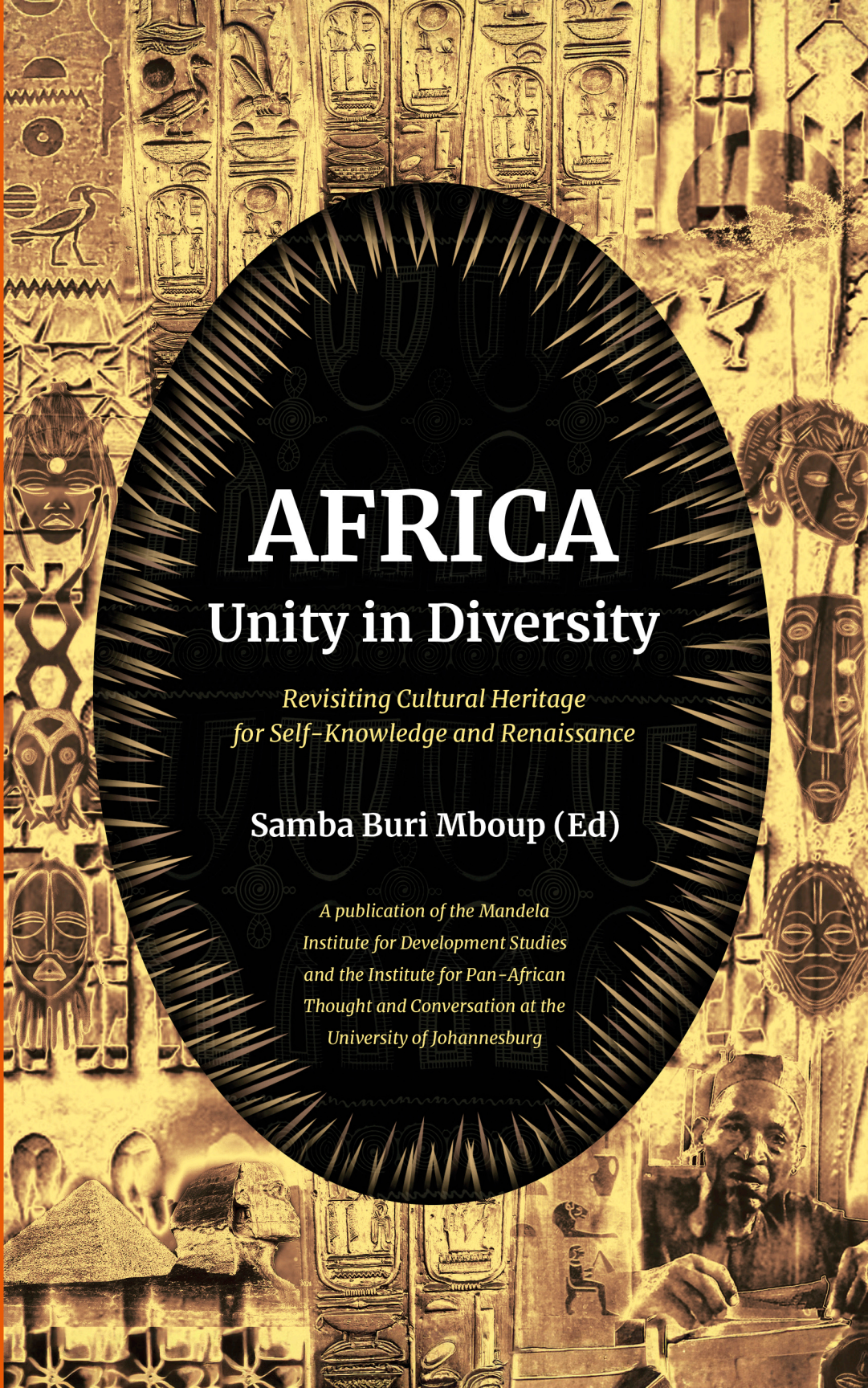

AFRICA
Unity in Diversity
Revisiting Cultural Heritage
for Self-Knowledge and Renaissance
Samba Buri Mboup (Ed)
A publication of the Mandela
Institute for Development Studies
and the Institute for Pan-African
Thought and Conversation at the
University of Johannesburg

Africa: Unity in Diversity

Revisiting Cultural Heritage for Self-Knowledge and Renaissance

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Glossary of Terms

African Africa: Africa that is still itself and continues to abide by its own rules, principles and value systems, beyond and in spite of foreign influences.

Africanisms: all historical experiences, societies, cultural areas or spaces of civilisation, identifiable in time and space, (inside and) mostly outside Africa, and sharing cultural features that could be linked to the same African cultural, historical, anthropological heritage(s).

African indigenous educational system: a form of education that was developed by Africans which privileges their values, cultures, languages and traditions, for example age-set schools known as *amabutho* in Nguni languages of southern Africa.

Afrikology: an alternative epistemology or paradigm anchored in inter- and transdisciplinarity, to be used for knowledge production and application in order to transform our vision of reality and the world as well as reality and the world themselves.

Afro-centric Perspective: a way of understanding Africa from the inside which privileges African agency in the making of history and other human developments.

Afro-Arab Borderlands: a term describing an area covering the Sahel-Saharan fringe of the African continent constituting a "zone of influence" in which African people and those designated as Semites engaged, met, engaged each other and exchanged cultures, languages and mixed together.

Ajami: 'Ajamī or a'jami comes from an Arabic word meaning non-Arab or foreign. It also refers to the practice of writing other languages, including African languages, using the graphic system of Arabic modified by the addition of diacritics to transcribe sounds (ex: [e]; [ɛ]; [o]; [ɔ]), unknown in the phonetism of the Arabic language.

Bantu: a collective term that is used to refer to indigenous African people who spoke related languages and shared common cultural and ideological orientations. These people used iron tools, grew crops and made pottery.

Bantuistics: all the bodies and studies and corpora on the realities of the Bantu peoples: their history, languages, lifestyles, specific cultures and anthropological traits, together with the approaches and methodologies used to conduct such studies.

Colonial Pact: Body of economic, political, financial, military measures and arrangements imposed by France on its African colonies before their accession to formal independence in order to maintain them under its durable, quasi-systematic control and domination. From Paulin Hountondji's perspective, the concept also refers to the replica in the area of knowledge production the same imbalanced type of relations between Africa and imperialist countries as encountered in the area of economic production.

Cradle of human kind: a description of Africa is the birth place of all human species.

Creolisation: a word used here to describe a process in which new cultures, languages and identities emerge from the experience of encounters and mixing of people from different backgrounds.

Cross-border language: a language that is spoken in two or more states.

Culture: is defined in various ways but in our case, culture refers to very a way of life, how people know themselves, how they celebrated themselves, how they understand their place in history and it includes their identity, dance music and knowledge systems.

Cultural Heritage: a term that refers to artistic, symbolic, cultural, and ideational materials as well as values and traditions handed down from the past to another generation as part of resources used to define an identity of a people.

Diaspora (African): This is a term used to name African people who were forcibly uprooted from the continent through the slave trade and are now found in such places as Haiti, Jamaica and the United States of America.

Diffusion: a form of spreading of cultures, languages and technologies from one civilisation into another.

Egyptology: archaeological study of ancient Egyptian civilisation, a field of studying ancient Egyptian civilisation.

Endogenous: a term that is used to refer to those factors that are internal to Africa and had a deep influence on socio-political and economic change.

Epistemology: refers to the study of the conditions of production of knowledge including the methods and tools used to produce knowledge.

Exogenous: a term that is used to refer to such external factors such as the mercantilism, the slave trade, imperialism and colonialism that influenced socio-economic and political dynamics in Africa**.**

Homo sapiens: this is an archaeological-scientific term used in evolutionary to describe the earliest ancestor of present-day human beings.

Hieroglyphics: an early Egyptian form of writing.

Kaffir: a derogatory colonial term used mainly in South Africa to refer to black indigenous people as non-believers, pagans and heathens.

Kingdom: a society with a form of governance in which at the apex is a king.

Linguistic community: a collective term used to describe groups of people speaking such dominant languages as Swahili, Nguni, Arabic and others which are spoken across borders and regions.

Maat: an African indigenous ethical principle of justice, truth, equity, righteousness and harmony.

Matricentrality: is a description of a society which is not patriarchal but one where femininity and matriarchy is the central organising principle.

Matrilineal society: a society in which there is woman-centred ideology in which the female-gender determines identity.

Mode of production: a description of the organisation of economic life of a people at different historical times including division of labour and distribution of resources.

Nilotic people: a group of African people who trace their origin to the Nile Valley.

Onomastics: a part of science that focuses on the study of names.

Patrilineal society: a society that is organised in accordance with the principles of patriarchy which privileges the centrality of male gender.

Phonetism: organised system of sounds of a given language, including the ways in which general sound laws that regulate the combinations and dynamics of change of sounds operate in the same language.

Sultan: is a leadership title used mainly to name head of a highly hierarchised aristocratic Arab society.

State formation: a process of enlargement of scale from family to clan, from clan to chieftainship, from chieftainship to kingdom, and from kingdom to empire.

Semitic: a family of languages including Hebrew, Arabic, Amharic and others traceable genealogically to Western Asia and the Middle East.

Ta'rib: is refers to a process of gradual spreading of Arabic identity including religion and language into non–Arabic communities.

***Ubuntu*:** an African conception of humanism that is predicated on *I am because of you* re and is different from the Cartesian notion of *I think, therefore, I am* otherwise known as the *cogito*.

Zone of confluence: an area of contact and dialogue between cultures and civilisations.

Dedication

A special dedication is made to Mr Ali Mufuruki. Mufuruki was a dedicated individual, visionary leader, and renowned businessman committed to advancing Africa. As one of the founding trustees of MINDS, Mufuruki also sat on the boards of major continental companies and organisations and was the founder of the Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI), East Africa. Mufuruki engaged in thought leadership, providing excellent ideas on advancing the continent. He lived his life emphasising that no African country would be free until every African country was free. The most significant honour would be continuing the journey that he started. He was, from the initial stages, one of the champions of the research study on which this book project was based, he would have been proudest to experience completing this project. Ali Mufuruki passed away on 7 December 2019.

This book is also dedicated to the memory of Professor *Koro* Diouldé Laya, one of its major architects and author of most of Chapter Three on West African polities, social formations and ethno-cultural mapping. A renowned sociologist and anthropologist, a committed Pan-Africanist, founder and first Director of the OAU Linguistic and Historical Study Center through Oral Tradition (CELHTO), and a major contributor to the UNESCO sponsored *General History of Africa, Koro* Diouldé, "the Old Ardo with a Lion's Heart" passed away on 27 July 2014, while still working with dedication on the African Heritage Research Study.

May the beautiful, powerful souls of Mr Ali Mufuruki and Professor *Koro* Diouldé Laya continue resting in eternal peace.

Amen

Acknowledgements

On behalf of all authors, I wish to first express our gratefulness to the management of the Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) and its Board's Chair Mama Graça Machel and CEO Dr Nkosana Moyo, for their intellectual consideration and trust in commissioning the original research project on which this book is based. I also thank the Institute for Pan African Thought and Conversation (IPATC) – University of Johannesburg for supporting the preparation of this book.

The responsibility for the content of this book obviously rests with the editor and team of contributors to its content. However, this project would not have been brought to fruition without the invaluable support of many resource persons and institutions regarding activities of identification of sources and data collection by opening wide the doors of their respective knowledge repositories to the research team, besides providing critical feedback and input into the content of the study at various stages of its completion.

Prof O H Kaya was of great support during the research missions to the NRF / UKZN AIKS Centre of Excellence, University of Durban. In Mozambique, the main host institutions were the Maputo Centro de Estudos Africanos headed by Prof Dr Armindo Ngunga, the Instituto Superior de Artes e Cultura (ISArC) in Matola coordinated by Dr Filimone Meigos, and the Arquivo do Patrimonio Cultural (ArPAC) coordinated by Dr Dava.

We are highly indebted to colleagues of the University of Botswana in Gaborone for their brotherly welcome, open-mindedness and quality of the research materials generously put at our disposal including primary, unpublished sources, particularly Prof Herman Batibo, Head of the Dept of African Languages and Literatures, convener and host of the Third Workshop on Untranslatable Heritage,[1] on 15 / 16 March 2013, and other esteemed colleagues including: Prof Andy Chebanne (Faculty of Humanities), Prof Euphrase Kezilahabi (Dept of African Languages and Literatures), Dr Maitseo Bolaane

(Director, San Research Centre) and Prof Bertha Osei-Hwedie (Director, Institute for Culture and Peace Studies).

In Tanzania, warm hospitality was offered by Prof H Mwevura, the DVC-Academic at the State University of Zanzibar, Mr M Mjawiri, Director of the Global Centre for Kiswahili Studies and Advancement (former TAKILUKI), Mrs Khadija B Juma, then Executive Secretary of the Zanzibar Kiswahili Council (BAKIZA), University of Dar Es Salaam (UDSM)'s Profs Mulokozi and A K Mutembei (Institute of Kiswahili Studies), Dr Muzale of the Languages of Tanzania Project and Mr Julius J Taji, of the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, and Mr Nyari Esa (Sr. library Officer) and Dr A K Kabudi, the library Director.

In Bamako (Republic of Mali), people visited at the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) amongst whom Mr Aimé Bambara (documentalist), Dr Emmanuel Sagara, Mr Adama Samassekou, (founder and first Chair of ACALAN) besides Prof Doulaye Konaté (former Rector of the University of Bamako and President of the Association of African Historians), were wonderful hosts.

In Niger, it was a pleasure to be hosted by the Centre for the Linguistic and Historical Studies through Oral Traditions (CELHTO)'s Dr Benjamin Nyalega (Director a.i.), Prof Djoulde Laya (first Director of CELHTO), Mr Issa Oumarou (translator, Fulfulde and Zarma-Songhoy), Mr Bamazi (documentalist), and Dr Amina Salamata Kiello (historian, assistant to Prof D Laya). In addition to the documentation identified and/or gathered from CEHLTO's rich knowledge repository, the visit culminated with the elaboration of a Draft Protocol of Cooperation between CELHTO and MINDS.

In Benin, warm hospitality and intellectual solidarity were offered by Prof Paulin Hountondji, Director of the African Advanced Study Centre on African Societies (AFCAS), by Mr Paul Christian Kiti, and by Prof Olabiyi Babalola Yai and Prof Eusèbe Alihonou.

In the Republic of Congo, Prof T. Obenga wo was then Deputy Minister of Culture was our interlocutor. In Gabon, two host institutions were the International Centre of Bantu Civilisations (CICIBA) and the UNESCO Office in Libreville.

Mrs Anne Marie Okome (CICIBA Director), Mr Meye (Head of the Dpt. of archaeology) and Mr Essaba Raphael (CICIBA documentalist), and UNESCO's Office Head Mr Alain Godonou, were engaging hosts.

In Cameroon, Prof Charles Binam Bikoi as Executive Secretary of the AU International Centre for Research and Documentation on African Traditions and Languages (CERDOTOLA) and Prof David Simo, the Coordinator of the Centre for German-African Scientific Cooperation, offered their hospitality and insights on several occasions. And in Senegal, Dr Hamady Bocoum, Director of IFAN-Cheikh Anta Diop and the National Patrimony, and Prof Pathé Diagne, a highly respected, widely published linguist, economist, socio-political anthropologist provided critical feedback on our preliminary findings.

I wish to also thank Ms Chantal Mbala Banga, who, as administrative assistant of the original AHRS team, did stand by our side always with dedication and grace.

Last but not least, our profound gratitude goes to the family of the late *Koro*[2] Professor Diouldé Laya, particularly to his widow and his daughter Fatimata Diouldé for their support to this book project, and for allowing us to use Diouldé Laya's picture for the illustration of the book cover that was beautifully designed together with the back cover by Ms. Jennifer Correia from BONITONA Studio, to whom we express our deepest gratitude for her professionalism, artistic creativity and generosity, as she has graciously offered her time and expertise in solidarity with the team of authors and the book project.

May all the resource persons and institutions mentioned above and others whose names might have been omitted, find here expression of our most sincere, deepest gratitude for their hospitality, encouragements, critical insights and invaluable support to bringing this book project into fruition.

Samba Buri Mboup
Editor

Endnotes

1 I was invited to the workshop's proceedings to which I contributed a paper on "(Re)discovery and ownership of heritage for African Cultural Renaissance".

2 *Koro* is a term of respect meaning Elder in Bambara and the Mandeŋ cultural space.

Foreword

As an Africa-wide think-tank aiming at addressing "the short, medium, and long-term development challenges in Africa in a holistic and comprehensive manner", the Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) focuses on influencing the shaping of policy and practice on governance, economic development and the evolution of African institutions through the provision of a forum for dialogue, information dissemination, networking, research and application of research outputs. Since MINDS believes that African Heritage is a key foundation to the continent's development, the Institution commissions research aimed at acquiring a better understanding of how development efforts could more effectively use indigenous knowledge and practices. This in turn requires that Africans become better acquainted with their own heritage.

MINDS programmes focus on four thematic areas, i.e. African Heritage, African Governance and Democracy, Economic Development and Institution Formation / Development. The African Heritage Programme encompasses learning about Africans and their heritage with the view to seeing how that knowledge could be used to shape the nature of development programmes. Key elements to be researched include "a map of common identities in Africa, analyses of distinguishing characteristics between cultures and regions, and analyses of knowledge and value systems, institutions, customs and governance". MINDS will use this body of knowledge as a filter to test the extent to which development interventions have either used or omitted to use African heritage as a foundation and guide for action.

This publication marks the beginning of the exploration, by MINDS and its partners, into a journey that we hope will be revealing, exciting and very rewarding. We invite the readers to join us on that expedition!

Dr Nkosana Moyo

Founder and CEO of MINDS

Preface

The Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) has great pleasure to release, in partnership with the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC), University of Johannesburg (UJ), and to share with African youth and the academic community at large, this book which is based on the African Heritage Research Study (AHRS). On this occasion, I wish to stress one aspect of the research process that stood including throughout the revision and validation of the AHRS Report: I mean the critical engagement through permanent contact and exchanges, and regular working meetings, between MINDS, the team leader and the research team. This has contributed significantly to guarantee the transparency and mutual accountability during the AHRS process, regarding, for example, work in progress and quality control. Some of such working sessions were marked by robust exchanges on the progress or final reports and the ways in which the research process was conducted.

Indeed, notwithstanding many difficulties and challenges, one thing that did help throughout all phases and steps, was the effort by the research team and its leader-coordinator, to engage with MINDS Team and Management on the one end and, on the other end, to document the work conducted through, for example, an Inception Report that was discussed and validated, as well as Back-to-Office Reports after every field research mission or visit to partner institutions undertaken, progress reports and briefs on work performed and challenges encountered. Regular meetings took place to discuss, improve, validate these documents while dealing with administrative, financial matters and challenges related to them. This open, inter-active approach was helpful to guarantee transparency and accountability, it also allowed to pre-empt and rectify what would have, otherwise, resulted in possible misunderstandings about management standards.

As far as quality control and validation of the research are concerned, it is worthwhile noting, as stressed by the team

leader on several occasions, that internal decision-making was made preferably on the basis of intellectual consensus, after consultation and a debate amongst members of the research team. Undoubtedly, one defining moment in the whole AHRS process was the 8 December Coordination Workshop at MINDS headquarters in Johannesburg: which provided an opportunity for the research team members and MINDS Management to meet and engage in an open and robust debate on matters related to the AHRS and its relevance to MINDS mission. The main outcomes of that Workshop were captured in a Summative Report for general proceedings and in an Inception Report stressing the scope of work, implementation plan and research methodology; one highlight of the Workshop, being an introductory module by one Research Team member (Prof Yoporeka Somet) to the Khemetic (Ancient Egyptian) language and writing systems.

Notwithstanding the intellectual responsibility of the AHRS team and its coordinator who happens to also have edited the current book project, visits to many academic and research institutions and invaluable intellectual feedback from high-profile resource persons, have contributed to shape and enrich the content of the publication that, once again, it is our pleasure and privilege to share with the reader and academic community at large, with a special focus on the African youth on the Continent and in the Diaspora.

Indeed, the main thrust of this book is about revisiting African heritage for true liberation, sovereignty and renaissance by harnessing the potential of Africa's cultural unity beyond diversity. It is our hope that the book shall contribute to reformatting African youth's mindsets and visions of Self and Other back into self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence as well as social and political protagonism for African renaissance.

Ms Graça Machel

(Chair of MINDS Board of Directors)

Author Profiles

Koro Diouldé Laya

Diouldé Laya is an African patriot who joined the ranks of the African Independence Party (PAI). He was portrayed by a colleague, Prof Boubé Gado who pronounced his funeral oration, as a passionate researcher interested in several disciplines including sociology, ethnography, anthropology, psychopathology, historical oral traditions, languages, oral literature, etc. He conducted research in all these disciplines and carried out several works, particularly in the field of the collection, transcription and translation of the oral tradition of the different ethnolinguistic groups of Niger, in particular in Zarma-Songhai, Hausa and Fulani. As one of the great theoreticians of the use of Oral Tradition in the social sciences, yet Diouldé Laya was not a traditionalist in the classical sense of the term: he was really "a living library that burnt with his death." Simply a *Wise Man* by African standards, he is, indeed, from the key generation straddling the colonial period and that of independence: "This generation, although specialized in one discipline, found itself obliged to deal with diversified fields." Diouldé Laya has worked alongside other personalities who share with him a passion for African studies, they include President Boubou Hama, Jean Rouch, Profs André Salifou, Louis Vincent Thomas, Abdoulaye Bara Diop, Joseph Greenberg, Georges Balandier, etc. Having rubbed shoulders with great Africans from all over Africa, but also beyond, he wanted to be a *Man of the Universal*, strongly attached to the values of fraternity, tolerance, solidarity, sharing and peace. Diouldé Laya was Secretary General of the Niger National Commission for UNESCO (1962-1970), Representative of President Boubou Hama on the Standing Committee of the Editorial Board of the African Encyclopedia, Accra (1964-1966), Director of the Research Institute in Human Sciences (IRSH) from the Abdou Moumouni University of Niamey (1970-1977), and CELHTO's founder and first Director (1977-1997). *Koro* Diouldé Laya was a member

of the International Scientific Committee for the writing of a *General History of Africa* sponsored by UNESCO, from whom he received two distinctions: the Simon Bolivar Bronze Medal in 1998 and the Avicenna Silver Medal for his contribution in April 1999. He leaves a rich documentary production composed of a great diversity of reports, articles and books.

Yoporeka Somet

Yoporeka Somet was born in Côte d'Ivoire, though he is a Burkinabe Writer, Philosopher, and Egyptologist. He studied Philosophy at Joseph Ki-Zerbo University in Ouagadougou, then Sociology and Egyptology at the University of Strasbourg in France. Doctor of Philosophy and Egyptology, Yoporeka Somet is a member of the editorial board of *Ankh,* Journal of Egyptology, and African Civilisations, he has also taught at the University of Strasbourg and at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar. He is currently a professor at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology in Nyeri / Kenya, and Director of the Center for African Renaissance Studies within the same university. He has authored several articles and books on African civilisations, including: *L'Afrique et la Philosophie – Introduction à la philosophie africaine pharaonique,*[1] *Cours d'Initiation à la Langue Egyptienne Pharaonique* (2007)*, Anthony William Amo, sa Vie et son Oeuvre* (2016), *L'Egypte ancienne, un Système Africain du Monde* (2018),[2] *King Khoufou and his Magicians, Tales from Ancient Egypt* (published in 5 languages).

Babacar Diop *Buuba*

Babacar Diop *Buuba* has authored many articles, book chapters and books including *Propos d'un Africain sur l'Antiquité* (2014), *L'Afrique ancienne dévoilée* (2017)[3] and *Les syndicats dans l'histoire : regard et partition universitaires* (2019). Diop is Full Professor of Ancient History at the Dept. of History, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar (UCAD), and also facilitator and director of the chair on African Renaissance at UCAD, established under sponsorship from ICESCO (the World Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and UCAD, where he served as Ombudsman for several years. He

was Fullbright visiting professor in the USA and Director of the SIT (School for International Training) programme in Senegal. Buuba Diop was the first General Secretary of the Autonomous Syndicate of Higher Education (SAES), being also an emblematic figure of the trade union and social movement in Senegal and Africa, as Secretary General for many years of ANAFA (Senegal) and President of the Pan African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (PAALAE).

José Do Nascimento

José Do Nascimento is a jurist and political scientist who graduated in Public International Law and Political Science. Lecturer of Public Law, Paris Saclay University, France. Member of the IDEST research laboratory (Institut Droit, Espaces et Technologies), Paris Saclay University. Head of the Research Program on Modern Aspects of the Intellectual and Institutional Heritage of Precolonial Africa within ARPEMA (Research Association on the Perspectives of Modernity in Africa). Do Nascimento published or co-authored several books, including: *Les Chemins de la Modernité en Afrique – pour changer l'Afrique, changeons de Paradigme* (*The Pathways To Modernity In Africa - To change Africa, let's change the paradigm*) and *L'Afrique au risque de la Cybercolonisation (Africa at risk of Cybercolonisation).* His most recent book (2020) on *La Pensée Politique de Cheikh Anta Diop (The Political Thought of Cheikh Anta Diop)* was so impactful that it was republished in quite a short period of time. In 2016, Do Nascimento co-edited with Roger Bautier, *Les Technologies numériques comme Miroir de la Société (Digital Technologies as a Mirror of Society)*, He also edited a book published by Editions l'Harmattan, in Paris in 2008 and titled *La Renaissance Africaine comme Alternative au Développement*[4] *(The African Renaissance as an Alternative to Development)*: a collective book based on proceedings of a colloquium co-organised by ARPEMA (Association de Recherche sur les Perspectives de la Modernité en Afrique) and PAARI (Pan African Review of Innovation), and first published in 2001 by Do Nascimento and Mawawa Mâwa-Kiese, under the title *La Renaissance Africaine et sa Prospective (African Renaissance and its Prospective)*.

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni was educated at the University of Zimbabwe, in Harare, and University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. He holds a BA Honours degree in History, MA in African History, PhD in History and PGDE in Education. He previously worked as Professor of History at the University of Zimbabwe and Professor of History and Development Studies at Midlands State University, located in the city of Gweru, Zimbabwe. Formerly a Research Professor at the University of South Africa (Unisa), he was also Director of the Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI), Professor Extraordinarius at the University of the Free State (UFS) in South Africa, Honorary Professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in South Africa, Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, and a Research Associate of The Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies at The Open University in the United Kingdom. Ndlovu-Gatsheni is Professor / Chair of Epistemologies of the Global South with Emphasis on Africa at the University of Bayreuth in Germany. He is author of many peer-reviewed articles, books, and book chapters on Decoloniality Studies and African Renaissance. Amongst them: *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization (2013), Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity (2013), The Decolonial Mandela: Peace, Justice and the Politics of Life (2016), Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization (2018).*

Juste Windpabasba Tiemtoré

Juste Windpabasba Tiemtoré is a career diplomat who was appointed as Ambassador and Director of State Protocol under the National Council of the Revolution (CNR in French), and a close collaborator of the late leader of the Revolution, Thomas Sankara, Minister, General Coordinator of the Presidency of Burkina Faso and Minister of Information. Later appointed Inspector General of the services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation by Decree in the Council of Ministers on 30 July 2003, and then Minister Plenipotentiary, Juste W. Tiemtoré was officially installed in his functions on 20

August 2003. He has also served as Minister Councilor at the Embassy of Burkina Faso in Pretoria (South Africa), which was one of his latest official assignments before retirement.

