forum

A number of issues emerged from the three-day policy forum. These are around: uptake and communication; policy ownership and insertion level; and governance and policy.

### Communication and uptake of research in policy process

There is still evidence of poor communication and low uptake of research by policy. This is of great concern and requiring action and innovation as it gives a sense of *déjà vu*, especially in relation to meetings and conferences like the IASC Africa regional meeting which target policy engagement as their focus. For many decades meetings like this one have highlighted the importance of communicating effectively into the policy process, writing usable policy briefs and other appropriate materials and means of communication. The lingering question is; ‘why is it that we really learned or achieved so little in this respect’? One of the reasons for poor communication and take up is probably the level and type of language used. Most presentations by scholars still came through in deep and complex language that is still used by the social and political scientists to transact their trade. The communication keynote address pointed out that there is a huge gulf between this kind of language and the way governments speak and act. It may be argued therefore that even if the researchers can manage to link into the policy process, they normally should not be the ones writing the policy!

### Policy ownership and insertion level

It is important to be clear about the nature of policy and whose policy is being referred to in policy dialogue. Policy comes at many levels, from that of community decision-makers to that of national governments and also transboundary policy. Before researchers attempt to make their research useful in the policy process therefore, there is need to understand the relations between different levels of policy and decide where research inputs are likely to be most useful and effective. This links to the issue of

the role of law in the implementation of policy - whether local by-laws, national legislation or international conventions and/or treaties. In this context, reference was made in some of the presentations about 'absence of the state', especially in far flung rural contexts. If the state is indeed absent, which we must acknowledge as being the case more or less across great swathes of the continent, is there a role for policy at the level of the state? Reference was made to no policy; unkept policies; policy somersaults; policy fluidity; and good policies. The implication is that policy matters because the state is not entirely absent. It was argued that in some circumstances it may be necessary to bypass the notion of policy and focus more on social movements. However, sustainable progress may require that the social movement sooner or later define the policy goals to which it aspires, and explain how these will be achieved! As usual therefore the policy 'industry' is confronted by the yawning gap between theory (which we may too easily equate with policy) and reality/practice (or lack of practice) on the ground. In general two sets of reasons were given why policy may have no effect: (i) the state may be absent, lacking the competence and/or resources to put it into practice; (ii) various forces within the state may be reluctant to implement, or may actively sabotage it - in which case a

choice may be made to bypass policy and 'sponsor' or support practice through social movements.

#### Link between governance and policy

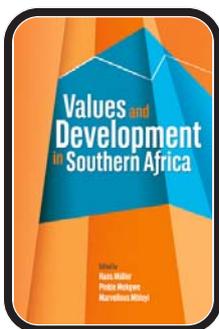
Despite the formal decentralization of local government, the RFGI research demonstrated that natural resource governance decisions tend to be made in predominantly undemocratic ways that do not represent local aspirations and needs regarding the resources in question. Moreover, the decision-makers in both local governments as well as natural resource governance sectors tend to be upwardly accountable rather than responsive to local needs. Higher-level organizations design and implement interventions through non-representative institutions with many adverse impacts - such as social fragmentation, elite capture, and the reinforcement of undemocratic local institutions - on local citizenship in natural resource governance. Thus for decentralization to result in substantive democracy, it is necessary that discretionary authority be devolved to local governments in order to make them responsive and accountable to the constituencies that they represent. Most forestry and project professionals are not aware of these simple facts - they do not understand basic principals of representation and democracy. Various references were made to the need for policy to reco-

gnise and facilitate subsidiarity; for national policy to tolerate and promote local policy; and for policy to be built on, and give effect to, a genuine commitment to decentralization. A practical policy recommendation is for policy to support local democratic decision making on natural resource use, monitoring and management roles of local resource users. It was stressed that governments must walk the walk of their democratic decentralization and local participation policies, not just talk the talk.

#### Conclusion

Two main conclusions can be drawn from the policy deliberations at the meeting. 1) A lot of (mostly well-intentioned) policy for natural resource governance, aimed at empowering the local level and poor/disadvantaged people in NRM, has failed to achieve its intended objectives, and has instead only empowered elites or reinforced existing power structures and relations. (2) Researchers remain largely unsuccessful in communicating their findings and recommendations intelligibly and effectively to policy makers.

Ownership of policy and the level at which policy applies are key issues for improved communications and uptake of policy. Also the nature and process of policy are perhaps even more important to get right if we want to make sure that policy content is effective.



#### Values and Development in Southern Africa

Edited by *Hans Müller, Pinkie Mekgwe and Marvellous Mhloyi*

ISBN: 978-2-86978-554-0 — pages : 268 p.

Development has been on Africa's agenda for a long time but progress has been both varied and limited, partly due to the diverse levels 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 decision makers, 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. The significance of this book lies in its provision of a theoretical argument, from empirical perspective, on the role of values in the development of Africa; an argument that is capable of facilitating a dialogue about African development, which obviously proves more useful than either the imposition of a technical process or the announcement of a normative framework.