Samba Buri Mboup

Samba Buri Mboup was educated at the Dakar Cheikh Anta Diop University and in France. He holds a Doctorate in General & Comparative Literature (Thesis on the Wolof Literature and Orature), and a University Diploma (DULCO) in Swahili / Bantu Language and Civilization, both from Sorbonne University, Paris. He speaks French, English, Portuguese, Spanish, as well as Wolof (mother-tongue) and Swahili (an African Union working language). Currently an Associate Professor at the Dakar Centre for Diplomatic and Strategic Studies, the book editor is also a Sr. Research Fellow at the Centre for Strategic and Policy Studies (CSPS) in Juba (South Sudan), and a founding member of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute. Formerly an Associate Professor at the University of South Africa (Unisa), in the period October 2006 to December 2012), Mboup also served as Ambassador of Senegal to southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (Aug. 2001-July 2006); in that capacity, he was a co-opted member in the NEPAD Steering Committee, before serving, as a NEPAD resource-person and an African Union expert in the areas of education, governance and security. As an International consultant in Development Anthropology and Strategic Studies, he has conducted several missions for the UN General Secretariat and UN Agencies and bodies including UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCHR, UNHCR, UNESCO, CNUCED, UNECA, in several African countries. A co-translator into French (1986) of Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (ÉditionsCaribéennes, Paris, 1986), Mboup has published in Portuguese, in Luanda, a book on Gender titled *Passado e Presente da Mulher Africana* in 1999, as well as several book chapters and articles in English and French, in peer-reviewed journals, on themes such as linguistic and cultural anthropology, Development studies, education, gender, leadership, African renaissance, Pan-Africanism.[5]

Endnotes

1 Translation : *Africa in Philosophy – Introduction to Pharaonic African Philosophy*.

2 Translation: *Introductory Course on the Pharaonic Egyptian Language*; *Anthony William Amo, his Life and Work*; *Ancient Egypt, An African World System*.

3 English translations : *Comments on Antiquity from an African ; Ancient Africa Unveiled*.

4 The editor contributed 2 book chapters to this publication.

5 See: a compilation of Mboup's works and publications in the bibliographical references of this volume.

Chapter One

The African Heritage Research in Context

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1.1. Purpose of the book

As centrepiece of MINDS' African Heritage Programme, the main purpose of the African Heritage Research Study (AHRS) on which this book is based was to develop a better understanding of what defines Africans by researching various aspects of Africa's heritage and determining its relevance for the African development agenda.[1] As the result of a collective effort, the report of the study was a synthesis of contributions of a research team of eight African scholars. The report and the current book project both reflect the insights gained during that collective research effort that was conducted under the leadership of the research team coordinator who has also been appointed as editor of this book project.

In line with the specific objectives of the research study and beyond its limited scope, the main purpose of this book project, is, amongst others: a) "to conduct a mapping exercise to identify and describe the geographical dispersion of cultural groups in Africa, and analyse key distinguishing characteristics between these cultural groups and regions; b) to describe and analyse knowledge and value systems, institutions and governance structures inherent within these cultural groups." Whereas such research objectives have methodological implications, more significantly, the book will describe how

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such purpose and aim have been pursued and what has emerged in the form of insights into the African heritage of culture and knowledge that has a special value for current efforts to improve socio-economic and political conditions in Africa in pursuit of African renaissance.

Also in conformity with the initial project, its terms of reference and expected outcomes, the body of knowledge generated from there, the analyses contained in this book, the conclusions and final considerations reached with the methodology that was applied to produce them, shall be used to promote dialogues and debates with a great variety of stakeholders especially Africans "at home and abroad", with a view to deepening self-affirmation and self-awareness amongst them, whilst driving the societal changes needed. The targeted stakeholders in these debates and dialogues include "people drawn from the public sector, women, the youth, civil society, academics, the private sector, and the media". This body of knowledge can, therefore, be used "as a filter to test the extent to which development interventions so far, have applied or omitted the use of African heritage as a foundation", whereas the outputs of the dialogues will help to "shape policy and practice on governance, economic development, and the evolution of African institutions".[2]

One key Pan-African research initiative, the *General History of Africa (GHA)*, provides a framework that has contributed to further illustrate by shedding more light on some specific objectives. This is an authoritative work that was produced over a 35-year period as a massive multi-disciplinary, even inter-disciplinary, effort involving more than 350 historians and experts, two-thirds of them being Africans. The main focus of the current second phase of the GHA is on its didactic use in pursuit of the following objectives :

- to contribute to a better understanding of the way in which African societies have evolved through space and time, as well as the impact of these transformations on the present and the future;

- to promote a better comprehension of the rich African past, of its rich cultural patrimony and its contribution to the general progress of humanity;
- to contribute to the construction of an African identity and citizenship through the teaching of a common history, so as to encourage the process of political and economic integration initiated by the African Union;
- to consolidate the collective consciousness of African people, and promote unity and shared values.

1.2. Methodology

The research methodology that was generally agreed and applied, beyond the diversity of contributors and approaches, paid special attention, amongst other principles, to the following that have guided it:

- the importance of linguistic relatedness and similarities for the study of African historical and cultural heritage and identities;
- an option for multi- and inter-disciplinarity;
- the need to capitalise on the knowledge base of the African school of thought established by Cheikh Anta Diop and the intellectual legacies of Pan-African research initiatives and processes such as the above-mentioned *General History of Africa*.

Babacar *Buuba* Diop's approach to the study on the Ethnogenesis of Senegal and the history of civilisations in general, in his contribution to a tribute to Prof Oumar Kane, former Dean of UCAD's Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences[3] was also taken into consideration, thereby providing further insights for the theoretical and methodological perspective both of the original study and this book project. Emphasis is thus put on three defining factors:

- the languages that allow insight into the worldviews, knowledge systems, know-how, techniques, toponyms (i.e. names of places), ethnonyms (names of ethnic

communities) as well as physical, economic and cultural anthropology;
- geography that allows to locate civilisations in their environment and ecosystems; and
- chronology that allows one to follow the evolution of challenges as well as technological and technical, institutional responses, different forms of resolution of conflicts (peace, war), the study of groups, individual characters and their roles in social, economic and cultural processes.

These pillars of a qualitative research undertaking meant an effort to understand the impact of language, geography and chronology on the interpretation of knowledge that was encountered. This overall approach was qualitative, analytical and critical with a view to generate new and fresh insights into the complex matters of evolving cultures, languages, traditions and practices.

While working on the original AHR study and in the process of compilation of this volume, the language competency of the team of authors and particularly the research team leader and volume editor was put to the test on several occasions. This language issue was dealt with through translations and where necessary, simultaneous interpretation for communication purposes, e.g., at coordination meetings with MINDS senior management and in interactions with other stakeholders or partners. This happened in the early stages of the AHRS process, but also thereafter, throughout the entire research and writing processes: to make contacts, plan meetings, collect, process, organise, analyse and systematise relevant information and data to produce research guides, protocols, templates and reports, including the original AHRS Report on which this book project is based.

During these processes, the language proficiency of the team of authors, in particular the research team leader and editor of this volume, was utilised to bridge communication gaps, conduct research effectively, access knowledge repositories and sources in different languages, peruse and

summarise reports, translate, transfer and exchange knowledge, share, discuss documents including book chapters, review and proof-read some of them when necessary etc. This process was, in a variety of ways, a challenging, time-consuming exercise. The team's linguistic proficiency helped to diversify the sources of knowledge produced in different colonial languages. It was also possible to critically assess such sources of knowledge while perusing them, and to interrogate the discourses produced from them and the related orders of discourses. This entailed an effort to examine, deconstruct some of the ideological precepts, a priori, prejudices underlying intellectual traditions, specificities and idiosyncrasies of the social and epistemological contexts in which such knowledge, discourses, orders of discourses were produced. Beyond what was said about the issues and realities described or analysed in such discourses, it was, thus, possible to grasp what made some of their authors say some of the things that they said in them: from which perspective, and with which intentions or motivations and so on.

1.3. Theoretical approach and conceptual framework

Africa-centredness is key to the conceptual framework of the study from which derives this book project. Clearly, the analyses found in the current publication were carried out from an Africa-centred perspective for knowledge production and utilisation, which entails the need to re-assert and take into account the relevance and actuality of African indigenous knowledge and educational systems (IKS and IES), as well as of *African Africa* in general as an operational concept for research and scholarship. This concept is about Africa that is still itself and continues to abide by its own rules, principles and value systems, beyond and in spite of foreign influences. It is obvious, according to Pathé Diagne, that the Africanity that will be discussed here can only be understood in terms of historical and cultural – and not racial – specificity. Moreover, it does not exclude – quite the contrary – the possibilities of borrowings or mutual exchanges with other non-African cultures or civilisations, nor the specificities and notable differences of one African cultural area from another,

because of the universal law of unequal development between different social formations, or even within the same formation.[4]

Amongst research priorities while compiling the AHRS Report and this volume, the work performed has brought to the fore the need to challenge intellectual orthodoxies such as for example, the concepts of "Development", "Civilisation", "Under-development", "Globalisation", Africa's so-called "marginality" in the world economic system, and so on. This entailed an effort to think beyond "national" perspectives imposed in African scholarship or sponsored, encouraged by Western "gurus" amongst their "anglophone", "francophone" and "lusophone" counterparts on the continent, in perpetuation of a pervasive trend of epistemological coloniality and dependence, as a result of ongoing intellectual delocalisation, cosmopolitism and/or mimetism: a predicament which certain African academics are still trapped in, notwithstanding efforts to try to extricate themselves from such an epistemological impasse.

Be it emphasised that references to the African past consistent with the option for an Afrocentric approach adopted here, should not be mistaken with a call for a mere *return* to the past, but rather, in the opinion of Hamady Bocoum, as a *recourse* in terms of mobilisation of the best practices and lessons learnt from the past in order to conceive and implement effective and durable responses to present and future challenges faced by the African continent and peoples, including those in the Diaspora.

This approach also capitalises on the intellectual heritage of authors like J F A Ajayi, for whom European colonialism was "just another episode" in African history and historiography[5] although such an assertion "is not intended in any way to minimize the fundamental and often quite ruthless nature of the changes brought to Africa and African institutions by colonial rule. It is true, however, that these changes were not evenly distributed, while the lives of some people were completely transformed, others hardly knew the European rulers were here before they began to leave".[6] Indeed, despite its profound and lasting impact on African peoples, societies and institutions, European and foreign agencies did not put

an end to the continuity of African endogenous agency that expressed itself through historical processes and events such as the *Mfecane* (which is well recorded in writing and in oral traditions, a movement which began in Natal in the 1820s and within forty years was affecting the lives of people around Lake Tanganyika), the migrations of Bantu peoples spanning over two thousand years (between 1000 BCE and CE 1000 / 1100), the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries jihads in the Western Sudan, the nineteenth century internal wars amongst Yoruba kingdoms and principalities, to quote a few examples.

The point made by Ajayi is that "in any long-term historical view of African history, European rule becomes just another episode. In relation to wars and conflicts of people, the rise and fall of empires, linguistic, cultural and religious change and the cultivation of new ideas and new ways of life, new economic orientation and so on, in relation to all these, colonialism must be seen not as a complete departure from the African past, but as one episode in the continuous flow of African history".[7] Ndlovu-Gatsheni shares the same view: "What must be noted is that most of the pre-colonial states were not impositions from above but emerged from enlargement of kinships and maturity of clans as well as informed by basic realities of such economic activities as pastoralism and agriculture".

Furthermore, the book's perspective deliberately focuses on Africa's past rather than on more recent times that are generally more (and sometimes better) covered by contemporary scholarship, although in its dominant approaches and research perspectives, "local forms of knowledge are treated with amazing coyness, and actively prevented from penetrating formal spaces of knowledge production".[8]

This poses challenges at least at two levels.

- Firstly, in connection with the knowledge deficit on Africa's past, as a result of intellectual disinterest and/or lack of intellectual competence from current scholarship still dominated by Eurocentric research perspectives, the current intellectual paraphernalia presented as "theories of development" will continue deprived of any legitimacy or

operational value, as long as they will continue disconnected from a true knowledge of African past and realities in general, especially *African Africa*.

- Secondly, there is an implicit advocacy for the pressing need of a transformation and re-foundation of the methodologies and approaches in humanities and social sciences. Furthermore, in respect of such a research priority, there is a need to mainstream the intellectual legacies of the African school of scholarship established by Cheikh Anta Diop. Diop's intellectual contribution stands out in the study of African history and cultural heritage, and the specific case study of Senegal in particular. Diop's seminal contribution to African and world historiography was, amongst others, through the scientific establishment of two to three theses: a) that Africa is the cradle of humankind and human civilisation; that b) The first Nile Valley civilisations (ancient Egypt and Ethiopia including Nubia) were African in their essence and main foundations and traits; and that c) despite undeniable specificities and differences, there is a profound historical, anthropological unity amongst indigenous African peoples and cultures.

The preceding had several important implications.

- On the one hand, based on the assumption of historical and cultural affinities and similarities between African societies and peoples, therefore, it is difficult if not impossible, to understand and explain any part of Africa in its own respect without (re)locating it in its continental context.
- On the other hand, a permanent dialectical movement is necessary between contemporary Africa and previous African civilisations and cultures, insofar as the intellectual journey back to the past makes it possible to understand many aspects of African contemporary societies. At the same time, the nature of contemporary Africa provides conceptual tools for the relevant interpretation of ancient realities, re-framing them back into their own African context. Only then, shall it be possible to overcome what Theophile Obenga calls the *anarchic dispersal of contents,* and the current state of relative intellectual underdevelopment

of African research in social and human sciences, where, despite notable progress and achievements as a result of much sacrifice and hard work, yet monographic perspectives without historical depth nor cultural consistency, still proliferate to the point of being sometimes a dominating trend in knowledge production.

1.4. Key concepts

1.4.1. Culture

In the words of Maulana Ron Karenga,[9] culture can be defined in terms of that "very specific way for each people to celebrate themselves and introduce themselves to History and to the world". Therefore, culture encompasses a holistic content and meaning: for a specific people, their culture is about all that they *are* and all that they *have.* Beyond folklore, dance, music, culture refers to the set of ideas, knowledge systems and instrumentalities (institutional, scientific, technological and political) by means of which a people conceive and organise their relationship to space and time, in the process of production and reproduction of their existence and social life: economic activity as a whole, architecture, indigenous educational and health systems, principles and patterns of institutional and political organisation, etc. For a given people, culture includes amongst others: the best practices and examples set by immortal figures and lessons learned during the richest hours of their history, their generic worldview, basic principles of life and value systems, their language (s) and spirituality, their vision of Self and Other including generic mental images and archetypes etc.[10] In agreement with Karenga, Amilcar Cabral emphasises the importance of the culture of a people as *quintessence of the historical process* of that people; hence, the need and relevance of the *return to the sources* as basis for the African Renaissance project.[11]

1.4.2. Identity

For Cheikh Anta Diop, history and language represent two of the three key components of cultural identity, the third being a psychological (subjective) factor.[12] Historical conscience is crucial for the consolidation of national conscience and nation-building, particularly in the case of a pluri-cultural and multilingual nation in the making. Amongst others, historical conscience refers to the feeling of belonging to the same community from a historical and socio-political point of view, and above all, from the consciousness of commonly shared aspirations, interests and value systems: in Diop's words it is about that which distinguishes a cohesive *people* from the heterogeneous, inorganic population of a market.[13] The psychological factor is anchored in and substantiated by, a set of principles, value systems and worldviews, shared as common reference amongst all members of the same community. For Diop, it is about "the psychological and cultural invariants that political and social revolutions, even the most radical ones, leave intact, not only amongst the people, but amongst the very leaders of the revolution".[14]

1.4.3. Heritage

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has defined "cultural heritage" or "cultural property" in the following terms: "Cultural heritage may be defined as the entire corpus of material signs – either artistic or symbolic – handed on by the past to each culture and, therefore, to the whole of humankind. As a constituent part of the affirmation and enrichment of cultural identities, as a legacy belonging to all humankind, the cultural heritage gives each particular place its recognizable features and is the storehouse of human experience".[15] The preservation and the presentation of the cultural heritage are, therefore, a cornerstone of any cultural policy.

From such a perspective, the preservation of cultural heritage further covers the non-physical cultural heritage, which includes the signs and symbols passed on by oral transmission, artistic and literary forms of expression, languages, ways of

life, myths, beliefs and rituals, value systems and traditional knowledge and know-how.

UNESCO's approach emphasises in particular, the concept of *intangible heritage* which Africa is well endowed with: the term "cultural heritage" has changed content considerably in recent decades, partially because of the instruments developed by UNESCO. Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also "includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts". It is worthwhile noting that "The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next." And that "While fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization" inasmuch as "An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life."

UNESCO's approach also stresses that intangible heritage is traditional, contemporary and living at the same time: "intangible cultural heritage does not only represent inherited traditions from the past but also contemporary rural and urban practices in which diverse cultural groups take part", in addition to its representativity and the fact that it is community-based: "intangible cultural heritage is not merely valued as a cultural good, on a comparative basis, for its exclusivity or its exceptional value. It thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or to other communities". Therefore, "intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it - without their recognition, nobody

else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage".[16]

1.4.4. Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are made of the sum total, categories and systems of knowledge together with their systems of acquisition, transmission and validation as well as the areas and modalities of their application. As a key component located at the very epicentre of culture, IKS play an irreplaceable role amongst the set of "ideas, knowledge systems and instrumentalities (institutional, scientific, technological and political) by means of which a people conceive and organise their relationship to space and time, in the process of production and reproduction of their existence and social life". From such a viewpoint, indigenous knowledge is not only about practices in the areas of, for example, "economic activity as a whole, architecture, indigenous educational and health systems" or institution-building.

Indigenous knowledge also encompasses peoples' endogenous discourses, orders of discourses and speech registers on their own practices in the areas of ontology (theory on the being), cosmology (discourses on the origin and structures of the world and the universe), sociology (study of societies), anthropology (study of human beings, their specificity and relations), axiology (concerned with values and value systems), epistemology (conditions and means of knowledge production) and eschatology (conceptions on the hereafter and the "life" beyond death).[17] Over the past two decades, research on IKS has gained momentum in the area of international and African scholarship, Paulin Hountondji being one of the leading African scholars in this area.

Through various initiatives, Hountondji and the Centre Africain des Hautes Etudes (CAHE) based at the University of Agbomey-Calavi have made crucial contributions to the study and documentation on African IKS.[18] These initiatives aim at a de-marginalisation and critical re-appropriation of IKS, by finding a common ground with so-called "modern science" – "that of the laboratories, universities and hospitals" – on the

basis of the same parameters and criteria. Indeed, the most fitting approach for the study of IKS is that which looks at them from the perspective of knowledge production, knowledge being understood in its widest sense: including not only *stricto sensu* knowledge, but also know-how and the related norms as well as the modes of preservation and transmission of such knowledge in its various forms.[19]

From such a perspective, the concept of IKS includes the following areas, activities and processes: pre-colonial technologies such as primary iron metallurgy, food production technologies, traditional procedures of "rain-making", endogenous systems of thought and technical procedures on, for example, numeracy, calculation of probabilities with applications in the area of geomancy and divination, pharmacopeia, taxonomies as reflected in African lexicons on animals, indigenous conceptions on mental health and disorders together with healing methods and practices, "mystical" practices, the respective roles of writing and orality in the transmission of knowledge and intellectual heritage, amongst others. At least three major conclusions can be inferred from the study on IKS: first, the field of what is knowledgeable is not limited to the only physical environment; secondly, "the so-called scientific conception of the world is but one worldview amongst others that are all as legitimate"; thirdly, "Western rationality is but one historical form amongst other possible historical forms of rationality in general".[20]

1.5. Outline of chapters

The outline of this publication is based on and, in no way could be dissociated with, the main thrust and logical framework of the original AHRS, despite obvious differences. The contents of the volume are distributed into a total of ten chapters.

Chapter One is the general introduction of the book by the editor. It outlines the purpose, objectives as well as the methodology and theoretical approach of the original study whose outcomes this book endeavours to expand on and disseminate to help junior researchers and the general public

understand and deal with issues related to African heritage and cultural identities.

Chapter Two, by S Ndlovu-Gatsheni and SB Mboup, offers an overview of the ethno-linguistic landscape on the African continent, based on a critical review of the problem of language classification. The chapter stresses the importance of cross-border languages and related ethno-cultural communities, with an interesting discussion on lessons from the *Linguistic Atlas of Tanzania* project. This chapter comprises a section based on notes and Swahili to English translations by J Taji from the *Languages of Tanzania* (LOT) project co-coordinated by Rugemalira JM and Muzale HRT.

Scanning and profiling African ethno-cultural communities is the purpose of Chapter Three. In this chapter, *Koro* Diouldé Laya, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, with contributions from Tiemtore, who provided quality briefing and analysis notes compiled from information collected, processed and carefully organised, deal with the linguistic connections and socio-cultural and anthropological realities in three areas: the distribution of cultural and linguistic groups in southern Africa, in addition to Bantu-centralised socio-political formations in Eastern and Central Africa, and on peoples, polities and socio-economic formations in West and West-Central Africa. The main sources used to compile the last section were *Koro* Dioulde Laya's invaluable notes and works, and Ki-Zerbo's *Histoire de l'Afrique Noire*, interviews and discussions with Prof Doulaye Konaté in Bamako having also helped to shed light on some of the issues dealt with in this section, by replacing them in their context or looking at them from different angles.

Chapter Four by Mboup deals with key factors and dynamics of socio-historical change of the African narrative. Amongst other issues, the chapter examines the impact of endogenous vs. exogenous factors, with emphasis on, for example, the relevance of what Kotto Essome calls the "forgotten geography of soils and peoples", including: the role performed by the Sahara as a natural bridge between rather than a dividing factor amongst, for example, African peoples living north and south of its shores, the importance of routes

of migrations and strategic trade routes, the significant role of polities such as the Empire of Mali, the impact of Islam and slavery on social formation processes in East Africa and the Indian Ocean, the process of Semitisation and its importance in zones of confluence and inter-cultural dialogue and conflict such as the Maghreb-Machrek, the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia and the Borderlands (from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea), with Sudan as a case study on the historico-political and socio-cultural dynamics encountered in such zones of confluence and elsewhere on the African continent.

Chapter Five, authored by Yoporeka Somet and Jose Do Nascimento, with a contribution from Mboup stresses and documents the primacy and permanence of African agency. The chapter builds from the results of analyses of major trends and landmarks of the African narrative in which the Bantu and Swahili realities and identities have played a key role, according to many sources such as Walter Rodney's seminal work *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. The chapter further sheds light on the reality of the *Africanity* of Sudan and its cultural heritage, and the importance of places like the Sankore university in Timbuktu, a city whose educational system in the fourteenth century was, according to J. Ki-Zerbo, "more advanced than in most European cities". Mention is also made of the relationships of Africans and their interlocutors in antiquity in which, as stressed by Babacar Diop *Buuba* quoting Herodotus, "Africans had the first initiative in their dealings with other peoples". The second section of Chapter Five, arguably the most consistent part of the chapter, delves extensively on Africa's heritage in the area of philosophy and knowledge production (by Somet), emphasis being put, amongst others, on: the Egyptian sources of philosophy, elements of Egyptian and African cosmogonies, African endogenous knowledge and educational systems and Africa's pioneering role in the history of writing, in addition to African concepts of the State, by Do Nascimento.

Under the title "Preservation, Re-Invention of African Heritage, Survival of Diaspora Communities", Chapter Six, compiled by Mboup, starts by looking at the concepts of Africanism(s) and Africanity (or Africanness), their significance

and relevance, and their interconnectedness with the concept of *African Africa*. This is followed by an examination of two distinct, conflicting historical factors: the impact of slave trade and chattel slavery on the one side and, on the other side, the significance of anti-slavery struggles as a key factor in the search for an alternative African historical conscience and an expression of African *Ubuntu* (personality, identity), throughout the permanent resistance against oppression and cultural erasure on the continent, as well as throughout the *Middle Passage* and in the *New World*.

The chapter revisits and documents various episodes and aspects of the saga of the glorious epic of the *Fighting Maroons*, as a vast, uninterrupted movement of resistance and search for statehood, nationhood and *Ubuntu* that spans from the Caribbean to the south of the USA through "Latin America", over more than five centuries, the independent communities founded by these African freedom fighters ranging from small bands that would survive for less than a year to powerful and well-organised states that lasted several generations, as was the case with the legendary Republic of Palmares in Brazil as well as other polities in Guyana and above all, Haiti, whose independence was proclaimed on 1 January 1804 and defended against a politico-military coalition of Western imperialist powers.

The analysis further stresses the gender dimensions of the struggle and role of African women who represented at least one third of the cargoes uprooted from Africa, having also played a fundamental role in the socio-economic and socio-cultural spheres of life (education, defence of the African family as an institution, perpetuation of African religions and languages), as well as in the multifaceted resistance against the slave system in general, including in the leadership of the armed resistance and the *quilombist* movement. Finally, the chapter puts emphasis on the cultural continuity between Africa and the Diaspora through a great diversity of *Africanisms* including, for example, aspects of popular culture in Jamaica, the significance and relevance of Rastafari as a genuine, powerful expression of Pan-Africanism, and the establishment of places of memory and meditation as landmarks in the cartography of African

resistance in the Diaspora, such as the *Citadelle* built by King Henry Christophe at Cap Haitien, as another example of that unwavering, unbreakable spirit of survival and resilience of people of African descent in their commitment to freedom, *Ubuntu* and nationhood.

Chapter Seven, by Babacar Diop and Mboup, discusses from a comparative perspective, the generic features of African peoples' identities and heritage with a focus on their commonalities. It is illustrative of what Obenga has termed a (historical, cultural, anthropological) phenomenon of "Egypto-Nubian dispersal" with at least two lessons stemming from the scrutiny of the Senegalese case. There is, first, the role and significance of the Wolof entity: not a distinct ethnic community as such in the opinion of Cheikh Anta Diop, but rather as a linguistic and cultural melting pot and commonly-shared space and lingua franca that in many respects, "belong to no one while, at the same time, belonging to all", secondly, the possibility to glimpse at the whole African narrative beyond the portrayal of Senegal as an *Africa in miniature*, as is also the case with places like Cameroon: one important historico-cultural hub as point both of arrival and secondary (sometimes tertiary) dispersal of peoples' migrations.

The nature and status of the Walaf entity in the Senegambian space and beyond is quite a contested issue, with a growing number of Senegalese historians and scholars adhering to the idea of a distinct Walaf entity and/or ethnic identity, alongside other ethnic entities such as the Fulani, Seereer, Mandinka, Joolaa, Soninke etc. Omar Kane may be quoted as one major contributor to this debate. Kane's works have shed some light on, amongst others, the diverse (including) Walaf origins and identities of the Toucouleur S*ebbe* (Warriors): A dominant class or caste of political district administrators in the Fuuta Tooro; most of them being "former Wolof chiefs appointed by the *Buur ba* (Kings, Emperors) in the mid-fifteenth century, following the integration of Fuuta into the Jolof Empire under Thioukli Njiklaan Sarré Ndiaye"[21]. However, it is worthwhile noting how the Walaf, Soninke, Seereer, and Soose (Mandinka) elements, upon settling in Fuuta, "adopted the local language

and the sedentary agrarian lifestyle – cultivating the lands of *Jéeri* and *Waalo*, engaging in fishing and hunting – while retaining their family names" (patronyms), and preserving their original cultural ethos synonymous with a "taste for weapons and military exploits".[22]

In all cases, we may retain as being of key importance, the following commonalities that bind African peoples together: a) linguistic and cultural affinities and similarities; b) religious worldviews and spirituality; c) main features of African social formations and *muntucracies*. They include conceptions and practices of power and authority, gender dimensions of leadership, as well other constitutional principles and underlying values such as *Ubuntu* ("humanity", "humanness" / "humaneness") and *Maat* (Universal Harmony or African Code of cardinal virtues), as encountered in, for example, modes and patterns of state and social organisation, the culture of peace, diplomacy and conflict prevention and resolution, and the administration of justice, with illustrations through a few samples of good practices and governance lessons.

In Chapter Eight, Mboup looks at peoples' cultural heritage and identities from a contrastive standpoint through an overview rather than an exhaustive inventory and analysis of, specificities and differences noticeable between ethno-linguistic communities and areas of civilisations, with special attention dedicated to factors and realities such as the impact of "great traditions", and specificities in the socio-economic formations, or about conceptions and practices on gender and matrimony. After assessing the combined impact of ethnicity, religion, language, as well as the differential impact of certain leaders and/or institutional reforms, the scanning of the relations between the Baganda and their neighbours provides an interesting case study that closes the chapter.

As logical follow-up to chapters Seven and Eight dealing respectively with commonalities (Chapter Seven) vs. specificities and differences (Chapter Eight) in peoples' socio-cultural heritage and identities, Chapter Nine is a recapitulative synthesis of major findings and conclusions. However, it is obvious that, far from exhaustive, this synthesis is but indicative, as the

topics listed in this chapter are only a recapitulation of major findings and conclusions, some of which at least partially being mentioned or reflected elsewhere, including in previous sections of this volume.

Chapter Ten by Mboup draws from rich corpora of works and publications encountered on the continent and in the Diaspora on the need and urgency to claim back the epistemological initiative, sovereignty and spaces. A few analyses and insights make reference to some of the editor's work such as lectures, modules taught and research conducted over several decades; some of this work having been used in support of activities and initiatives in the areas of academic citizenship and community outreach and engagement, for example, to make a submission to the South African Ministerial Advisory Panel on African Languages in Higher Education (MAPALHE).[23] Chapter Ten is something of an epilogue or postface dealing with what was already stressed or implicit from the beginning, including the approach and methodology used in the conduct of the study that this book derives from.

The focus of the chapter is on the relevance of the search for alternative theoretical models to questionable dominant paradigms on the question of African heritage as far as culture, knowledge and language are concerned. It stresses the importance of institutional spaces in academia for the promotion of an alternative paradigm for the study of African realities, indigenous languages and knowledge systems, as well as in other areas of humanities and social sciences. The chapter stresses the relevance of (works on) *Afrikology* in the search for new ways of understanding the object of study for this book project. It shows that to achieve this goal requires, in African scholarship, to critically assess, and to own and mainstream the legacy of Cheikh Anta Diop and the African school of thought as a prism for an alternative vision of reality and the world. The epilogue draws conclusions consistent with major findings detailed in earlier chapters, whilst attempting to pave the way forward, by identifying and exploring possible pathways and problems open for discussion and future research.

On the outline of chapters and the space dedicated to them, a distinction needs to be made between two different chapters. There are, first, chapters that focus on the presentation and detailed description of the main object of study of the book: i.e. the realities, contexts, entities most relevant to the ethnogenesis and linguistic and cultural mapping in different regions in Africa and the Diaspora. These chapters (e.g. chapters Two, Three, Six) shed light on the great diversity of polities and social formations, on the basis of analyses of the processes, realities, facts, used to document them.

The second set of chapters is generally more synthetic or conclusive. They consist in summative and synthetic recapitulations of insights about main findings and lessons drawn from sharper analyses of and a deeper reflexion on, the issues and realities that form part of the core object of study. This is obviously the main thrust of Chapter Nine; this is also, to some extent, the case of previous chapters on key factors and dynamics of socio-historical change of the African narrative (Chapter Four), on the primacy and permanence of African agency (Chapter Five), as well as chapters Seven and Eight, which present comparative and contrastive analyses and views on the generic features of peoples' identities and heritage, respectively.

1.6. Targeted audiences and implications for the thrust of the book

The various categories of audiences targeted by this book, each one with specific purposes, must be borne in mind in order to better understand what its main thrust is all about. In this regard, it should be stressed, first, that the book's content was compiled with a view to providing a carefully researched historical and anthropological framework together with theoretical landmarks and research tools, to African junior researchers including those in think-tanks, as well as to general readers of African history and thought, and scholars interested in the anthropology of African societies.

One of the contributions which the authors of the book hope to make is to be a well documented presentation on the

concept of African cultural heritage: one with a solid historical perspective and rich anthropological background, and be comprehensive enough to take full stock of the key importance of language and linguistic affinities, as well as the primacy and permanence of African agency, the realities of what Ki Zerbo calls an African *sui generis* mode of production, the importance of pre-existing great traditions, their impact on group identities, whilst acknowledging the relevance of ecology and of interconnectedness between common history and value systems and social morphology as well as with the different configurations of institutional tessitura and peoples' lifestyles.

The study of cultural heritage in the African context is thus made through the exploration of other research pathways and topics with specific problems related to the impact of key historical factors such as the role of the Bantu, in addition to those played by the Sahara and the development and diffusion of agriculture and metallurgy, without forgetting either the role of certain strategic and trade routes and economic metropoles, or the importance of migrations of peoples (e.g. Fulani, Bantu, Mande), besides the relevance of Swahili realities and identities, and the significance of the *Africanity* of Sudan and its cultural heritage, as part of that "forgotten geography" of soils and peoples as stressed by Kotto Essomé.

Beyond the book's didactic purpose, emphasis is put, sometimes implicitly, on the centrality and relevance of cultural heritage as a core determinant, beyond traditional *economistic* or *developmentalist* approaches, for any project for Africa's transformation. This approach presents itself in terms of a re-foundation of Africa's social fabrics, and reformatting of the hearts and mindsets of African populations, especially the youth, women and the toiling masses, back into self-knowledge, self-love and respect and confidence in their capacities to take their destiny in their own hands, which is more consistent with African Renaissance as a project of society and civilisation.

The book uses tested information and data from reliable sources available, including research and publications rooted in multi- and interdisciplinarity, by a great diversity of authors such as Bethwell Ogott, G Mokhtar, J F Ade Ajayi, A Adu Boahen,

Theophile Obenga, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Ali A Mazrui, Djibril Tamsir Niane, Adama Ba Konare, Herman Batibo, Dioulde Laya, C Wondji, Doulaye Konaté, Kotto Essomé, Pathé Diagne, M Elfasi, Sékéné Mody Cissoko, Dani Wadada Nabudere and others, some of whom having made, alongside Cheikh Anta Diop, seminal contributions to the eight (plus one) volume *General History of Africa* including its complementary collection *Texts and Documents*. Significant contributions to the content of the book also include unique sources of great quality by Herman Batibo on Bantu cultural history,[24] and *Koro* Diouldé Laya, whose interviews and unpublished works have allowed, inter alia, to document linguistic connections and socio-cultural and anthropological realities in the Western and West-Central polities and social formations frameworks.

The intention with this volume was to make a contribution to the argument about the need to break away from the trend of fragmented perspectives and "dispersal of contents" critiqued by Obenga: a trend that was imposed for some reasons, as an entrenched if not dominant tradition in African scholarship, through the proliferation of monographs and case studies to the detriment of works of generalisation. What certainly makes this book significant has, thus, to do with the strong advocacy for the need for an option for epistemic *De-coloniality* and *Afrikology* as cornerstone for an *intentional sciences* paradigm driven by a more holistic, Afrocentric, interdisciplinary approach to scholarship and research on cultural heritage in various African regions including the Diaspora.

Such an option has the potential to create conditions for the production, out of the (too) many monographs and case studies in, for example, the area of social and human sciences including theoretical and descriptive linguistics, as well as linguistic and cultural anthropology, of (a) theoretical endogenous model(s) that will allow to bridge the prevailing gaps in the description, documentation and (re) classification of (Southern) African indigenous languages and knowledge systems as encountered in, for example, Greenberg's and Malcolm Guthrie's classificatory models of African and Bantu languages.

There are also the ways in which complex and/or contentious issues are dealt with in African scholarship. The said issues include, for example, the study of the impact of cultural heritage on individual and collective identities and generic images of Self and Other, in correlation with the history, sociology and political economy of group relations, particularly in specific areas of our continent. Some of such areas like East Africa and the Indian Ocean, and zones of confluence around the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa or the Sahelo-Saharan *Borderlands* fringe form part of Africa's continental mass and/or of its strategic depth, in the case of offshore islands like Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius (even Cabo Verde), and whereby ethnicity, slavery and/or religion including Islam have played an important part as key determinants in shaping group relations and generic images of Self and Other, as well as in processes of (re) configuration (s), of the institutional tessitura of a great diversity of polities and socio-economic formations; hence, the need for inter-disciplinary platforms of dialogue on such complex, contentious issues and others, as advocated for in the postface or epilogue.

Finally, African names were transcribed using preferably the 1978 African Reference Alphabet, although orthographic discrepancies were unavoidable when, for instance, the same names appear written differently in quotes and bibliographical references in a different language that were consulted to compile this volume. The use of italics (for example, non-English words and expressions) and capitals was another issue: in this case, the same principle of consistency with the source and norms of the language of origin was followed as much as possible.

Endnotes

1 Assignment Brief, AHRS working document, 2013.
2 Brief, p. 3.
3 Cf. *Mélanges d'Archéologie, d'Histoire et de Littérature*, Université de Dakar (UCAD), Faculté des Sciences Humaines, Presses Universitaires, 2000, pp. 293-300.
4 Cf. Diagne, P., *L'Europhilosophie face à la Pensée du Négro-africain*, Dakar, Éd. Sankoré, 1981.
5 Cf. Falola, Toyin (ed.), *Tradition and Change in Africa. The Essays of J. F. Ade. Ajayi,* Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press, Inc., 2000, pp. 165/174.
6 id., p. 158.
7 Ibid.
8 Sithole, Mpilo Pearl, *Unequal Peers – The Politics of Discourse Management in the Social Sciences*, Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa, 2009, p. 2.
9 Karenga, Ron 1987, Communication to the FESPAC Colloquium in Dakar, in Jan. 1987.
10 Mboup, Samba Buri, 2011, "An African cultural Renaissance perspective on constitutionalism, democracy, peace, justice and shared values: challenges and stakes for statehood and nation building", in Gutto, SBO Jan. 2011 (ed.), *Shared Values, Constitutionalism and Democracy in Africa*, Johannesburg, Fortune-Africa Publishing, 2008, chapter 4, 69-84. This is a compilation of research papers and proceedings of a workshop on Constitutionalism, Democracy, Peace, Justice, Reconciliation and Shared Values in Africa, organised by International IDEA in collaboration with the Dept. of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission and the Institute of African Renaissance Studies, University of South Africa (Unisa), 6-7 Dec. 2010.
11 Cabral, Amilcar, *Return to the Source*, London [New York], Monthly Review Press, 1973, p. 42.
12 Diop, Cheikh Anta, *Civilization or Barbarism. An Authentic Anthropology*, Foreword by John Henrik Clarke, New York, Lawrence Hill Books, 1991, pp. 211-219.
13 Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism*..., p. 212.
14 Diop, Idem, p. 218.
15 See: UNESCO, Draft Medium-Term Plan 1990-1995 (25 C/4), 1989, p. 57.
16 UNESCO, id.
17 These were amongst the range of issues discussed during interviews on African scholarship on IKS, at CAHE headquarters in Porto-Novo and in Cotonou, between Prof Hountondji and other CAHE team members on the one hand, and on the other hand, the AHRS team coordinator and editor of this volume, first in March 2007 and thereafter in May 2013.
18 Hountondji, P. J. (ed.), *L'Ancien et le Nouveau – La Production du Savoir dans l'Afrique d'Aujourdhui*, Porto-Novo, Centre Africain des Hautes Etudes, 2009.
19 Hountondji, id., p. 16.
20 Hountondji, id. pp. 12-15.

21 Cf. Kane, Omar, *La première hégémonie peule. Le Fuuta Tooro de Koli Tenguella à Almaami Abdul*, Paris, Karthala, Feb. 2005.
Bringing greater clarity on the nature and status of the Walaf entity is one of the priorities in the work of the commission and research programme on the ethnogenesis and linguistic and cultural cartography that I am coordinating, within the General History of Senegal initiative: an issue whose degree of complexity requires the careful, critical scrutiny of a considerable amount of facts from a cross-disciplinary approach that, amongst others, dedicates great attention to the key relevance of linguistic evidence, whilst acknowledging the heuristic value of the study of geography, temporality and migration patterns, in association with onomastic data, as well as peoples' lifestyles, belief systems and modes of social and political organisation.

22 Bringing greater clarity on the nature and status of the Walaf entity is one of the priorities in the work of the commission and research programme on the ethnogenesis and linguistic and cultural cartography that I am coordinating, within the General History of Senegal initiative: an issue whose degree of complexity requires the careful, critical scrutiny of a considerable amount of facts from a cross-disciplinary approach that, amongst others, dedicates great attention to the key relevance of linguistic evidence, whilst acknowledging the heuristic value of the study of geography, temporality and migration patterns, in association with onomastic data, as well as peoples' lifestyles, belief systems and modes of social and political organisation.

23 Cf. Mboup, Samba Buri 2011, *Submission for the establishment of a National Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences*, Pretoria, 30 October 2011.

24 See: Chapter Three of this volume.

Chapter Two

An Overview of the Ethno-Linguistic Landscape

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2.1. Classification of African languages

It has been accepted, since Saussure and his *Course in General Linguistics*, that genetic relatedness between languages spoken by different peoples is the most pertinent and indisputable proof of the existence of cultural ties between the peoples who speak such languages. Genetic relatedness is revealed using the approach of comparative and historical linguistics, historical linguistics being based on the study of changes that affect the overall system of a given language, during its development in time and space.

One major breakthrough in the area of classification of African languages was registered with the publication in 1963 of Joseph Greenberg's book entitled *Languages of Africa*[1] which has become a basic reference that cannot be overlooked on the subject of classification of African languages, and this despite its limitations. Basically, Greenberg distinguishes four major language families in Africa: a) Congo-Kordofan or

Niger-Kordofan; b) Afro-Asiatic; c) Nilo-Sahara; d) KhoiSan / Khoi-San.

The Afro-Asiatic family was formerly called Chamito-Semitic).[2] This language family would include, according to Greenberg's outline: i) Berber; ii) Cushitic; iii) ancient Egyptian; iv) Semitic; v) Chadic (Hausa and other languages spoken near Lake Chad).

The Nilo-Sahara family, which has been the focus of much of Greenberg's attention and interest, consists of six major branches: Songhai; Saharian; Maban; Fur; Koman and Chari Nile.

The Niger-Kordofan family (or Congo-Kordofan) consists of two major branches or sub-families. The first sub-family is the Niger-Congo sub-family, whose area of geographic extension corresponds roughly to the Senegal-Kenya-South Africa triangle, the Kordofan family that covers a more restricted area corresponding roughly to Eastern Sudan and including the entities of Koalib, Tegali, Talodi, Tumtum and Katla.

The Niger-Congo sub-family is subdivided into six language groups:

- West-Atlantic (Walaf / Wolof, Pulaar, etc.);
- Mande;
- Gur or Voltaic (Senufo, More, Dogon, etc.);
- Kwa (Yoruba, Igbo, Akan, etc.);
- Adamawa (Mbum, Lakka, Banda, etc.) and;
- Benue-Congo, Bantu languages being one of three subdivisions of the Benue-Congo complex.

Khoi languages are languages spoken by the Khoi and some San. Amongst other features, Khoi languages possess a system of three grammatical genders (feminine, masculine and common) and of three numbers (singular, plural and dual). By contrast, the morphology of the San languages is characterised, amongst other things, by the scarcity of prefixes, suffixes and infixes. One should recall the comparison made by WHI Bleek, in his work published in 1862 and in 1869, between Khoi languages and Bantu languages, in which he considers San languages as a distinct group, despite their degree of proximity with Khoi

languages. KhoiSan languages are, with those of the Pygmy communities like the Baka of the equatorial forest, amongst the most ancient of the African continent. Yet, Khoi and San languages are amongst the least-known to date.

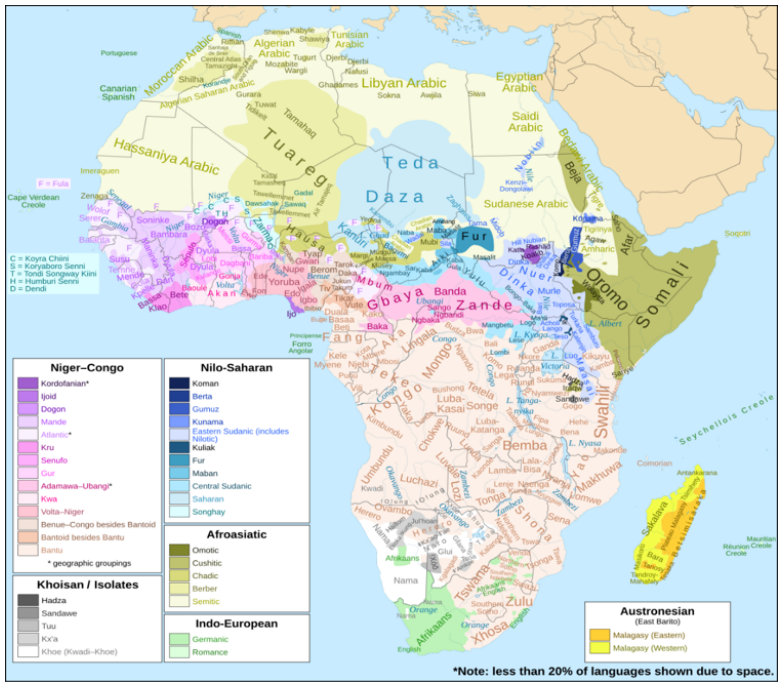


Figure 2.1: Linguistic Map Nº 1. Wikimedia Commons, file "Map of African languages.svg", author: SUM1, Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Map Nº 2 was developed by Théophile Obenga in 1973. This map is based on a thorough, convincing critique of J. Greenberg's classification of African languages. For a long time, the model proposed by Greenberg has served as a reference for the classification of African languages. And yet, as the Hungarian linguist Istvan Fodor has noted in his work on the classification of African languages,[3] Greenberg failed to observe a basic methodological rule: establishing phonetic correspondences in order to show genetic relatedness between two or several languages compared to one another.



Figure 2.2: Linguistic Map Nº 2. Source: Obenga, T. , L'Afrique dans l'Antiquité..., Paris, Présence Africaine,1973

Theophile Obenga and Cheikh Anta Diop applied themselves to filling the methodological gaps displayed in Greenberg's classification.[4] In a book entitled *Genetic Relationships between Pharaonic Egyptian and African Languages*, Cheikh Anta Diop, having shown in his previous work the basic historical and cultural unity of African peoples, resorted to the rule of phonological, morphological and semantic correspondences (thanks to which linguist F Bopp had shown the unity between Sanskrit, Germanic and Romanic languages within the large Indo-European family) in order to show the structural unity between Pharaonic Egyptian and African languages. In his turn,

Theophile Obenga supported and strengthened this thesis of Diop by adding more arguments to his scientific demonstration, notably in a paper read at the Cairo Colloquium, organised by UNESCO in January-February 1974 on the topic *The population of ancient Egypt and the deciphering of Meroitic script.*[5]

The following map (Nº 3) is based on an interpretation by the book editor of the classificatory scheme and map as proposed by Theophile Obenga.

In his paper to the Cairo Colloquium, Obenga questions the classification suggested by Greenberg, particularly regarding the so-called Afro-Asiatic family, showing that there is no genetic relation between Berber, Pharaonic Egyptian and Semitic, although all such languages were classified by Greenberg within this same "Afro-Semitic family". After rejecting the notion of *mixed language* and challenging arguments put forward by Greenberg to try and show, without success, a possible genetic linkage between Pharaonic Egyptian, Semitic and Berber, Diop and Obenga demonstrated the genetic relatedness between Egyptian (Pharaonic and Coptic) and the other African languages. In lieu of Greenberg's model on which their work relies, Diop and Obenga propose a classification model that identifies nine main linguistic families including:

1. two African minority groups: Berber and KhoiSan;
2. five large language families that include:
    - Egyptian: Pharaonic and Coptic;
    - Cushitic: Somali; Oromo ("Galla");[6] Saho; Danakil; Bishari;
    - Chadic: Hausa; Giziga and Matakam; Mandari; Musgu; Masa; Tuburi;
    - Niger-Kordofan (or Congo-Kordofan);
    - Nilo-Saharan, in addition to
    - two non-African entities: a) Semitic including Arabic in North Africa, besides other languages such as Amharinnya (Amharic) and Tigrinnya (Ethiopia); and b) Malagasy (spoken in Madagascar).

Be it emphasised that the *African-ness* criteria applies here to the languages and linguistic families on the basis of their genetic

relatedness, and not to the peoples who speak them as mother or father tongue: Ethiopian speakers of Amharic and Tigrinnya are also Africans like the Wolof-or IsiZulu speakers, despite the fact that Amharinnya and Tigrinnya are Semitic languages.

2.2. Cross-border languages and ethno-cultural communities

One feature characterising Africa is about the role of cross-border languages which are defined as "languages that are common to two or more states and domains straddling various usages".[7] Based on respective affinities across the African continent, the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) has, broadly speaking, identified such languages corresponding, somehow, to ethno-linguistic and cultural communities, the following being amongst the most widely spoken:

- Swahili (Eastern and Central Africa): Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, southern Somalia, Comoros, DRC, northern Mozambique and eastern and northern Malawi.
- Arabic (North Africa, Horn of Africa): Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Southern Sudan, Mauritania, Chad, Djibouti, Somalia and Eritrea.
- Fulfulde / Fula / Pulaar / Peu l/ Tukulor / Fulful / Fulbe / Fulani (West Africa): Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, and Central African Republic
- Nyanja and Chewa (southern Africa): Malawi, Zambia, northern Mozambique and Zimbabwe
- Afrikaans, Nguni and Sotho-Tswana[8] (southern Africa): South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Zimbabwe

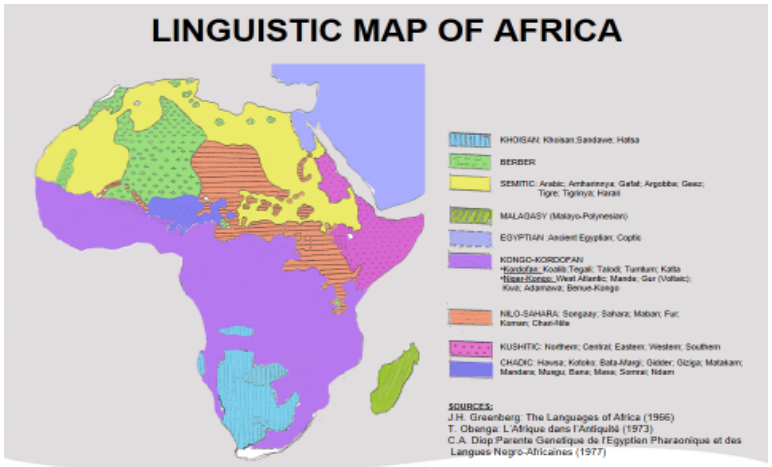


Figure 2.3: Linguistic Map Nº 3. Source: Obenga, Th., L'Afrique dans l'Antiquité, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1973 (chromatism, graphic interpretation by the book editor)

The above outline should be completed so as to include the following linguistic communities: Lingala (Central Africa), Hawsa / Hausa, Yoruba, Mandinka, Wolof (West Africa), Fang-Beti / Beti-Fang (Central Africa), in addition to Tamasheq / Berber (Sahelo-Saharan fringe and Maghreb-Mashrek).

The outline clearly indicates that while there are indeed differences in the socio-cultural and linguistic formations of Africa in general and southern Africa in particular, there are dominant similarities that not only enable us to identify broad language communities, the same similarities can also form the basis for Pan-African unity in general and regional integration in particular. Finex Ndhlovu has already dismissed the idea of Africa as having too many languages for it to be practical to use African languages for educational and wider social life. He argued that "plurilingualism" is in itself not a hindrance to continental unity.[9] Building on the work of historical and comparative linguistics as presented above, Ndhlovu emphasises that "most of the languages are variants of some core or proto-language and have very high degrees of mutual intelligibility to the extent that speakers of the different varieties can easily understand each other without resorting to interpretation."[10]

With specific reference to the southern African region, "the Sotho-Tswana cluster speakers of Sesotho of Lesotho, Northern and Southern Sotho of South Africa and Setswana of Botswana feel at home with each other's languages. The same applies to the Nguni varieties of the Zimbabwean Ndebele, siSwati of Eswatini, and IsiZulu and IsiXhosa of South Africa."[11] These linguistic affinities cannot be fully understood without a clear understanding of the dominant ethno-cultural formations that dominated southern Africa prior to colonialism. Below is a tabulation of the dominant languages in southern Africa and the Indian Ocean including those that were introduced through colonial encounters.

- Afrikaans (South Africa and Namibia);
- Arabic (Comoros);
- Bemba (Zambia; DRC);
- Chokwe (Angola);
- Diriku (Namibia);
- English (Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles, Eswatini, Zambia and Zimbabwe);
- French (Reunion, Seychelles, Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte);
- German (Namibia);
- Herero (Namibia);
- Kaonde (Zambia);
- Kongo / Kikongo / Kisikongo) (Angola and DRC);
- Kwangli (Namibia);
- Lozi (Zambia and Namibia);
- Lunda (Zambia and DRC);
- Luvale (Zambia);
- Malagasy (Madagascar);
- Mbukushu **(**Zambia and Namibia);
- Mbunda (Angola);
- Mbundu, North (Umbundu) (Angola);
- Mbundu, South (Kimbundu) (Angola);
- Nama (Namibia);
- Ndonga (Namibia);
- Ndebele (Southern and Northern): South Africa;
- Ndebele (Zimbabwe);

- Nyanja / Chewa (Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe);
- Oshiwambo / Kwanyama (Angola and Namibia);
- Portuguese (Angola and Mozambique);
- Seselwa Creole French (Seychelles);
- Somali (Somalia);
- Sesotho (Northern): Zambia and South Africa;
- Sesotho (Southern): Lesotho, South Africa and Zimbabwe;
- Shona (Zimbabwe);
- Swahili (Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique);
- SiSwati / Swazi (Eswatini and South Africa);
- Tonga (Zimbabwe and Zambia);
- Xitsonga / Shangaan (South Africa and Mozambique);
- Setswana (Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia);
- Tumbuka (Zambia);
- Tshivenda (South Africa and Zimbabwe);
- IsiXhosa (South Africa and Zimbabwe);
- IsiZulu (South Africa).

2.3. Lessons from the linguistic atlas of Tanzania and beyond[12]

Several scholars amongst whom M. Guthrie, J. Greenberg, D. Nurse and T. Spear, have classified Tanzanian languages. In Tanzania, four African language families are found. The first family is Niger Congo, which includes many of the Bantu languages, such as Sukuma, Nyamwezi, Ha, Gogo, Haya, etc.; the second family is that of Nilotic languages such as Luo and Maasai. The third family is that of Cushitic languages, which include such languages as Iraqw, Burunge, and Maa. The last family is that of Khoisan, which include languages like Sandawe, and Hadzabe / Hadza / Hatsa. Speakers of these languages arrived at different times and settled in various places in the country.

These languages differ significantly in terms of size. There are languages with more than five million speakers, such as Sukuma; there are those with an average size, about one million speakers but less than five million, such as Haya, Makonde, and

Gogo; there are languages with less than one hundred thousand speakers, which are the majority; and there are those very small languages with less than one thousand speakers. More than 85 per cent of these languages are Bantu languages, and the remaining 15 percent represent Nilotic, Kushitic, and Khoisan families. Most of these languages, especially in the Bantu zone, are very closely related.

After an overview on issues of classification, let us look now at their social use. The majority of Tanzanians, apart from using Swahili as a national language, also use their ethnic community language (ECLs) in their daily communications. These languages are mostly used in rural areas. For instance, when carrying out economic activities, especially agriculture, livestock keeping, and fishery, most Tanzanians communicate through ECLs. Since about 85% of Tanzanians are involved in agricultural activities, it is obvious that ECLs are very important to the economic development of Tanzania. Some communities, for example, sing songs in ECLs to motivate people to work during farming. When the song is sung together, it brings together the actions and inspires the workers to work in unity, not as individuals. The tone of a song inculcates the spirit of cooperation. In this way, people work fast, energetically, and efficiently.[13]

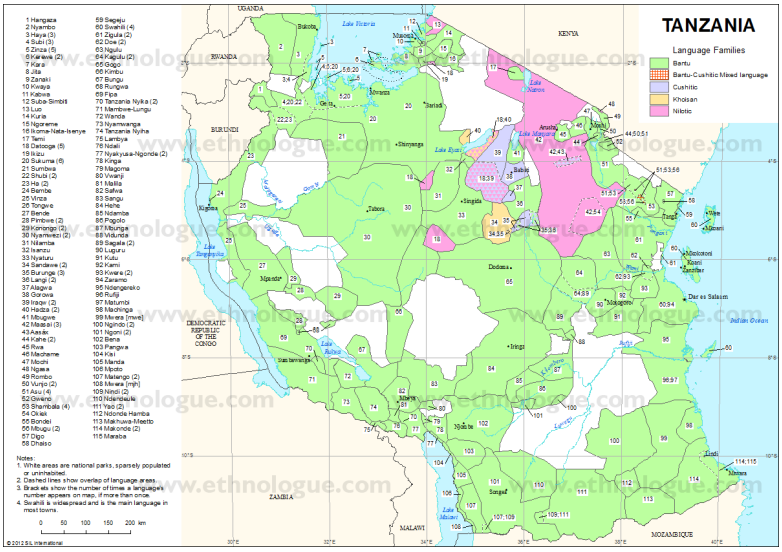


Figure 2.4: Language families in Tanzania. Source: www.ethnologue.com [Accessed: 29/12/2013].

Tanzanian ECLs also impart a lot of knowledge which can be used by their speakers in economic activities, traditional healing, worship, etc. Rubagumya (2008)[14] provides an example of the Ruhaya language spoken in Kagera region to explain how ECLs are heavily loaded with knowledge. A Ruhaya-speaker can distinguish more than twelve types of bananas together with the conditions and modalities of their use. Knowledge in ECLs is also imparted through proverbs, sayings, songs, and stories. All these carry an important message of informing and warning community members. Unfortunately, most of the ECLs are now facing the problem of limitations in their domains of use, while congestion of different languages is highly caused by community interaction along with urbanisation.

Endnotes

1 Greenberg, J., *Languages of Africa*, Indiana University, Bloomington and Mouton & Co, The Hague, 1966.

2 We shall see further in this volume, that the so-called Afro-Asiatic family is nothing but a linguistic ghost.

3 Cf : Fodor, Istvan, *Problems in the Classification of African Languages,* Budapest, Centre for Afro-Asian Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1966.

4 Diop, C. A., *Genetic Relationships between Pharaonic Egyptian and African Languages*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1974.

5 Cf. Obenga, T. 1978, "The genetic linguistic relationship between Egyptian (ancient Egyptian and Coptic) and modern Negro-African languages", in the proceedings of the Cairo Colloquium, published in 1978 by UNESCO in the General History of Africa collection Studies and Documents 1: (French version, pp. 64-72). Obenga further elaborated on these and others matters relevant to the research methodology on African history and cultural heritage, during an in-depth interview with the AHRS research team coordinator, in Brazzaville, on 27th April 2013.

6 « Galla» as both ethnonym and linguonym, seems to have been a derogatory name given to the Oromo community by neighbouring groups; hence the need, amongst other research tasks in African historiography, to focus on specific aspects of onomastics.

7 Cf. Report on ACALAN's Synthesis Conference on National Policies on the Role of Cross-Border Languages and the Place of Less Diffused Languages in Africa, ACALAN. 2009. In www.acalan.org/eng/accueli/synthese.pdf [Accessed 23 July 2013].

8 Reference is made here to the following sources: a) Batibo, H. M. 2005, "Language Decline and Death in Africa: Causes, Consequences and Challenges", Clevedon, *Multilingual Matters*; b) Prah, K. K. 1998. *Between Distinction and Extinction: The Harmonization and Standardization of African Languages*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press; c) Marui, A. A. & Mazrui, A. M., 1998. *The Power of Babel: Language and Governance in the African Experience*, London, James Currey Ltd.

9 Ndhlovu, F. 2011. 'Proposing a Language-Based Framework for the Form and Structure of a United States of Africa.' in *South African Journal of African Languages*. 3(2), pp. 243-253.

10 Ndhlovu, F. 2011. Idem, p. 248.

11 Ndhlovu, F. 2011, idem.

12 Cf. Notes and Swahili to English translations by J Taji from the *Languages of Tanzania* (LOT) project co-coordinated by Rugemalira, J M and Muzale, H R T University of Dar es Salaam, Dpt. of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, 2008.

13 Mtavangu, N. 2008, "*Occasional papers in Linguistics*", contributions to the Languages of Tanzania project, Dar es Salaam.

14 Rubagumya, C. 2008, Contributions to the Languages of Tanzania project, id.

Chapter Three

Scanning and Profiling African Ethno-Cultural Communities

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There are a great variety and diversity of pre-colonial African polities and socio-economic formations with their own organisational systems: most of the Khoe-San (also spelled Khoi-San, Khoesan, Khoisan, and referred to themselves as "Khoikhoi") people, for example, like staying in scattered bands of no more than 30 people. They have no centralised forms of leadership like the Bantu who may have chiefs and kings, etc.

3.1. Distribution of cultural and linguistic groups in southern Africa

Southern Africa is understood as a geo-historical formation conterminous with the geographical space covered by the SADC (Southern African Development Community) member states

of Angola, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. As noted by Finex Ndhlovu, such a definition of southern Africa best suits the investigation of cross-border ethno-linguistic and cultural issues as they cascaded from the pre-colonial times.[1] A combination of pre-colonial historical realities of migration, settlement and conflict, and colonial encounters, the role of the processes of "the scramble for Africa" and the "partition of Africa", produced complex ethno-cultural and linguistic dynamics and configurations groupings in the whole of the African continent and in this region.

3.1.1. The earliest socio-economic-cultural and political formations

Archaeologists and pre-historians have identified hunting and foraging as constituting the earliest form of socio-economic formation in southern Africa, if not the whole of Africa.[2] This earliest form of socio-economic activity meant that "people were more closely linked to their environment than they are now."[3] The earliest people who lived by hunting and foraging in southern Africa are the San and the Khoikhoi.[4] What seems to emerge in the specific context of southern Africa is that the "communities all began as hunter-gathers, then evolved into nomadic pastoralists, and later into agriculturalists".[5]

The San and Khoikhoi peoples sometimes blended under the ethnonym Khoi-San / Khoisan were identified by archaeologists and historians as the earliest and indigenous people of southern Africa. But it is important for analytical purposes to desegregate the San from the Khoikhoi because the former had no cattle whereas the later had cattle.[6] This point is confirmed by the historian John Omer-Cooper, who wrote that "The San were a hunting and gathering people who practiced no agriculture and kept no domestic animals except dogs".[7] The San people were a typical example of a hunting and foraging community whose property was basically hunting tools. They lived through extraction of necessities of life directly from their

environment. What they extracted from the environment were wild game animals and wild plant food as well as procuring of fish and shellfish. The other name for the San is *AbaThwa* (short people, a name given to them by the Bantu), while Europeans called them the *Bushmen*, all these being derogatory denominations.[8]

The tools used by the San were made of stone; hence, they were constitutive of the Stone Age socio-economic formation. The most advanced stone technology was the *microlithic* tools that were carefully shaped to perform various functions.[9] Socially, the San existed and lived as small hunting bands without sophisticated political organisation beyond the rule of band elders. The division of labour was very basic, with men performing the hunting using bows and arrows and women collecting wild bulbs, tubers and fruits.[10] The San built no permanent homes beyond simple and temporary shelters and the use of caves. Governance was simple "face-to-face" mediated by male members of the band. Nevertheless, each San group did in fact have a leader, usually the male head of the main family. He made the final decision about things like when to move camp. He was also the guardian of the camp's fire, which was considered to be sacred.

What also distinguished the San as a people was their religion. Because they depended so much for their life on environment, it is not surprising that: "They believed every valley, hill and stream was inhabited by a guardian spirit".[11] This means that their sense of being was intensely intertwined with nature. This ensured that they co-existed with nature very well. They never defined nature as a natural resource available for exploitation in anyway. What also distinguished the San as a people is that they were excellent artists, as evidenced by their rock paintings.[12] There are a number of values that can be gleaned from this analysis of the San way of life. The first is that of social unity as an essential pre-requisite for success in hunting. The second is respect for the environment and nature, from which they extracted necessities of life. The third is egalitarianism that distinguished the San social formations. The

final is the principle of reciprocity that ensured peaceful sharing of food within the group.

The second group of earliest socio-cultural-economic formation was constituted by the Khoi Khoi, who actually co-existed with the San. In all probability, the Khoi Khoi "began as a community of San who were in close contact with Bantu-speaking cattle keepers and adopted pastoralism from them".[13] Historians and archaeologists who preferred to lump together the San and the Khoi Khoi called them the *Khoisan.* But there are differences in physical appearance, stature, lifestyle and culture, between the two communities. The Khoi people were also distinguishable from the San by their mode of production: they were pastoralists who kept cattle and sheep.[14] The accumulation and ownership of property in the form of cattle by the Khoi Khoi modified not only the relations of production but also the broader structure of society. As noted by Barnard, the Khoi Khoi society became stratified, that is, they became hierarchised and patrilineal with complicated inheritance rules.[15] Herding of cattle became the domain of men as the Khoi Khoi made a transition from hunting and foraging into pastoralism.

Politically, the Khoi Khoi became organised into chiefdoms of considerable institutional sophistication. A collection of clans constituted the chiefdom. At the apex of power was a chief. But the Khoi Khoi chiefdoms were not strong enough to contain the breaking away of families and clans. Cattle accumulation and ownership played a major role in ensuring the loyalty of clients to a wealthy chief. In reality, ownership of cattle had profound socio-political implications for the earliest social formations of southern Africa. It enabled both sedentarism and seasonal nomadism. It meant that societies began to accumulate a surplus form of wealth. It enabled hierarchisation of society, with men climbing up the socio-political ladder while consolidating patriarchal power structures. Institutionally, a new settled and politically sophisticated society was in the making, predicated on a different mode of production.

But the ownership of cattle by the Khoi Khoi did not mean that they completely abandoned hunting and gathering. Those Khoi Khoi who lost cattle as a result of vagaries of nature easily

reverted to a hunting and gathering mode of life. Likewise, the San, who managed to acquire cattle easily, joined the category of Khoi Khoi community with their lifestyle. However, the arrival of the Bantu-speaking people had far more radical changes to the existing socio-economic and political formations of southern Africa.

In summary, from an anthropological viewpoint, Khoi people (improperly called "Hottentots"), including the Nama of Namibia, are groups of pastoral nomads who farm cattle and sheep and have a highly developed socio-political system. Whereas for the San, the basic unit of social organisation is the hunting group. the San farm neither crops nor cattle, and some of them speak languages that are very close to Khoi languages.

3.1.2. The Bantu

One major source for this section was Batibo's inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Botswana:[16] indeed a seminal contribution to *Bantuistics*.

3.1.2.1. Glimpses of Bantu cultural history

For Batibo "it is the lexical stock or vocabulary which is the most important custodian of cultural experiences in a given ethno-linguistic group": both basic vocabulary and cultural vocabulary. Batibo also takes stock of archaeological findings concerning the existence both of a Western stream and an Eastern stream in the migration patterns of the Bantu peoples. Through vocabulary, most items of which many still exist in present-day Setswana, albeit with changes in their sound structures, Batibo paints a vivid picture of ancestral Bantu-speakers' ecosystem, in their early habitats with precise indications on the fauna and flora:

"Basically, the ancestral Bantu-speakers in their early eastward and southward diaspora from Cameroon 3,500 years ago, according to the inferred cultural data, were dwellers of the rain forest and later of savannah areas with wide stretches of bush. They lived in environments with various species of palm trees. The wild life consisted mainly of the lion (*n-cimba*), genet, jackal, hyena (*m-piti*), elephant (*n-jogu*) and numerous kinds of antelopes (*n-kudu, m-pala*), leopard (*n-go*), monkey (*n-kima*),

porcupine (*n-ungu*) etc. There were also numerous rivers in which crocodiles (*n-gwina*) and hippos (n-*gubu*) were found. Common ants and insects included termites (*n-cwa*), spiders (*du-bubi*), mosquitoes (*m-bu*), locusts (*n-jige*), bees (*n-yuki*) and house flies (*n-gi*). Common birds (n-yoni), included the partridge (n-kwale) and the guinea-fowl (n-kanga). Fish (*n-cwi*) was also found in the rivers and ponds or lakes (*ma-diba*). Terrestrial crabs (*n-kere*) were abundant".[17]

From this scenario, it can be inferred that "the ancestral Bantu-speakers, at the time of the diaspora, were basically Late Stone Age farmers and hunters who used mainly wooden and stone tools". There is no evidence of iron-making at this time, as even the Proto-Bantu *ki-uma* which now means "iron" meant at that time "wealth", as it is still used in north-western Bantu.[18] In the same context, "The only widespread agricultural crop was bulrush millet. There were also certain kinds of roots and tubers. Oil plants and nuts (*bu-kuta*) were also cultivated", while "the tilling of the land was done by the use of digging sticks, usually made of ebony tree (*di-gembe*)". People of that time used to live in huts (*n-ju*) and made fire (*mu-dido*), surrounded by the only domestic animals of that time, namely the goat (*mbu-di*), chicken (*n-kuku / n-koko*) and the dog (*m-bwa*). Goat milking *(-kama*) may have been practiced by the same ancestral Bantu who used to make pottery by moulding clay *(-bumba*) while wearing cloth from dried skins (*n-gubo*), and using bows (*bu-ta*) and spears (*di-cimu / di-cumu*) for hunting and fighting. "Witchcraft *(-doga*) was also practiced and people believed in ancestral spirits (*mu-dimu*). Also medicine-men (*n-ganga*) had an important role in society. There were not many economic activities, except for some commodity exchanges (*-guda*), counting (*-bada*) and measurement (*-pima*)".[19]

3.1.2.2. The Setswana speech community and its cultural heritage

The intrinsic identity of Setswana as a Bantu language was preserved by retaining "the basic Proto-Bantu linguistic features such as the grammar, sound system and the basic core vocabulary". Setswana is also heir to Eastern Bantu whose

vocabulary is much richer in cultural content than Proto Bantu vocabulary:

According to Guthrie,[20] while Proto Bantu (or Common Bantu) vocabulary comprises only 23% of items, Eastern Bantu lexical stock is composed of at least 41%. This is partly a result of the abundance of innovations that occurred over more than 1,000 years of movement and partly because of contacts with groups such as the Sog, the Eastern Sudanic, Central Sudanic, Southern Cushitic, Nilotic and Khoisan people. Thus, the formidable environmental and economical series of adaptations gave rise to the multiplication of new cultural vocabulary, especially in the domains of crop-farming and livestock-raising.[21]

From the research conducted by Batibo and his team, it was possible to interpret the Setswana cultural past through its cultural heritage as reflected in the current state of the language. This heritage encompasses the following areas and related activities:[22]

- crop-farming culture (e.g. cultivation of sorghum *ma-bele*);
- stock-keeping culture (most probably from Khoe influences);
- hunting culture (an important activity of the Bantu-speaking people since the time of their diaspora);
- fishing culture (mostly marginal or absent, as amongst other Bantu peoples such as the Sotho and Nguni);
- bee-keeping culture (also borrowed from neighbouring Khoisan communities);
- iron-working culture: see lexical items like: *di-tade* =iron ore, *-tuda* = to forge, *mi-guba* = bellows, and *n-yundo* = hammer, most of which preserved in Setswana*: noto* = hammer, *me-uba* = bellow, in addition to *mo-thudi* = blacksmith);
- pottery-making culture: on which more investigation is needed to clarify the exact origin and history of this tradition, although archaeologist Phillipson[23] believes that "Botswana is covered by the Chifumbaze pottery complex";

- house-building culture for which the ancestral Eastern Bantu modes of building houses, fences and villages appear to have been maintained.

Social organisation was also maintained, notwithstanding difficulties to identify the origins of terms such as *kgotla* "elders' council", *kgosi* "chief" (or *nkosi* in Nguni).

3.1.2.3. Southern Bantu socio-cultural formations

Probably by the CE fourth and fifth centuries, a different people from the Khoisan had begun to settle in southern Africa. What distinguished these people was their use of iron tools rather than stone tools. As put by Omer-Cooper:

> These peoples smelted iron and other metals, grew crops and made pottery of a general type that was very widespread throughout central and east Africa and has been used to identify the Early Iron Age in this area. Evidence from the area as a whole shows that this Early Iron Age culture was practiced in the neighborhood of the Great Lakes in East Africa as early as 300 BC.[24]

These new people became identified by historians and archaeologists as *Iron Age Peoples* and more specifically as *Bantu*-speaking people. On their arrival in southern Africa, the Bantu branched out into a number of related language and culture groups. Amongst the most significative communities here, we can mention: a) those living between the Drakensberg Mountains and the Indian Ocean; b) communities of the Central Plateau of South Africa; c) those encountered between the Soutpansberg and the Limpopo and Zambezi Rivers; and finally, d) linguistic and ethno-cultural communities of Mozambique; and e) those found in Namibia.

The coastal land between the Drakensberg Mountains and the Indian Ocean accommodated a large number of communities speaking dialects of a common language known as Nguni. These Nguni communities were also distinguished by strict exogamy rules, forbidding marriage to any partner whose descent can be traced from a common ancestor. Many also had

a taboo against eating fish.[25] This coastal area was chosen for settlement because it is well-watered and has the best fertile soils. The Xhosa constituted the southernmost of the Nguni people, stretching as far as the Great Fish River; they are also the southern Nguni with closer contact with the Khoisan. Their neighbours to the north were the Thonga (Tsonga) peoples of southern Mozambique, another Nguni-related branch of the Bantu-speaking people. The Nguni are further divided into: i) Xhosa / southern Nguni (Thembu, Bomvana, Mpondo, Mpondomise, and Xesibe); ii) Central Nguni (Bhaca, Qwabe, Zizi, Bhele and Hlubi); iii) Coastal Nguni (Mthethwa, Dlamini, Ndwandwe, Ngwane, Zulu, Khumalo, and Ndebele).

The South African Central Plateau covers the former Transvaal, the Free State, Lesotho right up to Botswana and it was inhabited by a large Bantu-speaking population that belonged to the Sotho-Tswana group. Unlike the Nguni, the Sotho-Tswana group encourages marriage between cross-cousins, a relationship which the Nguni consider to be incestuous.[26] The areas occupied by the Sotho-Tswana are less well-watered compared to that occupied by the Nguni. Perhaps this scarcity of good water explains why the Tswana lived in fairly large communities around water places. What is important to note is that whereas the Nguni and Sotho-Tswana settlements were easy to identify as distinct, the two languages and cultures were by no means clearly different. The Drakensberg Mountains did not prevent culture and linguistic contact as some Nguni crossed the escarpment and settled amongst the Sotho-Tswana communities. Examples include the Ndebele and the Zizi. At the northern end of the eastern escarpment the Nguni and Sesotho-speakers lived alongside each other in what became Swaziland (now Eswatini). The Sotho-Tswana are further divided into the following lineage groups: Rolong and Tlhaping; Hurutshe and Bakwena; Kgatla and Tlokwa; Bapedi and Bafokeng.

The area between the Soutpansberg and the Limpopo and Zambezi Rivers became occupied by the Venda and another group called Lovedu / Lobedu. These groups are not part of the Sotho-Tswana clusters; they are linked to the Mapungubwe settlement and Shona lineages and people who became the

dominant Bantu formations north of the Limpopo River, in the area between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers. The Shona are credited for the erection of stone buildings such as Great Zimbabwe. The Shona are further divided into: Rozvi, Karanga, Zezuru, Manyika, Korekore, Kalanga, and Ndau (Mozambique). But in Zimbabwe there are other Bantu groups such as the Ndebele, Tonga, Sotho and Venda.

As for areas around Maputo Bay, they are dominated by the Tsonga people who trace their origins to the Nyaka, Tembe and Maputo kingdoms including descendants of Soshangane who are of Nguni origins; they speak idioms comprising of Ronga, Xitshwa and Shangaan. Other language groups include: Copi and Tonga (Inhambane), Sena (in the central areas, and along the Zambezi river), Makhuwa / Makhua (in Nampula, Nyassa, Zambezia, Cabo Delgado), in addition to idioms in use in the Northern and/or Northeastern provinces; they include: Yao, Nyanja, Nyungwe, Nsenga (Tete, Nyassa), Mwani and Makonde in Cabo Delgado. Swahili has also become an important idiom for social and cultural communication, in certain parts of the country and amongst the historical leadership of the dominant party FRELIMO, most of whom were trained as freedom fighters in Morogoro, Nashingwea and Tunduru, in Tanzania.

The area corresponding to today's Namibia is dominated by a mixture of Khoisan and Bantu-speaking peoples. The Bantu include the Herero, Ovambo and the remnants of hunter-gatherers called the Nama. But besides these groups, there are other Bantu-speaking peoples in Zambia, Malawi, Angola and DRC who speak related languages and share some commonalities in terms of culture. For example in Malawi and Eastern Mozambique, there is a group identified as the Ngoni who trace their ancestry from South African Nguni-speaking peoples. With the exception of the Herero, the Bantu in general and southern African Bantu in particular, practiced mixed economies of pastoralism and agriculture. Cattle occupy a special place in the lives and cultural practices of the Bantu-speaking people, including in the marriage institution and ritual sacrifices. Today, the Bantu-speaking people's social organisation is predominantly patrilineal with totems indicating

some traces of common descent. However, matri-centrality seems to be a commonly shared anthropological trait amongst various Bantu communities, still today.

While Bantu-speaking people had different names for a single supreme being, their modes of worship share a lot in common. That there is a Supreme Being who controlled weather is a strong common belief amongst the Bantu-speaking people; hence the practice of rain-making ceremonies in their socio-political activities. At the cultural and linguistic level, it is important to stress that similarities and affinities far outweigh differences. Culture contacts and assimilation were very common processes. For example, IsiXhosa exists today as an Nguni language with influences from Khoisan, especially on the phonetism and lexicon of the language.

In the southern African region, the idea and reality of strong and centralised states was introduced by the Bantu. From that time onwards, chieftaincies and kingdoms became a common form of political organisation, with some kingdoms being named after the founding father's clan-name. But kingdoms were political rather than kinship organisations.[27] The family household was the most important unit of production, yet as societies became sophisticated especially amongst Nguni societies, the age-set group became an important unit of production, whereas the continuous creation, control, and appropriation of labour power became a dynamic social principle upon which South African pre-colonial societies were founded.[28]

3.1.2.4. Bantu-centralised formations in Eastern and Central Africa

Our main source here was provided by T Obenga, who has conducted extensive and prolonged field research amongst various Bantu communities, having this body of knowledge has been further supported by solid scholarship and erudition from both a comparative and contrastive perspective.[29] From this and other sources, clanic political systems were, admittedly, the first forms of political organisation amongst the Bantu and other peoples in the context of *African Africa*. However, despite the absence of centralisation of formal power and authority,

these political systems were far from "anarchical" as they were depicted in Eurocentric scholarship. In such systems, power and authority were vested in the community of Elders (less in terms of age than because of their accumulated life experience, wisdom and social intelligence), as well as councils and age and gender groups.[30] Although such small size formations were the first forms of socio-political organisation in the context of pre-colonial Africa, however, larger formations such as chieftaincies, kingdoms and empires also existed in all parts of the continent, including amongst Bantu communities.

A closer look at Buganda, the Lozi kingdom and Makoko will help to better understand the history, spatial distribution, as well as cultures and patterns of social, political and economic organisation of communities in this specific area of our continent.

As a pre-colonial centralised polity, the kingdom of Buganda flourished on the northern edge of Lake Victoria in what is now central Uganda. In Buganda, the Kabaka (kings) used to adopt the totems of their mothers' matrilineages because the kingdom's territory corresponded with the ancestral land with all the totemic clans that shared the same territory. The Kabaka did enjoy great powers and considerable prestige: he used to appoint to all charges and functions, whilst granting all privileges and honours, he would also reward allies and clients alike with land. Nonetheless, except at a later stage marked by foreign interferences in the internal affairs of the kingdom and by relative political decadence, there was nothing of "oriental despotism" in Buganda. For instance, because of the cruelty of one Kabaka by the name Sibutwereke, all potential candidates to *obwakabaka* (kingship) that shared the same Elephant totem as Sibutwereke were banned from the right to access the throne.[31]

Similarly to what would happen in other African societies, including in the Kushite kingdom (ancient Nubia), the Queen-Mother (*Namasole*) and the Kabaka's sisters (*Nalinnya*) enjoyed great authority, particularly the Namasole, whereas it was the *Nalinnya*'s prerogative to officially name the new King, their brother, thereby playing an important role in the definition

of his titulature and political vision as well as the content and significance of his specific praise song.

The Kabaka's insignia as symbols of royal authority, prestige and glory included amongst others: drums, spears, thrones, ceremonial knives for parade (*ngala*) and royal mats, whereas court officials and dignitaries had very specific duties and responsibilities that were hereditary, with a certain level of functional specialisation according to clans: certain clans being in charge of the royal drums, and others of the sacred fire, and others acting as professional executioners etc.

The central government was organised around the Kabaka. It comprised a variety of officials and functions: the *Katikiro* (general manager and Prime Minister) who was seconded by the *Omusigire*, etc. The powerful and well-organised army of the kingdom was under the direct command of the Kabaka himself, whereas patterns of administrative organisation at peripheral including regional and local levels, comprised of twenty provinces (*mazasa*), 265 *abakungu* (districts) and 954 *abemiruka* (cantons).

The duties and responsibilities of all officials involved in the administration of the kingdom included tax collection, administration of justice, mobilising troops for the army and supervision of public works such as roads that used to play a critical role in the effectiveness of central administration over the provinces, districts and cantons of the kingdom of Buganda, that was developed on a beautiful and rich land.

Another example of a highly centralised Bantu polity identified by Obenga was the Lozi kingdom, to the south-west of today's Zambia, on the upper stream of the Zambezi river, in a large valley rich in alluvial deposits and pastures. The kingdom was founded by Mboo, then consolidated by Yeta I, before being expanded by Ngalama. Large-scale fishing was then practised on the Zambezi, whereas the nearby forest provided iron ore, timber, tree-bark for cloth making, wild bays, honey and game. In their narratives of origin, the Lozi stress that they have always been dwellers of the Great Plain, and that they descend from the union of Nyambe ("God") and their female ancestor by the name Mbuyu. As elsewhere in Africa,

all members of the royal family also claim the same type of transcendent ascendency. But beyond these mythical narratives, close relationships between the Lozi and the Luba is more than probable, as products of the same migratory wave.

The king himself, as a sacred institution of a quasi-divine essence, was at the top of all State structures. Central government was constituted by a national Council (*Mulongwanji*) whose members (the *Induna*) were distributed into various technical groups with their respective areas of responsibility and competence, as parts of a formidable, powerful bureaucracy. The *Mulongwanji* was presided over by the second authority of the kingdom titled the *Ngambela*, who was chosen outside the royal family, whilst the incumbent of the administration of justice was the *Natamoyo* or "master of life". The management of legislative and public matters fell under the responsibility of specific officials but the final decision belonged to the King, after consultation with a private council called the *Situmbu a Mulonga*. Lozi central government was, therefore, a very complex and efficient set of institutions, with villages as the basic units for the territorial administration of the kingdom.[32]

The third example of centralised formation is the Makoko kingdom that was developed around the eighth century by the "Teke"[33] people as the first important area of civilisation in Central Africa. As emphasised by Obenga, the kingdom distinguished itself by the harnessing of iron-making technology, the dynamism of its traders, artistic and cultural creativity as well as a solid, centralised social organisation. Whereas the different "BaTeke" groups recognised the authority of their respective chiefs, at the same time, the southern "Teke" communities recognised the leadership of a Supreme Chief whose moral authority and prestige were recognised by all tribal groups of the greater "Teke" people: there was thus, co-existence between "Teke" chieftaincies and a "Teke" kingdom. The socio-political organisation comprised: the family under the authority of a *Mfumu* or family head; the village composed of several families under the leadership of the village head or *Nga-Mpugu* who was also the village community's spiritual and religious guide; the clan as a conglomeration of several villages

under the authority of a *Nga-Tsie* or land administrator; the region (several clans) under the leadership of a *Mfumu a Tsie*. All these authorities used to carry distinctive insignia as symbols of their authority and power.

The Onkoo (King) was also a sacro-saint character as depository of the vital force of the entire Tekeland and guarantor of the cosmic order including the fertility of the land and its people. Yet "Teke" kingship was of an elective kind, although the future king was to be selected exclusively from the members of the six main dynastic "families", before his election by a very restricted electoral college of three dignitaries: the *Ngainlinon*, the *Ngabdzion* and the *Mwidzun*.[34]

All peoples under the authority of the "Teke" King had to pay tribute to him through their respective chiefs, every other year.

After Buganda and the Lozi and Makoko kingdoms, let us now turn our attention to Bantu chieftaincies,[35] as another form of centralised polities in Eastern and Central Africa.

In reality, chieftaincies are the most common form of socio-political organisation amongst pre-colonial Bantu people; having this form of polity been perpetuated until today, in Central Africa as well as in Eastern and Southern Africa. The systems of socio-political organisation in chieftaincies amongst the pre-colonial Bantu polities include, amongst others, sub-systems such as the *Ntemi* (amongst Eastern African Pare and Nyamwezi communities), *Okani* (amongst the Mbochi from Northern Congo), as well as *Bokgosi* (amongst the Tswana), *Bumfumu* ("Teke"), *Calo* (amongst the Bemba, from the north-eastern highlands in Zambia) and *Bokumu*.

In similar contexts, the main functions of the Chief included the following: to preside over important religious ceremonies when sowing or planting, as well as upon foundation of a new village, or during collective hunting or fishing activities; the administration of justice based on ancestral law, traditions and jurisprudence, political and military leadership in wars, and organisation of trade at various levels. Chieftaincies were of variable sizes, but each one had its own, well-demarcated, territory. Amongst Southern Bantu, such as, for example, the

Sotho-Tswana and Nguni (Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Swazi), the tribe (confederation of clans) provided the territorial boundaries and framework of chieftaincies, each one of them with their own territory, as well as a primordial (generally dominant) clan and a chief from the dominant family and central clan. Certain Nguni and Sotho chiefs used to be very powerful. However, despotic or authoritarian chiefs would be often abandoned by peoples who formed their constituencies in order to migrate to more clement polities led by less authoritarian, more just chiefs. Various kinds of councils and assemblies also used to play an important role in decision-making and governance in general.

Grosso modo, there were three main categories of socio-political formations: decentralised clanic or village formations, chieftaincies, kingdoms and empires, some of which being characterised by a high degree of centralisation of power and authority. Despite specificities and even notable differences, in all cases, the same governance values and principles were observed almost everywhere. Finally, it is important to emphasise the levels of political and administrative complexity and refinement that were sometimes achieved in the area of governance in order to find an adequate balance between political centralisation of power and authority on the one hand and, on the other hand, the relative autonomy of basic units such as clans, villages or tribes. In the Zulu kingdom for instance, that was founded by Shaka (born around 1783), there were "more than one hundred small political communities in Zululand and Natal that were independent from each other, each one of them with its Chief assisted by officials and councillors (*Induna*)".[36]

Let us now focus on peoples, polities and social formations in West and West-Central Africa.

3.2. Peoples, polities, social formations in West and West-Central Africa

In this part of our continent, otherwise known as Western and Central Sudan (i.e., West and West-Central Africa), the historical and political roles performed by the empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhoy had a strong and durable impact in the integration

of the populations and their cultures, notwithstanding the significant impact left by the legacies from polities of lesser dimensions that, although generally less known, did play, nonetheless, an important role in the same context, with the same or different peoples as major stakeholders and role-players.

According to *Mzee* Djibril Tamsir Niane, the period twelfth to fourteenth centuries is of great importance and significance, in his opinion, the importance of this period lies in the fact that Africa became a crossroads of international trade, exercising an extraordinary attraction on the rest of the world. Above all, this was indeed "a very special period, in which Africa developed its original culture and assimilated outside influences while retaining its own individuality". In particular, this was a critical moment in the history of state formations such as kingdoms and empires throughout Africa. The study of the institutions of Mali, Songhoy, Kanem-Bornu and the kingdoms of Mossi and Dagomba, for example, reveals their common basis in African tradition. For *Mzee* Niane, the inter-regional exchanges and relations that took place during the same period contributed significantly to the consolidation of the fundamental cultural unity of the African continent.[37]

3.2.1. Mandinka / Mandeng / Mandingo / Mandeŋ: peoples, state formation, socio-political organisation

The Mandinka or Mandigo are composed of a number of groups and sub-groups scattered throughout West Africa, being the most prominent groups at the end of the eleventh century, the Soninke (also called Marka or Wakore) who played an important role in the rise of the Ghana Empire, the Soso / Sosso to the south, at the foot of the Kulikoro mountains, and still farther south, the Malinke of the country called Mande or Mandeŋ, on the upper basin of the Niger, between Kangaba and Siguiri.

Our analysis here will focus on the Sosso / Soso Kingdom and its role in the succession of Ghana, on the one hand and, on the other hand, on the legacies of two outstanding leaders: Sundiata Keita / Sunjata Keyta and *Mansa* Kanka / Kanku Musa.

The emergence and consolidation of the polity of Ghana was a process in which the trade in the gold from the Wangara region celebrated for both its quality and quantity played a crucial role. In all probability, the prosperous Bure and Bambuk goldmines constituted the very heartland of Wangara. Then the slow and progressive collapse of Ghana opened up an era of competition for succession that was marked, after the failure of the Almoravid Movement, by the emergence of polities such as the Sosso Kingdom of the Kante situated in Kaniaga, on the southern margins of Ghana, away from the predatory endeavours of the nomads but closer to the gold mines of the Bure. The Sosso, founded in the CE eighth century, was dominated in the period 1076 to 1180, by the Soninke, a people with an established ethos and solid traditions in regional trade and amongst the most resilient in their opposition to Islamisation, as adepts of African pre-Christian and ante Islamic faith, spirituality and religions under the leadership of the *Diarisso* who often married Fulani women. The most famous Sosso sovereign was Sumaoro / Sumanguru Kanté (1200–1235).

Many factors are recorded in the history of West Africa. They include: the economic needs of Ghana, the impact of the Almoravid movement, the Sosso hegemony, the political and economic rise of the Mali and subsequent decline of this polity following the rise of the Songhoy / Songhay Empire. But one most noticeable factor of political change was undoubtedly the expansion of the Mandeŋ (or Mandinka). The Mandeŋ (or Mandingo) expansion impacted the very history of institution-building as well as the shaping of the destiny, social life and cultures of many peoples, amongst them: the Malenke, Bambara, Jula, Soninke, as well as the *Mande Fu* (Southern Mande) themselves and the Bariba (further to the North) whose kingdoms, it is believed, also owe their origin to processes related to the Mandinka expansion.[38]

Let us focus on the ways in which the history of institution-building, that of economic development and configuration of the social formation of the Mande space were marked amongst others, by the legacies of Sundiata Keita,

founder of the empire (thirteenth century) and *Mansa* Kanka Musa (fourteenth century).

After defeating King Sumaoro/Sumanguru Kanté at the battle of Kirina (1235 or 1236), thereby putting an end to Sosso dominance, one of Sundiata's top priorities was to define the fundamental rights and duties of the Mande people and clans in the celebrated founding Charter or Constitution of Kurukan Fuga. As a highly regarded leader, liberator of the Mande and protector of the oppressed, Sundiata, aided by brilliant generals such as Tiramaghan Traoré and Fakoli Koroma, also distinguished himself as a great conqueror and statesman. His government was composed of his companions. However, besides soldiers and war leaders, Sundiata surrounded himself with black scholars of the *marabout*[39] clans, who were the *Sananku* or "joking cousins" of the Keita clan. Some Arab traders might have frequented his court, as well.

Sundiata divided the Mande into two kinds of province: those which had first rallied to his cause and whose kings preserved their titles, as in the case of Ghana (Kumbi) and Mema, and the conquered provinces, where a governor or *Farin* represented the *Mansa* (Emperor) alongside the traditional chief. Each *Farin* had a number of officials and soldiers under his command. By respecting the traditional institutions of the conquered provinces, Sundiata thus guaranteed a rather flexible administration and system of governance: in this way, the Mande "resembled a federation of kingdoms or provinces rather than a centralizing empire".[40] At the same time, the existence of Mandingo garrisons in the principal regions guaranteed security, while also acting as a deterrent force

Initially, the king of Mande was a chief amongst other chiefs; it was the unification of the provinces of Do, Kiri and Banko, which made the Keita chief a powerful king. Through the conquests of Sundiata and his successors, the king of Mande became *Mansa* or Emperor, having a number of kings under him. At the central level, the Mansa was the head of government and the fount of all power; he was surrounded by high administrators and dignitaries, chosen from amongst the descendants of Sundiata's companions. In Mande itself

the village or *dugu* was the basis of the political structure; in general, villages were inhabited by descendants of a common ancestor. A number of villages under the authority of a chief formed a province or *kafu (jamana)*.[41] Whilst the descendants of Sundiata's generals formed a military aristocracy surrounding the Mansa and a Council whose advice was important in the sovereign's decisions, another institution – the *griot or Jeli* who was always chosen from the Kouyate clan descended from Bala Fasseke Kuyaté, Sundiata's *griot,* also performed a very important role. The *Jeli* officiated first and foremost as the Mansa's spokesperson. Couriers left Niani (the capital) daily on horseback, and those who arrived from the provinces had to report to the *griot* who, at the same time, fulfilled the role of tutor of princes whilst conducting ceremonies and directing court musicians.[42]

Besides Sunjata Keita the founder, Mansa Müsä I is the best-known of the emperors of Mali, largely because of his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1325 and the widespread fame of his visit to Cairo, where he gave away so much gold that the market for the precious metal was depressed for a long time. The pilgrimage had important consequences for the subsequent history of the western Sudan, a region which haunted men's minds and imagination thereafter.

Mansa Musa's vast empire was also, in the final analysis, a kind of confederation, with each province retaining a large degree of autonomy: for instance, vassal kingdoms such as Ghana and Mema were linked to the central authority only by a rather symbolic allegiance.[43] At peripheral level, the empire consisted of provinces and vassal kingdoms. At the head of each province there was a governor (or *Farin*) as was the case under Sundiata. At its height, in the fourteenth century, the empire of Mali had twelve provinces. It can be said that "The provincial government was a small-scale model of the central government": each province had subdivisions, which were occasionally clan units, and the *Farin* was surrounded by dignitaries and eminent persons, whose habits and customs he respected. The subdivision was made up of village communities

grouped under the authority of a local traditional chief *(dugu-tigi)*.

As amply documented, the same patterns of political and administrative organisation put in place by Sunjata (Sundiata) as founding father and first Emperor of the Mande and continued later on, under Mansa Musa I, resulted in a quite flexible governance system. This flexible institutional model of peripheral governance incorporating local leaders gave Mali considerable stability, while the security of goods and of persons was guaranteed by effective policies and an army whose strength was reinforced, amongst others, by the warlike nature and sense of discipline of the Mandingo, together with a high level of organisation that would extend to other state institutions including the judiciary:

> The emperor liked to play the role of 'father of his people', dispensing justice himself in solemn sessions; he listened personally to the grievances of his subjects against the governor or *farin* who represented him in each province. He decided lawsuits between individuals according to the country's laws. Thus, despite all the outward forms of a Muslim court, the *Mansa* remained the patriarch, the father, to whom anyone seeking justice could come. In the provinces, justice was rendered according to Islamic law by *kâdis* that he had chosen.[44]

In the area of socio-economic organisation and development, although Mali was known abroad for its riches in gold, nevertheless, the economy was essentially based on agriculture and cattle-rearing, which occupied the majority of the population. Hunting was also often linked to farming. The main crops included millet, rice, beans and other vegetables, as well as cotton. The people of Mali enjoyed abundant supplies of food thanks to which the Mansa could continue maintaining a large army whilst playing the role of father of his people, offering them frequent feasts.

Whereas communities such as the Fulani specialised in animal-rearing, at the same time, however, by the fourteenth

century, most of the Niger valley peasants were raising cattle, sheep and goats, at least for their own consumption and family needs in meat, milk and dairy products Fishing was almost exclusively the profession of very specialised groups, such as the Somono, the Bozo and the Sorko. Crafts such as iron-working, leather work, weaving were practised by certain groups who used to marry within their respective clans. These craftsmen had duties, but they also had carefully defined rights inasmuch as neither the emperor nor the nobles – and certainly not mere freedmen – could ask or expect from them more than was fixed by custom.[45] And trade was flourishing. Products exchanged included salt, copper, kola nuts and of course, gold. Mali was rich in important goldmines which had made it "the largest producer of precious metals in the ancient world", with the right to gold nuggets recognised exclusively to the Mansa.

Apart from Mali, the edification of polities such as the Bambara kingdoms of Segu and Kaarta were also an important contribution of the Mandinka to the history of state formation in West Africa.[46] These two polities have played an important role in the period sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. According to local narratives, the eponym ancestors of the twin kingdoms of Segu and Kaarta were two Bambara brothers: Baramangolo and Nyangolo; Segu being the most famous and powerful of the two polities. The Bambara (from *Bamanan* = people of the Crocodile) who are believed to have originated from the Jenne zone and even further northwards, co-habited with other peoples such as the Bozo (fishermen), Soninke (traders) and Fulani from Macina with whom they built an alliance in order to dispose of Mansa Magan, the last Emperor of Mali, in 1645. The first reigning dynasty was that of the Coulibaly.

3.2.2. Zarma – Songhay / Jerma and the legacies of the Empire of Gao

Under the above denomination were compounded together the Zarma with the Songhay / Songhoy / Sonray / Sonrai when it was found that the Zarma and the Songhay spoke the same language. In reality, the following main "dialects" are acknowledged: Sonray, Zarma and Dendi. Like many others, the

Zarma - Songhay are self-aware of their own ethnogenesis. In terms of geographic location, this community belongs to the middle valley of the Niger River, from Djenne (Mali) to Bussa (Nigeria). It is divided between Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Benin. Many members of this community are also found in Ghana and Togo.

Boubou Hama has well documented the constitutive sub-groups of Zarma – Songhay people. Without being exhaustive, the following subgroups must be mentioned: Songhay, Kado, Dendi, Kourtey, Wogo, Zarma. In their turn, the Songhay and Zarma are sub-divided into countless smaller subgroups that also maintain special relations amongst themselves: for example, in Zarma, there is a joking relationship between the Kale and the Gole. Based on the pioneering studies of Boubou Hama and to some extent Jean Rouch and Delafosse, Songhay culture may be viewed as the summary of African cultures bequeathed by former Ghana (Wagadu) and the Mali Empire, and external aggressions notwithstanding, the culture remained profoundly African in many respects.

The Songhay-Zarma are sedentary farmers both on dry land and irrigated land. They do not own cattle, but "have never lacked milk" thanks to the solicitude from a Fulani woman, Harakoy Dikko, known as the mother of all geniuses and indeed the daughter of the master of the stables: this fact illustrates a certain level of openness of the Zarma - Songhay to other groups. The communities' lifestyle is centred around the ecosystem of the Joliba or Niger River (Mali, Niger). The use of the land in a variety of ways was a major asset in providing a livelihood and building the wealth of the peoples. The leadership of what would later become the Songhay / Sonray Empire, sponsored the development of an official system for land measurement, and perhaps more than Ghana and Mali, the Songhay - Zarma used available opportunities and knowledge systems to build their wealth and power. The Sorko's know-how was thus used for fishing, the Donzo as hunters; blacksmiths were performing their craft, whereas farmers included producers of dry millet crops and the Wogo developed extensive rice fields.

The Songhay-Zarma intensified agricultural production and trade, but at a cost of tough policies and strict administrative regulation that eventually aggravated the division between the ruling class and exploited classes, even though this could not exceed a certain threshold. And the caste system was particularly developed. Until today, the Songhay-Zarma own livestock that are entrusted to cattle herders; they are also hunters, fishers and considered as very knowledgeable in indigenous science especially those who perform circumcision rites. The Zarma-Songhoy were not great traders, whereas the Zarma are known for their love for horses.

In terms of state construction and political organisation, the Songhay-Zarma are the successors of the builders of the Ghana and Mali, two of the greatest empires of Western Sudan. The modes of state organisation reflect the organisational patterns of more centralised polities with different ethnic groups, regions and functions.

In his many publications, Malian historian the late *Mzee* Sekene Mody Cissoko has made seminal contributions to the study of the legacies of the two most towering figures in the history of the Songhay Empire: Sunni Ali Ber ("Ber" meaning the Great) (ruler from 1464 to 1492) and *Askiya* Muhammad I the *Syllanke*, founder of the dynasty of the Askiyas (1492-1592).[47] As an outstanding statesman, an organiser and a relentless and feared warrior-leader, Sunni Ali Ber changed the fortunes of the kingdom of Gao in many respects.

At the time of his accidental death in 1492, the empire based on the Niger, extended from Dendi to Macina. It was organised on the Mandingo pattern: establishment of new provinces that were entrusted to rulers called *Farin* or *Farma* in Mandingo and *Koi* or *Mondzo* in Songhay. Sunni Ali Ber also "appointed a *Kadi* in Timbuktu and probably in other Islamic cities. All these agents in the east were directly responsible to Sunni Ali Ber. The patriarchal and customary state of Gao thus became a centralised state which controlled all the Niger regions. Sunni Ali Ber facilitated the economic development of the new empire. Although he failed in his attempt to dig a canal

from the Niger to Walata, he is said to have built dykes in the river valley and encouraged agriculture".[48]

Sunni Ali Ber was also a champion of African traditional belief systems and religion who stood up against the Muslim aristocracy, especially the *'Ulamä*\in Timbuktu, who did not hesitate to denigrate him profusely for political and ideological reasons, because the Emperor who never bothered to be a good Muslim, confronted the new forces of Islam and the towns, having never given up the traditional religion of Songhay, thereby also being remembered and celebrated in oral tradition narratives as the symbol and defender of traditional Songhay culture.

When civil war broke out after the death of Sunni Ali Ber, then Muhammad Ture or Sylla seized sovereign power, assuming the title of Askiya, thereby establishing an Islamic dynasty.

In the sphere of political and administrative organisation, Songhay under Askia Muhammad displayed great institutional originality. Amongst other consequences, the strong hierarchy of authority, the systematic centralisation and the absolute monarchy endeavoured and somehow succeeded to break away from the traditional political system of a federation of kingdoms, as in the empires of Ghana and Mali and elsewhere, for example, in Yorubaland. Swinging rather harmoniously between tradition and change, the Gao monarchy which had inherited a long tradition of government, was based both on Islamic and customary values:

> On the one hand, according to the ancient customs of Songhay and the Sudan, the king was the father of his people, the wielder of semi-sacred power, and the source of fertility and prosperity. He was deeply revered. Governance was, on the other hand, guided on Islamic tradition, the kings of Gao, who had been Muslims since the eleventh century, had to govern according to the precepts of the Koran. These two traditions were combined and, as the character of the sovereigns varied, so one or other sources came to the fore.[49]

Central power was organised around the Askiya who used to live in Gao surrounded by a large court, the *Sunna,* which included members of his family, high dignitaries, and *Gesere / Garasa* and *Mabo griots.* The royal government was composed of "nominated ministers and advisers, who could be dismissed by the Askiya and were placed in order of rank according to their functions. The officials of the central government formed the imperial *Council*, which discussed all the problems of the empire". As earlier seen with Mali under Sundiata Keita, the succession was also fratilineal. However, in practice, the succession was decided by the strength of the contestants: which was the cause of fierce competition, alliances, intrigues, and periodic crises. The new Askiya was proclaimed by the *Sunna* and enthroned in the ancient capital of Kukya / Kukia. Of note was the importance both of the army commanded by the *Balama* and military functions in general, together with the institutionalisation of the respect for the constitutional rights of minorities and foreigners, as also emphasised by authors such as Chancellor Williams in his recount of the historical process of destruction of African civilisation:[50] amongst other departments co-ordinating the government of the empire, mention should be made of the importance of the *Korei Farma* as minister in charge of (white) foreigners.

As was the case with Mali, the Songhay adopted two systems of government according to the territories concerned. The first group comprised those conquered provinces which were governed by chiefs appointed by the Askiya and subject at any moment to dismissal by him.[51] These governors, who formed a hierarchy, exercised all sovereign power except for justice, which was entrusted to the *Kadi.* The Songhoy also implemented a dual system of government of the provinces, at peripheral levels of governance. A distinction can thus be drawn between the central government of the Askiya and the government of the provinces. Indeed, centralisation did not prevent the application of the principle of indirect administration to the vassal or tributary countries and provinces. The chiefs of such countries and provinces were thus installed in accordance with local custom and recognised by the Askiya. In particular, indirect rule was applied to the Hausa states of Kano and Katsina, the

kingdom of Agades, the Tuareg Kel Antassar federation, whereas the Mali Empire was also a tributary, but Songhay domination over Mali was never continuous.

Justice was a royal prerogative. The Askiya, as *Amir* of the Muslims and father of his people, delegated the administration of justice to representatives who were quite independent of the central power or its officials. In any case, a distinction should be drawn between the two kinds of jurisdictions, the Islamic and the customary. Islamic jurisdiction, based on the Malikite law taught at the Sudanese universities and under the responsibility of the *Kadi* as the supreme judge appointed by the emperor for life, was only applicable to members of the Muslim community. The *Kadi* was aided by legal assistants such as clerks of the court, secretaries and notaries. The *Kadi* sat in judgement on all matters, criminal and commercial, and there was no appeal against his sentences, whereas punishment was meted out by the *Asara Mondzo,* an official of the imperial power. Again, customary justice was the rule throughout most of the empire and even in the great Muslim towns, people settled their disputes within the family or through the chief of their ethnic group in accordance with their own customs.[52]

Through the sets of institutional reforms and constitutional changes that were introduced under the reign of the Askiyas, it is also possible to identify the rationale and indices of a transition towards feudalism with the rise in the state hierarchy of state officials such as the *Fari Mondzo* as the Minister of agriculture who, in all likelihood, must have been concerned with the management of the many imperial estates which were scattered throughout the empire and which brought in large revenues every year. Administration of natural resources was thus an important issue that required the empowerment of special officials and state departments. Amongst other duties, the *Fari Mondzo* had certainly to settle disputes over land, similar functions being performed by the *Hari Farma* (Commissioner of waters and lakes), the *Sao Farma* (Commissioner of forests), and the *Wanei Farma,* who was responsible for property. There were also at central level, a large number of servants, usually captives

or slaves, in charge of seeing to the various domestic tasks under the direction of a mayor of the palace, the *Hu Hokoroi Koi.*

Ultimately, as stressed by *Mzee* D.T. Niane, it does seem as if the Songhay were inspired by Mali's administrative structures. A study of social formations further reveals that the underlying structures of Songhay society were similar to those of other western Sudanese societies.[53] The importance of kinship ties in particular, was a dominant anthropological trait in the rural and urban areas alike, with the family as "the basic element which coloured all social institutions and daily life". As elsewhere, clans were groupings of several families. The oldest were of Soninke origin (Ture, Sylla, Tunkara, Cisse, Jakhite, Drame and Jawara). It is interesting to note that only a few clans (e.g. the Maiga) were Songhay, which, as stressed by *Mzee* S M Cissoko, raises the issue of the actual composition of the Songhay people, "who had a considerable admixture of the blood of the Soninke, Berbers and other peoples like the Mandingo, the Gobir and the Hausa".[54]

Concomitantly with the role performed by intellectual centres located in major cities and towns such as Walata, Timbuktu, Jenne and Gao, endogenous education did start in early childhood with grandmothers later relayed by men, the family and society at large, through age groups. Similarly to institutionalised practises elsewhere on the African continent, two key aspects of the educational system can be highlighted: vocational training and initiation, the concept of age group being indeed a very strong concept. In such a context, relationships between members of the same age group are thus emphasised, with no age class ready to accept the last row, and every age group striving to stand out in a system that promotes excellence. "Benevolence" includes the right to disobey the eldest in certain circumstances, but also to enjoy some preferential treatment. Wrestling was/is practiced as part of the formal training for boys, while horse racing was/is also a popular activity.

In the area of religion and spirituality, life in Songhay society provides in a variety of ways, yet another excellent

example of the competition and co-existence between African cultural tradition and a form of Islamisation.

3.2.3. Kanem-Bornu

With Mali and Songhay, Kanem-Bornu was one of the most famous and extensive African polities during this same period. During its peak, its influence extended from Tripolitaine (Libya) and Egypt to Northern Cameroon, and from the river Niger to the Nile.

The consolidation of political power and rise to leadership in the polity of Kanem took advantage of the expansion of the Islamic faith. But conflicts with local and/or neighbouring populations such as the Teda and Kanuri were fuelled by religious disagreements and proselytism. Which led, amongst others, to political instability, exile and massive migrations of populations including many Kanembu, who moved to the western shores of Lake Chad, in spite of being "often attacked and sometimes massacred by the Sao"; whereas to the North of the sultanate, hordes of Arab enslavers continued to plunder the region and its peoples. The most famous sovereign of the Kanem-Bornu during this period was Ali Ibn Dunama (1472-1504) alias *Al-Ghali* (the Conqueror).

Kanem-Bornu's political organisation and administration were similar to those of Mali and more so Songhoy. It was a decentralised feudal monarchy that was ruled by the *Maï* (Sultan) who was "revered like a god". The State institutions included the *Yiroma* controlled by the *Mestrema* at the service of the Queen), whilst the *Magira* (Queen Mother) used to be highly respected and honoured.

The army was powerful, well-organised and well-equipped, as one major institution of the kingdom. It was efficiently backed by a network of military fortresses built with baked bricks probably by Sao architects and blacksmiths, and whose vestiges can be seen standing until today, in remote places such as Njimi, Wadi, Ngazargamu and Nguru.

Through and beyond state relations between the empire of Kanem Bornu and regions and city-states of Northern Nigeria, the peoples of Kanem-Bornu - Kanembu, Kanuri, have

always maintained very special ties with Hausa communities, in a framework whereby the Hausa have been positioning themselves, in the course of time, as the dominant classes of rulers, merchants and Muslim clerics, as well as the Shuwa Arabs (closely related to the Baggara from Darfur), the Bolewa, Ngizim and so on, whom the Hausa used to designate by the generic name of Barebari (or Beriberi).

3.2.4. Hausa / Hawsa

The period between 1200 and 1600 is crucial in the history of the Hausa[55], the Kano Chronicle and M. Adamu's contribution to the *General History of Africa*, being major sources for the study of the history of the Hausa peoples, as well as that of the polities and socio-economic formations established by them. Adamu writes:

> Within the area traditionally inhabited by the Hausa from very early on, Hausa was the only known indigenous language. The territory itself had no particular name and was simply called *Kasar Hausa* – the country of the Hausa language (and people). However, through migrations and assimilation, the area expanded towards the south and west, and, in the north, a number of non-Hausa peoples, especially the Tuareg, the Zabarma / Djerma and the Fulbe / Fulani who entered the territory and settled there. With time, Hausa has thus become the dominant language of the savannah belt of the central Sudan. It is spoken by diverse groups who have intermingled over the course of history, so that they eventually took on a single, unique cultural identity and gave rise to a brilliant civilization.[56]

The study of Hausa identities and culture from Adamu's standpoint is an illustration of the relative porosity and shifting borders of ethnic spaces and identities in Africa:

> Hausa, who speak the same language, follow the same customs and obey the same political institutions, comprise one of the most important ethnic groups of Africa, as many neighbouring peoples who were drawn by Hawsa language and culture, abandoned their own

> language and customs to endorse Hausa identity as members of the Hausa community.

In reality, assimilation into Hausa community of language, culture and state did not prevent members of such neighbouring communities to continue retaining their original identities. This was the case, for example, of the Fulani who raised to power in northern Nigeria, in the framework of the nineteenth century Islamic Revolution spearheaded from Fuuta Tooro (in Northern Senegal) to Macina (in central Mali) and Northern Nigeria and beyond, by key Fulani leaders such as El Hadj Omar Tall, Ahmad Lobbo and Shehu Usman Dan Fodyo. Precisely in the Nigerian case, aftermaths the conquest of Hausa states weakened by divisions and social strife, Fulani have adopted the locally dominant Hausa identity, including the corresponding language and culture, instead of trying to impose their own Fulani language and culture.

Hausawa (the Hausa people) originated from various ethnic backgrounds, forming independent city-states rather than a single, centralised kingdom. According to the *Bayajidda* legend,[57] originally, the Hausa city-states of Northern Nigeria emerged in the early medieval period, founded by diverse groups and centred around independent city-states like Kano, Katsina, and Zaria. These states thrived through trade, specialising in crafts and dyestuffs, before being later transformed, in a context of internal strife, by Islamic influence which incorporated the Hausa lands into a unified Islamic state.

Immigrants into Hausaland, particularly during the formative stage of Hausa states, prior to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in the wake of the nineteenth century Islamic Revolution, included: Fulani / Fulbe herdsmen, Tuareg pastoralists, Wangarawa/Dioula (Mandingo) traders and Songhay fishermen. At the same time, Hausaland was also losing important numbers of people on no mean scale, with the majority of the emigrants moving southwards and westwards. The history of Hausaland and of Hausa identity was thus the history of their pluri-secular, complex relationships with

neighbouring peoples amongst whom the Jukun, Kwararafa, Gwari, Yoruba, Nupe and Yawuri.

In reality, the relationship with Kanem-Bornu is of great significance, given that many important cultural elements including patterns of institution-building and governance were borrowed or copied from the Kanem Bornu which, to some extent, has operated historically and culturally as origin of Hausa great traditions.

The spread of Islam was another major factor, although Islam did not expand significantly amongst the Hausa people prior to the fifteenth century, with the majority of the population continuing to follow their traditional religion. Arguably one of the main areas in which Islamic influence played a significant part was in the political sphere, under the reign of Dan Fodyo and his successors. Indeed, Islam has greatly contributed to the process of political centralisation with the advent of the Sokoto Caliphate (or Emirate), through the (conquest and) amalgamation of various Hausa States, both the seven original states or *Hawsa Bakwai* (Daura, Kano, Gobir, Zazzau or Zaria, Katsina, Rano and Biram) and the other seven *Banza Bakwai* (the *Seven Bastards or Illegitimate Ones*), namely: Kebbi, Zamfara, Gwari, Jukun (Kwararafa), Yoruba, Nupe and Yawuri. In the wake of Islamic ideology were also forged and disseminated a number of negative stereotypes such as *Maguzawa* (probably derived from Arabic madjus, originally meaning fire-worshippers, pagans) by which Hausa used to designate non-Muslim neighbouring communities.

Nonetheless, in the original traditional framework, throughout the country, small rural communities *(kauyuka,* sing, *kauye)* were composed of groups of families *(gidaje,* sing, *gida)* under the authority of a chief *(maigari).* These communities consisted, in fact, of farming hamlets that were generally quite small and in some cases of a shifting nature. At the next level came the villages *(garuruwa,* sing, *gari),* which were larger and permanent. At their head they had a *sarkin gari* or *magajin gari* (village chief), who may on occasion have had district leaders *(masuunguwa,* sing, *mai-unguwa)* under him. At the apex of the structure stood the *birni* (plural *birane),* the district capital,

which was ruled not by a *sarkin birni* (the expression does not exist in Hausa), but a *sarkin kasa* or chief of the "country", whose authority naturally extended over all the lower-level chiefs.[58]

In the final analysis, beyond influences from places such as the Kanem-Bornu, in all cases, it is important to emphasise the primacy of local circumstances in the shaping of administrative and political structures. As a matter of fact, in spite of some regional differences, "Hausa political organisation both in its formative stages and in its subsequent development, followed a similar pattern everywhere, based on a common socio-economic and cultural identity, as expressed in the common language".

What about economic life?

According to Kano chronicles, the first mention of the kola nut dates back to the early fifteenth century. Known as *kola nitida* (red kola) in Hawsa or *gonja* (in the language of the same name) or *woro / guro* in other languages spoken in West Africa, the kola nut, has acquired with time, a strong symbolic value in the same context, in its varied uses to seal social contracts such as marriages and friendships or in manifestations of hospitality and *Ubuntu*. As a rare – even a precious – commodity, the kola nut also performed an important role in the trade networks and exchanges, both at intra-regional (within West Africa / Bilad as Sudan) and inter-regional (e.g. between this latter region and the Central Sudan) levels. This was notably the case in the framework of the Hawsa-dominated trade networks and activities with Kano, Katsina, Zaria as major centres. This trade "seems to have flourished throughout the entire Central Sudan, to the North, the East and the South, where it was only stopped due to insecurity of the desert routes, the Bornuan hegemony, the problems of inaccessibility of the Adamawa highlands and the politico-economic dynamism of the Yoruba".[59]

In spite of all, Hausawa (the Hawsa people) were predominantly a people devoted to agriculture, with every Hausa primarily being a farmer and land belonging to the community – hamlet, village or town. However, slave labour played a major

role in some of the larger estates particularly those belonging to state dignitaries. Many crops were grown in Hausaland, especially millet and other cereals as well as rice and other food crops.

Second to agriculture was handicrafts: leather works, metal working, pottery, amongst others, and of course textile production as a major sub-sector of economic production and income. These activities were in many instances, strictly regulated, most of the craft occupations being governed by professional corporations or guilds, each of which with its leader occasionally appointed on nomination by the guild members,[60] or else by the king, in the context of kingdoms.

3.2.5. The Yoruba kingdoms and Benin[61]

Testimonies reinforced by linguistic evidence point to the formation of the population of Yorubaland as a result of two waves of immigrants that arrived around CE 1000 in the region from the north-east (probably the Upper Nile region), and settled in the forest and on its fringes. Similarly to many other African peoples, ancestors of the Yoruba have thus migrated from the Nile valley with stop overs in places like Kanem. Whereas Igbo democratic communities, each one under the protection of the same common divinity and leadership of an *Okpara* (head of lineage), prospered in the South-East of Nigeria, Yoruba principalities and satellite entities developed in the South-Western part of the country. Yoruba sovereigns and the polities established by them in Ile-Ife, Ibadan, Oyo, Ikeja, Ijebu and elsewhere trace their common ancestry back to the mythical Oduduwa, son of Olodumare, the Supreme God.

As compared to other polities such as Ife, Benin seems to have registered an early transition from chieftaincies to kingship, perhaps as early as in the twelfth century. It is thus only normal that in such a historical and socio-cultural context, the political evolution of the polity was also marked by the observance of the principle of balance between central and peripheral powers, between newly established kingship and previous chieftaincies:

> Tradition depicts the first rulers of the Ife line as strictly limited in their authority by the power of the hereditary order of indigenous chiefs known as the *Ozama,* although this order probably received its titles and patterns of organization from the dynasty itself, for the titles bear a resemblance to some of the commonest Yoruba titles – a feature which can only be explained by imitation on one side or the other. Unless both Yoruba and Benin titles derived from a common outside source. The Edo titles are *oliha, edonen, ezomo, ero, eholo nire* and *oltoton.* Their Yoruba counterparts are *olisa, odofin, ojomo, aro, osólo* and *olotón.*[62]

The six *Ozama* chiefs appear to have played a political role very similar to that later attributed to the seven holders of the title of *Oyomesi* of Oyo. It is quite probable that as was the case with other groups, the history of state formation amongst the Yoruba as depicted by Ryder, was also marked by variations on the same basic pattern, of a balance of power between a king and chiefs representing descent groups: indeed a very widespread pattern of evolution in the organisation of political systems in Africa. Despite occasional changes and adjustments, this institutional pattern was maintained in place until at least the fifteenth century, when the fourth ruler of the Benin dynasty, named Ewuare, contrived to alter the balance in his favour after an armed struggle with the *Ozama* chiefs, thereby transforming this limited monarchy into an autocracy and the small state into a large kingdom:

> Ewuare imposed a number of significant changes in governance. The government of Benin, as refashioned by Ewuare, rested upon the ruler and three bodies of titled chiefs: the hereditary *Ozama,* the palace chiefs, and an order of 'town' chiefs created by Ewuare himself. These senior members of the hierarchy formed the *Council*, which deliberated with the ruler on any matter he cared to lay before it. Each of them was also entrusted with the supervision of a number of the tributary units into which the kingdom was divided. Junior grades furnished

> messengers, soldiers and other executants of the royal will.[63]

Another important constitutional development at this time was the application of the principle of primogeniture to succession to the throne:

> Ewuare gave his heir apparent the title of *Edaiken,* which he added to the *Ozama* order. Finally, in the realm of religion, too, Ewuare, who is remembered in Benin as a great magician, gave greater potency to the mystical powers attributed to the ruler by introducing the annual *Igw* festival, during which his vital forces were renewed.[64]

But for some reason, the main Yoruba polity has always been Ile Ife. As the main polity and capital, Ile-Ife, was the centre of political power and spiritual life and home to historical legitimacy: mortal rests of all Yoruba sovereigns had to be returned to Ile-Ife in order to be buried there after their death, together with their insignia.

Yoruba socio-political organisation has a municipal base, with prosperous cities some of which totalling several hundred thousand inhabitants since the pre-colonial period. Urbanisation and African spirituality and religion form an important part of Yoruba culture and heritage.

Yoruba peoples became famous worldwide with their refined art works and handicrafts in brass (bronze) and terracotta. This was about creative artistic heritage and traditions that in all probability developed out of the prior Nok culture of terracotta art works, and intrinsically related to the court life of Yoruba polities, in celebration of the splendours of the kingdom and achievements of its most outstanding leaders. But most of these exquisite masterpieces were plundered by the 1897 British military expedition, before being discovered in 1910 by Leo Frobenius or exhumed at a later stage in the wake of excavations and archaeological diggings from 1938 onwards.[65]

Brass, iron and copper art works, ivory or wooden carvings, weaving or drum products were the socio-professional

prerogative of specialised and well-organised corporations of craftsmen and craftswomen with their own titles from apprenticeship to professional mastery as well as their assigned neighbourhoods and respective streets. But despite a commonality of craft and purpose with Ife, differences were noted in the features and look and feel of art works from Benin in the history of which three distinctive periods were identified between 1500 and 1691: archaic period, early period, classical period.

The Yoruba Kingdoms and related polities were to share the same fate as many other African polities of the time, as they became caught into the networks of the Atlantic slave trade and its cortege of internal conflicts, wars and destructions.

3.2.6. The Akan

Amongst others, the great Akan family comprises of the Baule / Bawle (in Côte d'Ivoire) and the Ashanti / Asante and Fanti / Fante (in present-day Ghana). One first striking feature of Akan polities is the high levels of centralisation counterbalanced by the institutional recognition of cultural difference and relative institutional autonomy at peripheral power level. Each Akan state comprised a certain number of towns and villages, and had its own pantheon of gods, whilst the king paid careful attention to the words of the priest. Dual leadership in observance of the principle of gender equity in socio-political governance together with mixity in the construction of political systems were also the norm within Akan polities: each Akan state was placed under the authority of a king and a queen,[66] whereas from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, the Akan people who formed the majority of the population in the lagoon zone, had set up kingdoms and city-states following the development of autonomous kinship societies that were independent of each other, in the previous period.[67]

Henriette Diabaté emphasises important aspects on the ways in which the principles of matricentrality and dual leadership have influenced the history of state and institution-building amongst the Akan peoples.[68] According to Diabaté,

> Power was held by the queen and it appears that it was after the birth of kingdoms that men took power, while continuing to associate the queen with its exercise. Probably the clans accepted the queen at their head in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when they 'lived independently, in isolated units, having no need of a common chief; but when it became necessary to fight more often in order to survive or to expand, they preferred a leader who was always ready for war'.

The preceding had important implications for the change in the essence and nature of political power:

> We may conclude that the kingdoms were fully structured by the end of the sixteenth century. The requirements of defence meant that the role of the queen had to be reinforced by a war leader who shared power with her; the appearance of the king thus marks the passage from a kinship society to a kingdom. Henceforth, the king's role was more political than ritual.[69]

The transformations that occurred in the political sphere have also had important repercussions on Akan society in terms of social division of labour and greater complexity of the social formation:

> The social division of labour had begun; for example, the Kru probably caught enough fish to sell the surplus to their neighbours. Then the commercial current flowed northward from the coast. The coastal people sold salt, others offered special fabrics. Gold exerted a great attraction for the Mandingo, who had long traded in kola nuts; after 1500 they moved beyond Begho across Bron country as far as El Mina, to enter once again into contact with the Portuguese, whom they had already met in Senegambia.[70]

In all cases, matricentrality and dual leadership have always been a central norm of governance amongst the Akan people

as well as many other West African peoples. For instance, on the death of a Mossi chief or king, between the official announcement of his death (not to be confused with the actual time of his death) and the appointment of his successor, his position is temporarily assumed by his eldest daughter, who is given the title of *Napoko* (literally "Chief Woman"); the *Napoko* is a substitute for her father, whose clothes she wears.[71]

Let us now turn our attention to the specific case of the Ashanti.

The rise to political leadership of the Ashanti is traced back to the eleventh–twelfth centuries, when on the margins of the forest, were established small principalities or chieftaincies that associated groups of Akan from the North and local communities whose languages (and customs) were probably adopted by the Akan newcomers, as has often been the case in Africa, throughout the history of migrations. The Twi as language of the Akan, has borrowed many words from Mande idioms such as Mandinka, Jula, Malenke. They include, for example, names of tobacco, gold, slaves, horse, camel, as the new Ashanti polities were also founded on the trade of gold and kola nuts.[72]

Groups of Fanti, another Akan branch, took advantage of prevailing struggles amongst Akan rival chiefs in order to push their way further to the South. They met in the coastal areas, with other peoples from Nigeria such as the Gâ who came to finally settle on the plain around Accra, whereas the third major component of the Akan people – the Baule/Bawle – migrated and established themselves further to the West, in Côte d'Ivoire, following military defeat by other Akan rival groups. Amongst others, Baule history records their achievements as a people, under Queen Awra Poku: a symbol of outstanding female leadership, in a context significantly marked by strong matricentral traditions, as amongst the Ashanti and other Akan communities.

Nana Osei Tutu was arguably the most famous Ashanti sovereign. As the royal throne, the *Sikadwa* (the Golden Stool) is believed to have been descended or sent from the sky: hence his (symbolic) significance and importance as the symbol

of unity amongst various peoples who have unanimously ratified their double adhesion to the same nation(s) and (dual) national identity, as citizens and subjects both of the *Asantehene* (Sovereign of the Ashanti) and the *Kumasihene* (Sovereign of Kumasi: the capital city of the Ashanti Kingdom). The Sovereign's regalia also included: his court, his guard and canopy of honour, the shield in elephant skin and the gold decorated drum.

It is important to take note that as European rivalries to control the Atlantic slave trade intensified, various Ashanti polities and their sovereigns in the region will progressively become integrated into the networks of this infamous trade, with the construction of the forts of Elmina, Takoradi, Cape Coast and Osu. The Ashanti kingdoms and related polities, similarly to other African polities of the time, also became caught into the networks of the Atlantic slave trade, with all destabilising consequences that derived from there.

3.2.7. Twareg / Tuareg

They are called Kel Tamajag (pedantic form, but more accurate as a self-attributed ethnonym) or Kel Tamashek/Tamasheq: meaning "those who speak Tamajag/Tamashek/Tamasheq". The Twareg are a fraction of the Berbers. Theirs is a culture of nomads in a difficult environment marked by open spaces and freedom of movement both of people and their cattle. According to Twareg studies, the culture also includes language, literature, and society.[73]

Socio-political organisation and lifestyle are based on itinerant (shifting, moving) camps: almost perpetual movements are imposed by environmental constraints, whereas the socio-economic production model is based on livestock and agriculture practiced in oasis (mixed economy). The Tuareg also engaged in trade and provide(d) connections between various communities and social formations in the region and across regions: for instance, like the Toubous/Tubu, they used to escort and monitor the movements of caravans including alongside the pre-colonial trans-Saharan trade routes.

Classes and castes inherited from the past have also been maintained within Twareg societies. Belonging to the same political entity and political unity are generally difficult to achieve amongst Tuareg communities. In the Aïr region for example, the organisation is in confederations, with *Amenokal* as the political title given to leaders (amongst the Willimenden), whereas leaders appointed in other Tuareg communities bear the title of *Anastafidet*. However, it is worthwhile noting that at the height of the Empire of Gao's domination, two Twareg *Amenokal* and their respective communities (Mochgarenkoy and Andarsenkoy) were the "vassals" and allies of the *Sonni* and *Askia* (Emperor).

As far as gender and the status of women are concerned, be it recalled that the mythical ancestor of the Twareg is Kahena, a woman who resisted the invaders. Kahena is a national heroine, as recorded in the *General History of Africa*. It is perhaps symptomatic that during field research conducted by Diouldé Laya around Tegira (to the North of Zinder in Niger), only the Tuareg women were answering the research questions asked, while men (including the head of group) kept silent, as if they had no right to speak. Be that as it may, matrilineality and female social dynamism and leadership remain very strong, until today, whereas the cost of the wedding is prohibitive. Even the tent that hosts the couple and family seems to belong to women more than to men.

3.2.8. Fulani / Peulh / Fulbe / Hal Pulaaren

The Fulani are distributed from the Atlantic Ocean to the Sudan; in fact, they are found almost everywhere in West and Western Central Africa, except in the Sahara. In Niger, the natural habitat of the Fulani is Liptako-Gourma and Dallol.

As far as social organisation and lifestyle are concerned, the Fulani are shepherds, agro-pastoralists and in some cases, sedentary. Traditionally, the Fulani society is one that is structured in clans. The clans are distinguished based on the different indigenous knowledge systems that they master, together with their respective areas and modalities of application. Amongst the Fulani, *Kumen* (knowledge) is about,

amongst others, knowing when the rains will come, being capable to find one's way by reading correctly the positioning and display of the stars in the sky, sending pathfinder shepherds to fetch water, and being able to protect animals with wooden or metallic weapons, but also with sacred formulas.[74] In the area of belief systems, it is recalled that in Fulfulde or Pulaar (the Fulani language), the hieroglyph *Ankh* can be read *Yonki* = Life or *Wonki* = exist / existence / life (from *Wona* = to be, followed by *Ki* as the suffix of action). Life is of crucial importance; existence has a value in itself, an intrinsic value. Hence, life is too precious to be trivialised: nobody has the right to remove one's life even Self or power holders. If one is guilty of doing something wrong, even shameful, one then remains with the option to simply disappear.

And regarding the mode of production and socio-political formation, the Fulani like many other Africans are strongly influenced both by ecology as well as their ancestral value systems and cultural ethos. Generally, livestock (herding cattle, keeping sheep, goats, poultry) is a dominant activity and pastoralism the dominant lifestyle. However, the Fulani may practice a diversified range of socio-economic activities that include various forms of agriculture (irrigated, recession amongst others) and even fishing (practised by the Jawbe or masters of the water), in the framework of generally mixed economies.

Many epics published by Christiane Seydou are indicative of the concepts and practices of power and authority amongst the Fulani.[75] Theirs is a politically organised society originally under the leadership of an *Ardo* (guide), when communities used to move around together. But at a later stage, Fulani socio-political organisation has evolved in some places towards wider communities led by masters of territory or *Laamibe* (sing.: *Laamido*) until they reached even wider polities called *Almamiya* (e.g. in the Fuuta Tooro, Fuuta Jallo) and finally *Caliphates* as in Sokoto and Maasina / Macina.

In the area of endogenous education systems, like any other African child, the young Fulani undergoes formal education until they become an adult. Knowledge of nature and

the environment and of the animals including their reproductive cycle is paramount in this system. This is a phased educational process first under the responsibility of women (mothers, aunts, old women), before being relayed, later, by age-group formations under the mentorship of male adults and wise men of the clan. At this stage, the *Gnomêru* (young Fulani under education) is braided like women, and to end this period, he has the freedom to say all nonsense, including profanity. He has also the right to practice *soro* or Fulani caning, before being sent for shaving as a sign that yesterday's *Gnomêru* has then reached the stage or status of full manhood. The concept of age is, therefore, a very strong one amongst the Fulbe.

For the study of Fulani culture, their specific spirituality and religion in particular, the leading authority remains undoubtedly Amadou Hampate Ba, with the publication of the two famous initiatic narratives: Koumen and Kaidara.[76]

Today, certain Fulani communities are known for their zeal in the practice of Islam whilst others have retained their pre-Islamic traditions. Ba and other authors after him, have analysed several myths that display nesting stories on Fulani and other African peoples' origins and narratives. In some of them, the Fulani proclaim that they descend from Bajjo Manga, daughter of the *Kayamagan*, Emperor of Ghana; while in the Zarma-Songhay pantheon, the mother of all gods is a Fulani woman by the name Harakoy Dikko (Lordess/Mistress of the Waters). These examples testify to the centrality of the woman within Fulani societies: it is said in particular that "Fulani women assume control of the economy through the milk".

3.2.9. Gurmantche/Gulmance/Gulmanceba

The ethnonym Gurmantche literally means "the inhabitants of Gurma", a region situated on the right bank of the river Niger, from the central Delta to Yauri where the Gulmanceba co-exist with the Songhay-Zarma. The Gurmantche also like to call themselves Bulkimba or Bemba. The Gulmanceba are found in Niger, Benin, Togo, Ghana and Burkina, the largest number being in the latter country.

The Gurmantche live in sedentary communities organised in clans and sub-clans that constitute the base of many chiefdoms; with the "king" of Nungu (Fada Ngurma / Ngourma), considered as the Elder and for this reason, respected and revered accordingly. The social systems of the Gulmanceba evolved from an original communal system to a class, even a caste system. Socio- economic modes of production include agriculture and livestock as with time, the Gourmantche have become agro-pastoralists, owners of large flocks whilst also being involved in fishing in rivers and dyeing (mixed economy). In agriculture, the Gourmantche hoe is famous for being very well-made and effective. Cloth-dyeing is also an important socio-economic activity that in some instances, has reached at least semi-industrial levels of production, distribution and consumption, and through which the Gurmantche have distinguished themselves in the West African region and even beyond.

First amongst common elements of identity and identification comes Gulmancema, the language spoken by the Gurmance. This is also an old and rich African culture that is famous for the Gurmantche's notorious knowledge in the practice of geomancy based on the use of probabilities. The system of geomancy is considered reliable more so as there are opportunities for verification and control: the same problem can be submitted to several geomancers. Only groups like the Toubou are believed to be able to compete with the Gurmantche in this area. Many specific rituals are also well preserved and still followed today, together with the perpetuation of certain prohibitions and symbolic identification to a common totem: in this case a variety of lizard.

That the Gourma/Gurma opposed strong resistance against the Songhay/Sonray empire according to local narratives, tells something about the efficiency of their political system. Furthermore, the fact that those who took the power name themselves *Bulkimba* or *Bemba*, which means "conquerors", is an indication of the occurrence of an aristocracy which used to exert its dominion over a fraction of the indigenous society. In agriculture, there is an institutionalised tradition

of community-based work; but today, the richest amongst the Gurmanceba take advantage of most of the existing workforce.

From a socio-cultural point of view, endogenous education culminates in initiation rites such as female and male circumcision. The best dancer or acrobat stands out in each promotion circumcised. Cultural relatedness between Gourmantche and Dogon is seen in the modalities of initiation rites, in particular the type of attire worn during these rites. Regarding thought and belief systems, there is evidence on the existence of a Supreme Being, master of the universe, *U Tienu* who can be addressed only through offerings done by, for example, the family heads in the intimacy of their concessions. *U Tienu* is believed to be both powerful but benevolent and accessible at the same time.

In this latter context as elsewhere, the African heritage is thus preserved and perpetuated, even with the conversion to "revealed religions": which has resulted, amongst others, in the redefinition of social statuses and roles from a gender perspective. Nonetheless, despite the fact that Gurmantche society has become patriarchal, the role of women and matrilinearity remain fundamental. In fact, in the opinion of Dioulde Laya, there is an apparent power (the male power), whereas the non- apparent and real power belongs to women. And because of the sacrality of the image of the Mother, Gurmantche children, similarly to other African children in most communities including Central African Fang-Beti, are weary of any sign of a curse from their respective mothers.

Endnotes

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30 Obenga, *Les Bantu*...pp.141-146.
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32 Obenga, *Les Bantu*, pp. 124-128.
33 « Teke » seems to have been a derogatory name given by neighbouring groups: hence the need, amongst other research tasks in African historiography, to focus on critically reviewing certain names and generic community images of *Self* and *Other*, through inter-disciplinary studies of the sociology, political economy and history of certain ethnotypes, and related stereotypes and archetypes.
34 Obenga, *Les Bantu*, p.131.
35 Obenga, Id. pp.135-141.
36 Obenga, *Les Bantu*, pp.145.
37 Niane, D.T., in UNESCO, *General History of Africa - Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Centuries*, Introduction to Vol. IV, French version, pp. 1-14 (see: quote, p. 7).
38 Cf. Niane, Djibril Tamsir, "Mali and the Second Mandingo Expansion", in UNESCO, *General History of Africa*, Vol. IV, Chap. 6 (pp. 117/171).
39 Marabout: Moslem literate, both religious leader, soothsayer and healer.
40 Niane, D.T., in *General History of Africa*, p. 135.
41 Niane, D.T., in *General History of Africa*, Vol. IV, p. 160.
42 Niane, Idem, Ibid.
43 Niane, Ibid.
44 Niane, Ibid.
45 Niane, Id. p. 170.
46 J Ki Zerbo, *Histoire de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris, Hatier, 1972, p. 241.
47 Cissoko, Sekene Mody, "The Songhay Empire from the 12th to the 16th Century", in *General History of Africa*, Vol. IV, UNESCO, pp. 187-210.
48 Cissoko, Id. p 193.
49 Cissoko, Id., p. 196.
50 Williams, Chancellor, *The Destruction of Black Civilization. Great Issues of a Race from 4500 BC to 2000 AD*, revised edition, third printing, Chicago Illinois, Third World Press, 1976.
51 Cissoko , Id., p. 198.
52 Cissoko, Id. pp. 201-2.
53 What was original about it was, according to testimonies and sources consulted, the development of a market economy which gave rise to an urban society with differentiated activities, although this was somewhat a marginal phenomenon, since society as a whole was predominantly rural. (Cf. Cissoko , Id. p. 204).
54 Cissoko, Id. p. 205.
55 During that time were established "centralised governments in half a dozen states, based on walled capital cities, which also became important as commercial centres. Some of these states had

already begun to expand and to attack other peoples in Hausaland and beyond".

56 M. Adamu, "The Hausa and their Neighbours in the Central Sudan", in *General History of Africa*, Vol. IV, pp. 266/300 (quote: p. 266).

57 The traditional narrative credits the legendary figure Bayajidda with establishing the Hausa city-states after slaying a sacred serpent in Daura. His sons, according to the story, became rulers of the major states.

58 Adamu, Id. pp. 293-4.

59 Ki Zerbo, Joseph, Histoire de l'Afrique Noire, op. cit., p. 173.

60 The basic task of such corporations was to collect the various taxes levied on the craftsmen. They also exercised control over admission into the guild, production methods, standards of workmanship and prices. (Cf. Adamu, Id. p. 297.

61 See: Ki Zerbo, id. p. 159; and Ryder, A. F. C., "From the Volta to Cameroon", *General History of Africa*, Vol. IV, pp. 339-370.

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63 Ryder, op. cit., pp. 351-352.

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65 Ki Zerbo, *Histoire de l'Afrique Noire*, p.164

66 In particular, "The presence of the Queen beside the King at the solemn sessions of the court is noteworthy.

67 Cf. Kipre, P. , "From the Ivory Coast lagoons to the Volta", in *General History of Africa*, Vol. IV, pp. 324-338.

68 Cf. Diabate, Henriette : *La marche des femmes sur Grand-Bassam*, Abidjan, NEA, 1975 ; « La formation du royaume Sannvin (1700-1843). Sources orales et Histoire », Doctoral dissertation (Doctorat de 3eme Cycle), University of Paris-Sorbonne, 1979; *Sannvin, un royaume akan de la Côte d'Ivoire* (1701 – 1901), PhD (Doctorat d'État) in History, University of Paris-Sorbonne, edited and published in 2 volumes by Karthala, in May 2013.

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Chapter Four

The African Narrative: Key Factors, Dynamics of Socio-Historical Change

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4.1. Endogenous versus exogenous factors, their impact

Factors such as colonialism, slavery, neo-colonialism and apartheid have contributed to shape the destinies and identities of the African People. The combined effects of such factors have impacted on and sometimes transformed, the social formations of the continent. Nevertheless, the impact of such factors should not undermine that of internal factors of key importance, as in the case, for example, of what Ki-Zerbo termed "Great Centuries in West Africa", spanning the period end twelfth/end sixteenth century.[1] As a matter of fact, from end twelfth until end sixteenth centuries, sub-Saharan Africa in general and its Western and West-Central region, otherwise known as Western and Central Sudan, will undergo a significant development of all its regions in the economic, political and cultural areas. But this was not an *ex abrupto* process; it started in the preceding period with an intense preparation which entailed, amongst others, the founding of most great kingdoms and polities, in the wake of a process of demographic settlement and political stabilisation subsequent to prior movements of migrations of populations. Indeed, the development of historical processes was also propelled by contacts and exchange with the outside world,

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Europeans and Arabs in particular, through slavery, colonisation and the imposition or adoption of foreign educational and belief systems and other modalities that significantly impacted African peoples and societies.

Nevertheless, ultimately, such foreign influences notwithstanding, African agency was preserved against all odds as a key historical determinant in the processes that continued to shape Africa's destiny until today (see next chapter of this volume).

4.2. The forgotten geography of soils and peoples

The convergence of peoples and cultures has been a reality since the very early stages of the history of the African continent. Ample testimony to that is what Kotto Essome called the "forgotten geography of soils and peoples"[2] including political structures such as the empire of Mali (1240 – 1500) which covered, at its peak, a land area three times more extensive than that of France today. This is but one example amongst many others of important areas of convergence of peoples and cultures, of contact and mutual exchange and influences, as was also the case in the valleys, river and lake basins adjacent to the deserts: Nile Valley, Lake Chad, Lower Senegal, Middle Niger etc.

4.2.1. Role of the Sahara, development and diffusion of agriculture and metallurgy

Let us first emphasise the role of the Sahara as a North–South natural bridge, and the development and diffusion of agriculture and metallurgy,[3] as key historical factors. As well documented by Ki-Zerbo and thereafter in the *General History of Africa*, we should start by mentioning the unifying role of the Sahara, in which were identified sixteen periods of human occupation from the early era of hunters to that of the agro-pastoralists.[4] This testifies to the fact that the Sahara has not always been the natural barrier that it has become today. In particular, the Sahara will play a fundamental role in the Neolithic Revolution, whose origin is located in the Nile Valley (Fayum Region in Nubia), around 5000 BC and that would spread to the Ethiopian

highlands, to the region of Lake Chad and Niger (between 3000 and 2000 BC), and to the rest of the African continent. The Neolithic Revolution was the starting point for profound changes in the material conditions of life of the African peoples, especially with the transition from gathering to agriculture, on the one hand, and on the other hand, from hunting to domestication and later to breeding of animals.

Besides the unifying role performed by the Sahara, it was possible to identify five major agricultural cradles in Africa, from which, in close correlation with global natural conditions, were disseminated and scattered throughout the rest of the continent, together with agricultural techniques, varieties of crops and foodstuffs produced from thereof. Similarly, centres of metallurgy and diffusion of iron in Africa are well-known: Kush (Meroe), Nilo-Chadic savannas (Koro Toro site), Eastern and southern Africa (northern Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe) etc. Obviously, the processes under study also involved (material and spiritual) facts of civilisation: dissemination of instruments and modes of production as well as modes of perception and interpretation of the environment, ways of organising and using the space as well as a range of attitudes and behaviours determined by the relationships with nature and society, in the peoples' original habitats.

4.2.2. Strategic routes, economic metropoles, migrations of peoples

In the study of most significative historical factors, the role of strategic and trade routes and economic metropoles on the one hand and, on the other hand, the migrations of peoples (e.g. Fulani, Bantu, Mande), should also deserve a closer scrutiny. Indeed, to rediscover and revisit the "forgotten geography of soils and peoples", it is critical to study yesterday's strategic and trade routes, some of which overlapping with the routes of human migrations and, therefore, with the axes of dissemination of techniques, ideas, concepts and modes of perception, belief systems and religious practices etc. Amongst them: the trans-Saharan trade routes, those of East Africa, including the Kilimanjaro route (also called route of the Wakaamba), or the

great meridian East African route: a natural bridge between the two hemispheres, etc.

In various regions of the African continent, routes of migrations and trade have been taken advantage of at some point by certain communities such as the Bantu, Fulani, Hausa, Mandinka and others, to establish or consolidate their influence on the history and societies. For example, both Hausa and Mandinka benefited from the West African trade networks and activities to establish their political dominance and/or consolidate their economic prosperity in the region; at the same time, they disseminated various products, ideas and techniques as well as the Islamic faith.[5]

Economic structures in West Africa have, in some cases, undergone no fundamental transformation over centuries because of technological stability, notwithstanding a major trend of re-orientation of trade routes from the sixteenth century onwards to the benefit of newly established coastal routes in, for example, the Gulf of Guinea, to the detriment of the South-North trans-Saharan desert routes that have been the first axis of contact between this part of the African continent and the outside world.[6] Two metropoles, Timbuktu (the "desert port") and Jenne / Djenne performed a major role both in the intra-regional economic development during the same period as well as in the trade across the Sahara that would, at times, reach out to important European economic centres. The goods and products that were produced, exchanged in these two cities, or used to transit through them included, amongst others: pure gold, leather, lead, iron bars, marble jewellery, antimony, henna and other beauty products, in addition to various kinds of fabrics, indigo, salt in bars, dried fish, kola nuts. At some point, the trade in slaves also used to transit through such places. Kano (Northern Nigeria), Salaga (Northern Ghana) and Bhego (also in Ghana, to the South of the Bend of the Black Volta) were other major cities in the same framework and during the same period.

The transportation system was relatively well-organised and state interventions took place where and when necessary, for example, in the regulation of weights and measures used in trade and related transactions. Urban life was also flourishing,

singularly with the edification of imposing and spacious mansions inhabited, amongst others by wealthy dealers and business (wo)men who used to indulge in enjoyable receptions to which were sometimes invited their own kins(wo)men and friends, or visiting scientists and intellectuals from other countries or regions, in observance of social values of hospitality, commensality and *Ubuntu* as epitomised in an African saying according to which "a guest is a present from God".[7]

In the study of migrations of African peoples, we will cite three examples: first: the Fulani (or Fulbe) found almost everywhere in the Western and Central Sudan (i.e. West and part of Central Africa), including: in Senegal (Fuuta Tooro and Damnga), Guinea (Fuuta Jallo), Mali (Maasina), as well as in Niger and in Northern Nigeria and Cameroon; secondly: the Mande expansion (between 1250 and 1500), which was deployed in several directions (between the Atlantic, Hausaland and the forest); and that enabled the creation and consolidation of a dense and very complex trade network, thus becoming an important factor of unity amongst African peoples of Western and Central Sudan in West Africa; and finally, the migrations of the Bantu peoples: one entity amongst the most sizeable and homogeneous from a linguistic, anthropological and cultural viewpoint, and whose migrations (from 1000 years BC to about 1000 / 1100 AD) were marked by the spread in Central, Eastern and southern Africa, of agricultural techniques (cereal farming), metallurgy and pottery (e.g. Urewe and Kwale in Eastern Africa).

4.3. Islam, slavery and social formation in East Africa and the Indian Ocean

In East Africa, patterns of social organisation as well as inter-community relationships (productive and exchange relationships, matrimonial strategies, cultural and symbolic relationships amongst others), were strongly shaped by and to some extent, are still dependent on the cultural and symbolic legacy of two major historical factors: Islam and slavery. According to Bethwell A Ogot, slavery and the slave trade were major factors for demographics and movement of populations in Eastern Africa; the total number of Africans being transferred

to the Islamic world (Yemen, Aden, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan), and to India and China, estimated at about 14 million, between the seventh and the twentieth centuries.[8] According to I B Kake, this phenomenon occurred with active involvement of North African Moslems especially from Maghreb.[9]

From a doctrinal point of view, it is indeed difficult to reconcile the condemnation by the Prophet Muhammad of slavery and human trafficking on the one hand and, on the other hand, the admission of the legitimacy on behalf of Islam, of the conditional continuation of serfdom, and of the enslavement of human beings, non-Muslims in particular. In all cases, the slave trade led by Arab Muslims is a very old phenomenon, initiated since ancient times, and having undergone a remarkable expansion between the end of the fifteenth and the late nineteenth centuries. As amply documented by Tidiane N'Diaye,[10] the Arabs raided sub-Saharan Africa continuously for 13 centuries; most of the millions of people thus deported disappeared because of the inhumane treatment inflicted on them. The slave trade began when in CE 652 , the Arab emir and general Abdullah bin Said imposed on the Sudanese, a *bakht* (agreement) obliging them to deliver hundreds of slaves annually. The majority of these men were taken from the populations of Darfur, at the onset of this huge human drain that was to officially stop not before the beginning of the twentieth century.

It is true that many aspects and episodes of this human trafficking remain unclear. Yet it is still certain that the trade in African slaves existed in East Africa since at least the seventh century (CE), the origin of the slaves being located in the region between Ethiopia and Somalia (to the north) and Mozambique (to the south).[11] The routes for this traffic were identified with Kilwa and Zanzibar as its main centres in East Africa; both became major suppliers to the Middle East in the nineteenth century, especially after the installation in Zanzibar of Said, a native from Muscat, after 1840.[12] Other cities such as Tabora and Ujiji will also be transformed into advanced centres for this shameful but so lucrative traffic, for which groups such as the Yao, Nyamwezi and Baganda would act as "middlemen".

Elsewhere, the slave caravans were led or escorted by Twaregs, in the framework of the Western traffic across the Sahara, that contributed significantly to the development and prosperity of many Berber cities.

In some places, where the slave trade had even become a seasonal government activity according to various sources and testimonies, the human trafficking and enslavement system was marked in particular by raids against the Dinka, Shilluk and Ingassa populations, following the appointment by the Egyptian authorities of Ali Khurshid Agha as Governor of the province of Sennar (1826); whereas its extension in 1870, had also resulted in the looting and plundering of the southern provinces of Darfur and Kordofan. The period between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries constituted, incontestably, the real historical turn of the phenomenon whose paramount importance is well-established, especially with the series of progressive transformations experienced in agriculture in East Africa: expansion of cultivated areas, transformation of some merchants into farmers, and some slave traffickers into slave owners, growing demand for labour for all European sugar cane plantations in Ile- Bourbon (Réunion) and Ile-de-France (Mauritius), as well as for the cultivation of cloves.

Demographic proportions recorded in Zanzibar in 1860, are quite eloquent on the importance of the phenomenon of slavery at the time. Similarly, beyond Zanzibar, Pemba and Malindi (which became the granary of East Africa), the plantation system was also extended to the mainland , with the development of ancient cultures like cereals, coconut, etc., while exports of food products to Saudi Arabia and the Horn of Africa have greatly contributed to the development of the agricultural plantation system in East Africa. Amongst other consequences of this intense agricultural and trade strongly related to slavery activity, the following may be emphasised: the establishment of an Arab aristocracy headed by the *Sultan*, towering over a heavily hierarchised society; and the emergence of a lifestyle determined by the plantation system; this despite the fact that trade maintained its importance, and that political power still

remained dependent on a dynasty or a community, not the possession of plantations.[13]

Finally, at a psychological and symbolic level, the consequences of slavery and the slave trade still continue to impact negatively on the relations between Arabs and Africans. No one has, perhaps, summed up the problem of Arab-black relations better than the Egyptian historian Samir Zoghby, for whom these relations are like an abscess that it will be necessary to puncture and empty one day.[14] Only after the abscess has been punctured and emptied, shall conditions be created then, for a true dialogue, towards the consolidation of a common future of peace and mutual respect between Africans and Arabs. Kake's paper was written in the same spirit.

4.4. Process of Semitisation and zone of confluence and cultural dialogue

The concept of Semitisation refers to a socio-historical phenomenon of miscegenation and acculturation at three levels: anthropological, linguistic and religious, even though such a phenomenon goes, in fact, beyond these aspects. For the African populations of this zone of confluence, Semitisation may involve processes of either Arabisation and/or Islamisation (e.g. in the Maghreb-Mashrek), or Christianisation (e.g. amongst followers of the Coptic Faith), or partial "Judaisation" (example of Ethiopian Falashas), etc. As we know, the Semitic universe is the product of a biological and cultural mixing between black and white people that occurred on the threshold of historical times, in Western Asia, as part and parcel of an area of inter-civilisational and inter-cultural confluence, within which African presence is believed to have been a very ancient fact. African culture constitutes the pre-historical, proto-historical and in some cases, the historical substratum of Semitic cultural heritage, as in Arabia or Country of Sheba, Phoenicia and Palestine or Country of Canaan, according to biblical onomastics. As a result, African populations such as certain Ethiopians as descendants of the ancient Sabeans have a Semitic language as their mother- or father-tongue.

Further research is needed on these issues. However, it is generally accepted that there are two main groups of Semitic languages, a Northern group on the one side comprising Canaanean (Hebrew, Phoenician, Babylonian) and Aramean; and on the other hand, a Southern group comprising Arabic (or Sabean) and Ethiopian (or Abyssinian) of which Ge'ez (Tigrinnya) and Amharic (Amharinnya) form part.[15] Ge'ez, for which the oldest written record is the Chronicle of King Ezana (CE 350), would lose its preponderance and eventually be supplanted by Amharinnya, following the end of Aksumite dominance over the region around CE 1270. This date is seen as being a turning point in what historians call the process of "restoration" of the legitimacy of the Solomonide dynasty.

The importance of this zone of cultural dialogue and mutual influences seems fundamental, not only as birthplace of the Semitic entity, but also as an area of contact and dialogue between cultures and civilisations, especially between the regimes of matriarchy (southern African cradle of civilisation) and patriarchy (the Indo-European Nordic cradle), as emphasised by Cheikh Anta Diop in his seminal work *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa*.[16] This inter-cultural and inter-civilisational dialogue, bears testimony to the complexity of historical processes that support the evolution of the material and symbolic inter-community ties, in areas of our continent such as the Nile Valley, the Horn of Africa, the Maghreb-Mashrek, that have maintained over a longer period of time and in more consistent ways, relationships with the peoples of this area of cultural dialogue. This is all the more significant, bearing in mind the following facts: 1) that the Semitic world (that of Jews and Arabs in particular), resulted from a process of biological and cultural miscegenation; 2) that almost all elements necessary to the emergence of Islam were already in place, over 1000 years before the birth of Prophet Muhammad. It is also important to remember; 3) that despite the apparent dominance of foreign conceptions in places like the Horn of Africa and the Nile Valley, the first civilisations in this region are incontestably and deeply African in their essence, spirit and main features; and 4) that in the relationships between the peoples of Africa and their counterparts from antiquity, more

often than not, Africans took the first initiative in the political, scientific and cultural levels, over many centuries.

4.5. Ethnicity, Dual Heritage, and Conflicting Images of Self and Other

Culture being that "very specific way for each people to celebrate themselves and introduce themselves to History and to the world", then the images on Self and Other that are forged and held by individuals and the communities that they identify with, surely play a significant role in these processes. It is thus necessary to thoroughly study the history, sociology and political economy of such processes, in relationship to ethnic and racial issues on the continent.

4.5.1. Different situations, similar issues and problems

First, there are social issues with a racial colouration in southern Africa, and in the northern and northeastern regions of the African continent: Maghreb and Mashrek, Sudan, Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa; and adjacent islands to the continent. There is also the problem of national and ethnic minorities that have come and settled in Africa: Lebanese, Syrians, Greeks, Indians, Pakistani, Bengali, etc. Thirdly, there are problems with strong ethnic connotations and for which it is important to distinguish between African responsibilities on the one hand and, on the other hand, aspects that derive from foreign influences. What were the responsibilities of European colonialism and those of African post-colonial regimes and elites in the development of what is commonly and abusively called *tribalism*? These and other issues should deserve a greater attention from scholars and analysts dealing with African matters.

Let us start by looking at the case of Hutu and Tutsi in the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes region is indeed one major hotspot of ethnic tension and social conflicts, with the Hutu (of Bantu origin) and Tutsi of Nilotic origin as main protagonists, for example, in Burundi and Rwanda, whereby the April-June 1994 genocide in its complexity and with all its consequences, features as one of the darkest episodes in the history of ethnic

rivalries and antagonisms, on African soil and elsewhere in the world.

Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa represent another area of conflicting identities and images of Self and Other. The main factors of the ethnic complex include: a) the psychological and symbolic consequences of biological and cultural miscegenation; b) religion (Judaeo- Christianity and Islam); c) language (non-African Semitic languages such as Amharinnya, Ge'ez and Tigrinnya); as well as d) the transposition of discriminatory conceptions and practices, some of which having been systematised and consolidated under the feudal state ideology.

The relationships between Africans and Arabo-Berbers provide, arguably, one of the most evident cases of problematic inter-community relationships and identities on the African continent, Mauretania being one of the first examples that comes to one's mind; with almost all the phenomena that characterise the complex interrelationships between Africans and Arabo-Berbers: economic socio-political, cultural and symbolic relations marked by slavery or captivity, racial discrimination, cultural genocide and assimilation, territorial expansionism and political oppression, and so on.[17] One of the most symptomatic cases of conflicting identities in Mauretania is undoubtedly, the case of *Harratin* of semi-servile condition.[18]

Similarly to the Southern Moroccan *Ganawa*, the fate of many *Harratin* is linked to the history of conquest and/or destruction of some important centres of African civilisation of antiquity and other polities such as Ghana, Mali and Songhay; and to the process of pushback to the south, of African populations, who have thus suffered from relationships of dependence and predation through plunder, slavery, and kidnapping of African women, as well as attacks on the essence of African cultures and religions, and contempt for African people's rights and heritage. At the same time, the development of a cultural and political consciousness amongst *Harratin* communities, constitutes in Mauretania, a social phenomenon that most clearly testifies to the process of gradual erosion of the social base of *beydaan* power, today. One must also mention the active participation of regimes such as those of

Syria and Irak to wars against African populations of Sudan and Mauretania, while strengthening Arab military and political presence in these countries.

The focus will also be put on the Maghreb (North-West Africa) and Mashrek (further to the East) whereby Kairouan and the Berber people performed a critical role. For K.K. Prah, the construction of Kairouan, "the city that would become the premier Arab base in North Africa" and later "the third holiest city in Islam in the medieval period, after Mecca and Medina" was completed by CE 675, after the Arabs had taken over Tunisia by the year 670. "From Kairouan, the Arabs turned to Carthage that was first raided in 678 AD" and taken by 695.[19] Following the defeat of the Byzantine Empire, Arab attention was then turned to the Islamic conversion of the Berbers. "By the early 8th century, Arab armies included 12,000 Berbers" whose cooperation was crucial for the expansion of the empire to the Atlantic.

Here, patterns of social organisation display the following configuration from the base to the top of the social formation: a) the *Harratin*: black Africans from the south, whose possibilities of social ascension are stifled by their servile status and condition; b) the *Akhamme* (landless peasants); c) the great landowners and power holders together with other followers of the Muslim religion. History in this region and in Egypt in a particular way, was also marked by a process of substitution of the African population by Arabs, and attempts at marginalisation of the African heritage and culture. This process was compounded by historical distortions regarding, for example, the questioning of the *African-ness* of ancient Egyptian and Nile Valley civilisations. At the same time, a policy of geographical containment and discrimination was implemented, whereby the 12 to 15 million Egyptian Nubians[20] who are concentrated primarily in the southern Aswan region, still continue today to resist against ethnic discrimination, as well as the Arabisation and/or Islamisation project targeting them.

4.5.2. Sudan as a case study[21]

4.5.2.1. The ta'rib process in historical perspective

As stressed by Sharkey,[22] the process of *ta'rib*, or Arabisation entails the gradual spread both of Arab identity and the Arabic language, first amongst northern peoples, before being imposed on other peoples and regions of the country. B G V. Nyombe emphasises the plurality of uses, meanings as well as practices associated with, the term *ta'rib*. In a 1994 publication, this author writes: "In the Sudan, issues of language, culture, religion and race are so closely interlinked as to be inseparable. For the Northern Sudan Arab government, there has been, also, an obsession since independence with the need to project the Sudan to the outside world as a homogeneous Arab nation; a nation with one language (Arabic), one religion (Islam) and one culture (Arab-Moslem culture). But the reality is of course far different".[23]

For Y Fadl Hasan,[24] *ta'rib* in Sudan began in the early Islamic era with the influx of Arab Muslim nomads. The process accelerated after the fall of Nubia's Christian kingdoms in the early fourteenth century, and, following the sixteenth-century rise of the Funj sultanate of north-central Sudan, reached a state of consolidation along with Islamic culture more broadly. Policies pursued by the British colonial power and subsequent political regimes played a critical role in the next steps: "After the Anglo-Egyptian conquest of 1898, British colonial policies favoured a narrow elite from within these 'Arab' communities. Members of this elite went on to develop a conception of a self-consciously Sudanese Arabic national identity, in the process adapting the term 'Sudanese' (sudani), which derived from an Arabic word for blackness and previously had servile connotations".[25] Later on, at de-colonisation (1950s), these "Sudanese Arab" nationalists turned *ta'rib* into an official policy that sought to propagate Arabic quickly throughout a territory where scores of languages were spoken.

4.5.2.2. Ta'rib ideology and experience in Sudan and the Borderlands

The term *Afro-Arab Borderlands* is used to designate an area circumscribed by but not limited to, the Sahelo-Saharan fringe of the African continent in areas straddling Mauretania, Mali, Niger, Chad and the Sudan, with Mauretania and Sudan as the western and eastern frontlines of these Borderlands that represent what Babacar Diop terms Zone of Confluence, as an area of pluri-secular contact, mutual engagement and exchange between African populations and populations of Semitic or Berber stock, being another similar area encountered on both shores of the Red Sea.

In Sudan, *ta'rib* ideology and the related strategy of domination sit on a) territorial conquest, b) a slavery system, c) cultural alienation and social assimilation of African peoples, reinforced by d) racial supremacy mythologies and the myth of the a-historicity of Africa, with e) the alternative or concomitant use of language, culture, religion as cornerstones for identity definition and social citizenship.

In his May 2004 paper, Kwesi Prah delves extensively on the process of Arab conquest and expansion on the African continent as a key aspect of the *ta'rib* process. Arabisation was also accompanied by the growth of an ideology of Arab cultural and racial supremacy that is now most evident in Darfur.[26] In a similar context, Salam Diakite of the University of Mali is quoted by Prah, as arguing that "Attitudes of racial superiority of the white communities (Moors and Arabs) toward the non-white populations (Soninkes, Fulanis, Wolofs, Tukulors) along the Mauritanian borders on the one hand, the use of derogative nicknames, and the perception that the different ethnic groups in the northern regions of Mali (Touaregs, Moors, Arabs, Songhais, Fulanis, Bellas) have of each other on the other, have given rise to an atmosphere of mistrust and insecurity not likely to contribute to any peaceful and economic development in the areas concerned".

As further emphasised by many authors,[27] "until decolonization in the mid-twentieth century, when officials in Khartoum made Arabization into a government policy, the

acquisition of Arabic as a primary language had often led to the acquisition of Arab identity, as families constructed pedigrees through the 'invention of tradition' to assert descent from illustrious male forebears of Arabian origin". Sharkey further emphasises how Arabisation through assimilation also occurred in two other notable ways: first, as enslaved people (drawn from Ethiopia, Southern Sudan, and western regions as far as Lake Chad) and their descendants were slowly incorporated into free Arabic-speaking families and communities; and second, as some members of non-Arab communities, such as Fur and Fulani in Darfur, acquired large herds of cattle and formed alliances with Arab pastoralists like the Bagara / Baggara, in the long run changing communal affinity through patterns of settlement, intermarriage, and language assimilation. Also of note, are vicissitudes of the tormented Arab conscience, as manifested in the relationships of "Sudanese Arabs to other Arabs particularly those from the Middle-East: "For the [Sudanese] 'Arabs' at least, they are not completely sure of what and who they are. In the Sudan they are 'Arabs', but in the Arab world they are seen as mongrels who hardly deserve that name. They desperately strive for recognition of their 'Arab' status by other Arabs, who tend to look down on them – even using for them the dreaded name of *abd* (slave) that they use for those more black than they are".[28]

As Islam spread in Sudan, knowledge of Arabic spread too, with the study by Muslims of the Qur'an written in Arabic, and because Arabic offered a welcome "technology of literacy" for recording land deeds, significant events, mercantile and budgetary transactions, and biographical accounts of remarkable figures.[29] Despite this positive development, it is important to also stress what some scholars have referred to as "the fetichist obsession and tyranny of written sources". As is well documented by authors such as Jan Vansina in his seminal contribution to the *General History of Africa*, this obsession with written sources has often manifested itself under the form of methodological imbalances and gaps.[30] Such a trend tends to take for granted what is said, connoted, implied or suggested in written documents without questioning their objectivity or "veracity". It also overlooks the established fact that oral

tradition when adequately managed from a methodological point of view, can provide a reliable source for historical reconstitution as demonstrated in the *Kasala* song of the Baluba, the *Wayjaloore* (epic songs) of the Wolof in Senegambia, the *Mvet* of the Fang-Beti in Central Africa as well as in many other forms of African epic traditions including Nguni and other praise-singing traditions in southern Africa.

4.5.3. Distorted images of the world, of Self and Other

In Sudan and other parts of the African continent and beyond, the same strategy also imposed an image of Africa and the African people framed within a specific vision and concept of space and time that have been carefully engineered and marshalled to suit the interests and the project of the dominant groups. Hence the notion of "peoples without history", meaning: peoples outside human history to which they made no contribution at all**.** From the viewpoint of, for example, the "Europe of Enlightenment" of the voltaires, hegels and gobineaus, African people's contribution or capacity to contribute to history or civilisation were simply and purely denied. This was compounded by attempts at the justification of European or Arab superiority including through religious discourses such as the Islamic notion of *Kaffir* (mis-believer, pagan, heathen) or the biblical myth of the Curse on Ham and his descents, as something of a divine nature; and, therefore, as realities to be accepted as both a burden and an order of things stamped by God's will. One modality through which these supremacist ideologies operate, is by perpetuating the phenomenon of historical amnesia and an inferiority complex that was created within the same ideology and related discourses.

Endnotes

1 Histoire de l'Afrique Noire : pp. 129-175 sq.

2 "L'Afrique ou l'identité perdue", a series of four articles, in *Revue Science et Vie*, nº 731-734, August/Nov 1978.

3 See in Volume 1 of the *General History of Africa*: Portères, R & Barrau, J., « Origins, development and expansion of agricultural techniques », (pp.687-705); Vercoutter, J., "Discovery and diffusion of metals and development of social systems up to the fifth century before our era" (id.: pp. 706-729).

4 *General History of Africa - Methodology and African Prehistory*, Vol. 1 directed and edited by J Ki Zerbo, UNESCO, Heinemann, California 1981, 1992, 1995, 2000.

5 Ki Zerbo, *Histoire de l'Afrique Noire*, p. 175.

6 Ki Zerbo, *Histoire de l'Afrique Noire*, p.165.

7 Ki-Zerbo, id. p. 172.

8 Ogot, B.A., "Population movements between East Africa, the Horn of Africa and the neighbouring countries", in *The African Slave Trade from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century*. Reports and papers of the meeting of experts organised by UNESCO at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 31 January-4 February 1978 and published in 1984, in the Studies and Documents collection, pp. 175-183.

9 Kake, I. B., "The slave trade and the population drain from Black Africa to North Africa and the Middle East: in : *The African Slave Trade from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, op. cit., pp. 164-174.

10 See : N'Diaye, T., Le génocide voilé : Enquête historique, Montreal, Paris, Gallimard, 2008, 2017. Estimates quoted by N'Diaye mention a total of 17 million of black African victims, which is far below reality, given the high mortality rate amongst enslaved cohorts, caused by the cruelty of treatments inflicted to them over centuries.

11 Ogot, B A, Id, p. 176.

12 Kake, I B: id., p. 165.

13 The abolition of the Oriental slave trade will occur in 1907, after restrictions imposed since 1837.

14 "An abscess can lead to blood poisoning. It may also develop into gangrene which may require amputation of a limb. Yet, if treated surgically it will probably leave an ugly scar and the memory of a throbbing pain. Such have been Arab relations with Black Africa. The past brings forth the ugly image of the Arab slave-trader which mars the present and strains the dialogue, creating awkward moments of embarrassment". Cf. Samir M. Zoghby, 'Blacks and Arabs: Past and Present', *Current Bibliography on African Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 5, May 1970. Quote as in Kake, I B: p. 173.

15 Ethiopian writing systems seem to be the oldest as compared to other Southern Semitic writing systems including the graphic system of the Arabic language, whereas Semitic writing systems are considered to be derived from ancient Egyptian graphic systems, especially Demotic and Hieratic.

16 Diop, C A, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa*, Chicago, Third World Press, 1974, 1978, London, Karnak House 1990.

17 Cf. *Mauritania To-Day newsletter*, # 2, August-September 1990, in particular the following articles :
Daxxel, D., "The roots of Apartheid in Mauritania", pp.5/8)); and Almayehu, Girma: "Arab expansionism in Africa", pp.3/4.

18 Mauretania's adhesion to the Arab League in October 1973 was felt by the Black African majority, especially the *Harratin*, as an arbitrary and discriminatory act aimed at them and their historical personality and cultural heritage.

19 Prah, Kwesi Kwaa, "Towards a Strategic Geopolitic Vision of Afro-Arab Relations", CASAS, Cape Town, Paper submitted to the African Union (AU) Experts' Meeting on a Strategic Geopolitical Vision of Afro-Arab Relations, AU Headquarters, Addis Abba, 11-12 May 2004, pp. 1-2.

20 These figures from approximately 2010, should be updated.

21 This section is based on a paper presented by the volume editor at the Unisa-MTN-IDEA' sponsored November 2009 Sudan Studies Conference. See: Mboup, S.B., "Contribution to the debate on the Africanity of Sudan. Epistemic challenges in the area of historiography and cultural anthropology ». A revised, updated version of this paper was presented at the *International Forum on the Ethnic Identity of Ancient Egyptians of the Third Panafrican Festival on Black Arts and Cultures* (FESMAN III), in December 2010, in Dakar-Senegal.

22 Sharkey, Heather J., *Arab Identity and Ideology in Sudan: The Politics of Language, Ethnicity, and Race*, Oxford University Press, 2008. First presented in April 2007 at the African Studies Centre of the University of Leiden and a symposium on Darfur (1 March 2007) at the Africana Studies Center of the University of Pennsylvania (p.1).

23 Cf. *The Politics of Language, Culture, Religion and Race in the Sudan*, Frankfurter Afrikanistische Blätter 6, 1994 (quote as in Sharkey, Id., p.6).

24 Fadl Hasan, Yusuf, *The Arabs and the Sudan, from the Seventh to the Early Sixteenth Century*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1967.

25 Sharkey, H J : Id.

26 See also Sharkey: id., p.1.

27 See: Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terence (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, (p. 2); Spaulding, Jay & Abu Salim, M.I. (eds.), *Public Documents from Sinnar*, East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, M.I. 1989, (quote as in Sharkey, Id: 3).

28 Prunier, Gérard, *Darfur: the ambiguous genocide*, 2005.

29 Goody, Jack, *The Power of the Written Tradition*, Washington DC, Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000; Spaulding, Jay & Abu Salim M.I. (eds.), op. cit.

30 Cf. "Oral tradition and its methodology", in *General History of Africa*, Vol. 1 (op. cit.. pp. 142-165).

Chapter Five

Primacy and Permanence of African Agency

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5.1. Full scheme of the Narrative on the Continent, historical trends and landmarks

As amply documented in African scholarship including by C A Diop,[1] Africa is the cradle of humanity and human civilisation. Following the emergence of the first *Homo sapiens* (between BCE 150 000 and 130 000), the ancestors of the African people of today were driven into a powerful South-North movement started in prehistoric times, since the original Great Lakes region to the Nile Valley, where they began to live in clusters before founding later the Sudanese Nilotic Civilisation (Nubia) and the Egyptian Civilisation. These first two civilisations resulted, therefore, from a long process of sedimentation and

crystallisation through time and space of African cultural elements. In the late BCE sixth century, aftermaths foreign invasions, these same people will experience a process of dispersion in several directions within the continent. Some centuries after what is considered the end of the Sudanese Egyptian antiquity, their descendants founded the first civilisations of the West and South: Nok–Ife, Zimbabwe, etc.

Of course, exogenous factors such as slavery, colonisation and foreign education and belief systems have had a significant impact on peoples of Africa, their societies and mindsets and the course of their history, although the period spanning the influence of such exogenous factors was nothing but "another episode" in such history, as recalled by Ajayi: indeed, African agency remains the key determining factor amongst factors that have shaped and continue shaping African peoples' history and destiny, as we will try to illustrate in this chapter.

In addition to major realities, trends and landmarks identified in the previous chapter as part of the "forgotten geography of soils and peoples", key landmarks and determinants to be taken into consideration to illustrate the primacy of African agency include amongst others: the role of the Bantu; the relevance of Swahili realities and identities; the significance of the *Africanity* of Sudan and its cultural heritage; African political and military might as determinant in the balance of forces and history of geopolitical relationships between Africans and their interlocutors in antiquity.

5.1.1. The unifying role of the Bantu

The case of the Bantu entity is one of the many examples that illustrate the reality of the fundamental unity of the African peoples. Works by various authors have significantly contributed to document such a fact not only as a scientifically established fact, but also as a fact of social conscience with great socio-cultural significance, within the confines of the Bantu world and beyond. After the foundational work was laid out by pioneers of *bantuistics* (Bantu studies) such as Wilhelm H I Bleek,[2] Carl Meinhof[3] and Malcolm Guthrie,[4] African authors including Theophile Obenga[5] and Herman Batibo[6] have also made seminal

contributions to this matter and discipline, in addition to Joseph Greenberg, author of *Languages of Africa*[7] and C M Doke.[8] Cheikh Anta Diop's works on African languages have also, to some extent made a contribution to this specific field and to historical and comparative linguistics in Africa, in general.[9] Conclusive results of archaeology, palaeontology and paleo-botanics, reinforced by those of cultural anthropology and historical and comparative linguistics, indicate that Bantu peoples have migrated from the mountainous regions of Western Cameroon into their current habitats in Central, Eastern and southern Africa, over a period of two millennia (between 1000 BCE 1000 and CE 1000/1100), following two migratory waves or trends: a Western wave alongside or parallel to the Atlantic coastline; another wave which followed the northern fringes of the equatorial rain forest; being one important primary point of convergence of the two trends in the Congo basin, wherefrom Bantu peoples were to disperse later, following secondary and tertiary waves of migration.[10]

5.1.2. Swahili realities and identities

According to Wilfried Whiteley[11] and Abdallah Khalid,[12] the origin of Swahili owes a lot to certain historical factors which, in the first centuries of the Christian Era and even earlier, led certain groups of African people speaking broadly similar languages to be dispersed over a wide geographical area neighbouring the Indian Ocean and called *Shungwaya* in local traditions. Such basic linguistic affinity added to the trading relationships which they developed over time, account, to a great extent, for the emergence of a common language as a means for social communication. Despite the Arab origin of the toponym *sawahil* (coast) from which the linguonym *Swahili* (KiSwahili) is derived, *WaSwahili* (the Swahili people) were but one amongst other original *Zanj* or black / African peoples; whereas Arab influence on the language (essentially on the phonetism and lexicon) was to be registered later (i.e. not earlier than in the CE nineth/tenth century).

As demonstrated by Nurse and Spear,[13] the history of the development of Swahili both as language and cultural identity

was marked in a significant way, by a multiplicity of factors and processes occurred between CE 800 and CE 1500, the African component being of paramount importance in shaping such identity. However, as a result of the combined impacts of factors such as people's migration to the coast, their involvement in long-distance trade across the Indian Ocean and urbanisation of Swahili societies, the Swahili people have come to develop, through space and time, certain cultural traits that differentiate them, somehow, with their other African neighbours. From this perspective, Swahili can be seen as the result and expression of some sort of cultural syncretism: "Arabs have been trading along the coast for a long time, and many have remained to settle and to become Swahili"; having also, in the same process, influenced the development of coastal culture. The influence has, thus, "gone both ways, and the result has been a dynamic synthesis of African and Arabian ideas, within an African historical and cultural context".

Despite attested influences of Arabic on the Swahili vocabulary since the CE twelfth century and even earlier, results of historical linguistics are often used to substantiate the idea that this language, together with idioms such as ciBemba (Zambia, southern DRC), KiKongo and CiLuba, displays the highest ratio of retention (44%) of the common pre-dialectal Bantu linguistic legacy, as reconstituted in their respective works, by Karl Meinhof and Malcolm Guthrie, and later on, by Obenga and Cheikh Anta Diop. As proof of the A*fricanity* of KiSwahili, Nurse and Spears point to the fact that "some of the major sound changes that took place during the historical development of Swahili had already occurred by the beginning of the second millennium after Christ, and most were complete by AD 1500".[14]

5.1.3. Africanity of Sudan and its cultural heritage

The Africanity of Sudan can be established by first looking at the land and its peoples: their history, the social morphology and fabrics, as derived from relationships with the ecology, as well as other main constituents of cultural identity such as language and psychological factor.

Let us first record that the toponym Sudan evolved from the word *aswad* (meaning black) and its plural *sud*. Hence the ethnonym *Sudani* (meaning Sudanese people) and the toponym *Bilad-as-Sudan* (literally: Land of Black People) used sometimes indiscriminately, to refer both to what is now Sudan and to other parts of the continent, West Africa in particular. Long before the coinage and usage of the toponyms Sudan / Bilad as Sudan of Arab origin, the country was referred to in many ways as the Black Land or Land of Black People. Testimonies from Herodotus and Diodore de Sicile (circa 90-20 BCE) amongst others, have documented extensively how the country that is now Sudan and its people, have since time immemorial, referred to themselves and been referred to by neighbouring peoples including the Greeks, as respectively Land of the Blacks (Aethiopia, *Kmt*) and Black People (Ethiopians, *Kmtw*).

In his recount of Sudanese onomastics, M J Hashim[15] quotes some of the toponyms relating to the south (such as Hent-Hen-Nefer and Wawat). Hashim stresses how "these toponyms have been associated with the colour of blackness (such as Ta-Nehesu, Kush, Kerma, Æthiopia, Nubia, anaƎal-Salt al-Zarqā' and lastly al-Sūdān), which was - and is still - the colour of its people, since the early times of the ancient civilisations of the Nile valley up to the present". Hashim goes on commenting that "The same name seems to have evolved by translation from one language to another in the course of time. This, regarding belonging and identity, puts Sudan in the heart of Africa, which is rightly called the Black Continent. What seems to be differences of colour amongst the Sudanese are nothing more than the shades of blackness".

Throughout history, the right to name places and peoples has often been a privilege usurped by oppressors to the detriment and exclusion of the oppressed. But in some instances, as a result of their national resistance against oppression, indigenous names given to peoples and places are maintained and transmitted through space and time, from generation to generation. This is the case for the toponym Khartoum, the capital city of Sudan whose etymology, also testifies to the Africanity of the country and its peoples. Khartoum derives from

a Nilotic blend *khare-tum* whose literal meaning is "meeting of rivers" or river confluence, from *khare* (water, river in Dinka, Shilluk, Nuer, Bari, Lotuho, Toposa/Turkana) and *tum* (to meet); as Khartoum is situated at the confluence of the Blue Nile and White Nile rivers.

Be it also recalled that there is growing consensus around the fact that the physical appearance and ethnic identity of the indigenous people of today's Sudan – designated as ancient Ethiopians and Nubians or Egyptians – were indeed those of a black and African people. This fact is confirmed by written testimonies of authors such as Xenophane, Herodotus, Aristotle, Aeschylus, Diodore de Sicile and Diogene Laerce. Such a fundamental fact explains, in the opinion of Cheikh Mbacké Diop, that the qualificative *black* was used by this original African population for purposes of self-identification as well as in the characterisation of both their own land and their gods.[16] As stressed by Cheikh Mbacké Diop, the idea of the ethnic identity in terms of black colour and Africanness of the original Nile Valley populations including those of the Sudan, has received further confirmation by latest developments in scientific disciplines such as archaeology, palaeontology, archaeogenetics and molecular biology, physico-chemistry, history, linguistics and Egyptology etc.[17]

Through a great variety of facts and artefacts, Sudan also testifies to the African origin of human civilisation. Today, no serious scholar dares to challenge the established fact that Africa is indeed the cradle of humankind and of human civilisation. This fact has become a fact of historical and cultural conscience for an increasing number of Africans. According to Kotto Essome, such a fact comes as a result of a much-needed journey in space and time aimed at the rediscovery of certain "lost identities" as well as the "forgotten geography of soils and peoples". In the case of Sudan, this journey "down the corridors of history" as advocated for by the late Dr John Garang de Mabior, emblematic leader of the South Sudanese people's Liberation Movement, is much needed, inasmuch as it provides the vision of the New Sudan with "an anchor in history" while

showing to all Sudanese and to the world, that "Sudanese are indeed a historical people".

Another historical fact of key importance that has been ignored if not occulted for a long time, was brought into light by African and other scholars. This fact is about the anteriority of the Civilisation of the *Land of the Cataracts* (i.e. Upper Egypt: Kush, Merowe, Napata) in comparison to the *Civilisation of the Delta* (i.e. Lower Egypt). Many sources point to the fact that the Southern provinces of what is today's Sudan, are fundamentally and substantively anchored in a commonly shared historical and cultural patrimony that flourished as part of a more ancient techno-complex (more than 10,000 years BCE), out of which developed at a later stage, the Neolithic Revolution in the Sahara. The historical and structural connections between the Neolithic Revolution and Nile Valley Civilisations have been established as a fact of evidence documented and reinforced by archaeological, paleontological and other testimonies.

Not only did the South provide some of the basic elements of civilisation such as, amongst others, the prototype of the pyramids as well as spirituality and associated belief systems and ritualised practices in places such as Thebes (Nowe). Moreover, from a historical point of view, the South has often performed the role of last bastion and shelter of African legitimacy particularly during troubled times of social restlessness and strife consecutive to foreign invasions. This was the case when black African Pharaohs of the XXVth Dynasty such as Taharqa, Shabaka and Piankhi (Peye) mobilised their armies to restore African legitimacy in Egypt, after defeating and driving out of the country foreign invaders who had taken advantage of situations of socio-political crisis and decadence, to usurp political power in Lower Egypt and subvert it to serve political, economic and strategic interests other than those of the African people.

5.1.4. Africans and their interlocutors in antiquity

Walter Rodney, in his seminal work *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, has demonstrated that at the eve of the contacts between Africa and Europe (fifteenth century), there was no significant

difference in terms of levels of historical development between the two continents. There were indeed areas where Africa was more advanced than Europe – and vice versa. What ensured from the prolonged contact between these two continents, was that Africa's human and natural resources were confiscated and plundered to serve Europe's developmental purposes; whilst Africa became increasingly impoverished and underdeveloped in the same process. We should also remember that pre-colonial Africa was home to important centres of intellectual and literary life; with some of them having enjoyed an undeniable influence and prestige at international level, like the Sankore university in Timbuktu, a city whose educational system in the fourteenth century was, according to J Ki-Zerbo, more advanced than in most European cities.

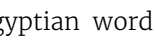
Another example: in an article published in the Pan-African research journal *Jonction* on the theme "African people and their interlocutors in Antiquity", Senegalese historian Babacar Diop Buuba, following on Herodotus' footsteps, demonstrates how, in opposition to views propagated in the dominant discourses on history, African people first assumed the initiative in their relationships with neighbouring peoples of the Middle-East , following the unification of the Egyptian empire by Southern monarchs, between the end of the fourth millennium and the beginning of the third millennium BCE. The same article also refers to certain well documented episodes of Egyptian expansionism towards the East under Pharaohs of the XIIth and XVIIIth Dynasties and to African resistance, particularly in the Kushite Empire, against Persian expansionism, in the seventh century BCE. Explicit reference is made to the testimony of Herodotus, the "father of Greek history", on how the Ethiopian Sovereign challenges Cambyse, his Persian counterpart:

> This is the advice given by the sovereign of Black people to the Sovereign of the Persians: the day when the Persians will be able to bend bows the size of our bows, then they could undertake to attack us. For now, they should be grateful to the Gods for not inspiring the Ethiopians with the least interest in adding other lands to their own.[18]

Let us also stress African agency and significant contributions in the areas of philosophy and religion, as well as in knowledge production, education, state construction and in the history of writing.

5.2. Heritage in the areas of philosophy, spirituality and religion[19]

5.2.1. The Egyptian sources of philosophy

Let us firstly examine the origin of the word "philosophy". The term of "philo-sophia" or even the noun "philo-sophos" derived from it would have been employed for the first time, according to Greek tradition itself, to qualify either Thales or Pythagoras. Thales and Pythagoras lived in the sixth century BCE. Both scholars, according to the same tradition, had stayed in Egypt and it was until their return to Greece that this term of "philo-sophos" would have been used for the first time. In his work *The Birth of Philosophy at the Time of the Greek Tragedy*, Nietzsche describes philosophy as a foreign activity in Greece, at the time of the *Presocratics.*[20] In fact, the words σοφος (friend) and σοφια (wisdom) derive from an Egyptian word ***seba***, which means "teaching" (verb or substantive), "instruct".[21] In addition, according to the historian of philosophy Diogenes Laertius, "Thales did follow lessons from no master except in Egypt, where he attended teachings from the country's priests". The same author adds that "according to Pamphile, he (Thales) learnt geometry from the Egyptians, thus designed the figure of the rectangular triangle in a circle, and immolated a cow for this discovery. Finally, in the history of philosophy, Thales is the first Greek philosopher who postulated that water is the origin of all things".

In addition to Thales and Pythagoras, other Greek pioneers in thought and/or science took the trip to Egypt or – at the very least, were fed Egyptian knowledge. These are, of course Plato and Aristotle, but also Solon, Xenophanes, Democritus of Abdera, Hecataeus of Miletus and his disciple Heraclitus of Ephesus, Eudoxus of Cnidus, etc. All have learnt, owned and developed Egyptian ideas and knowledge, to varying degrees.

5.2.2. Some elements of Egyptian and African cosmogonies

Now let us consider some elements of the Egyptian cosmogony, putting it in perspective, on the one hand with the doctrine of the pre-Socratics and on the other, with African cosmogonies. Egyptian cosmogony presents itself as an attempt to rationally explain the origin of the universe, things, beings and even of the gods.[22]

The main documents of the Egyptian cosmogony are found in the Texts of the Pyramids (dating from -2600), the Book of Coming Forth by Day, better known as the Book of the Dead (dating from -2300 to -1700), the Inscription of Shabaka (text whose original version dates back to -2780 to -2260 and which was copied ca -710 on the orders of the Pharaoh Shabaka). Several centres of thought flourished throughout Egyptian history, the most famous being without doubt that of Heliopolis. From the perspective of Heliopolis' wise men, there were, originally neither nothingness nor Chaos, nor one God-creator; instead, there was a primordial matter, unorganised, unconscious, non-informed and isotropic,[23] called *Nun.* This *Nun*, which can be understood as an original liquid mass, contains potentially all elements of the future universe. We recognise here the water of Thales. From the *Nun*, the spirit of the world, *Atum / Itm* that exists first in a scattered state, then takes conscience of itself in awakening to existence. It then splits to give birth to *Re*, personified by the power of the Sun. From the *Nun* as primordial water to *Atum* and *Atum Re* there is not actual creation, but rather, processes of self-transformation and categorical conversion, of a becoming (mutation) ("kheper" in Egyptian, symbolised by the God *Khepri*, a young scarab).[24]

Atum is in his being, both oneness and duality, the one and the many: Atum-Re-Khepri. The number three is indeed the mark of plural in Egyptian. Out of this Trinity was born a first couple made of *Shu* (air), and *Tefnut* (the humidity principle). This couple gives, in turn, birth to *Geb*, the Earth God, and *Nut*, the sky goddess. These, in turn, give birth, on the one hand, to *Osiris / Asr*, God of Vegetation, fertility and, therefore, principle of good, who proceeds to marry his sister *Isis / Ast*, symbol of the

water and the fertile Earth. They give birth to two sons Horus and Seth, God of the desert, of sterility, evil spirit who marries his sister Nephthys. All of the existing beings will, therefore, proceed from this Ennead. Thus, Egyptian cosmogony is the first to report the existence of the gods. An extract from the Texts of the Pyramids said that "it's *Nun* that is the father of the gods": . In this same system, all beings (men, animals, plants, minerals) will be considered as derived from *Re*.

Another example of a relatively well documented African cosmogony is that of the Dogon of Mali.[25] Marcel Griaule, who studied the Dogon belief system, considers the Dogon cosmogony as being as rich as that of Hesiod,[26] even though it should rather be compared to that of Hermopolis: a city whose Egyptian name *Khemenu* means "the City of the Eight". In the Dogon cosmogony, are also found eight primordial ancestors created by the God *Amma*. These eight deities are still called *Nomm*o, which means water. Hence, the title given by Griaule to Ogotemmêli's narrative. Elsewhere in this narrative, the disorder and evil will be introduced by the Pale Fox or Jackal, animal figure that reminds of the Egyptian God Seth.

5.3. African endogenous knowledge and educational systems

It is generally assumed that the birth of philosophy is linked to the emergence of rationality or *logos*. These two events (the emergence of philosophy and the logos) are also attributed to a miracle that the Ancient Greeks are credited to have operated, at around the BCE sixth century. The problem, however, is that none of the Ancient Greeks themselves ever made such a claim. On the contrary, the most prominent of Greek sages before Plato and Aristotle clearly referred to the Ancient Egyptians as their masters and teachers. Such were in particular Thales' and Pythagoras' cases.

How then was the educational system in Ancient Egypt organised, even before the Ancient Greeks visited there? Those familiar with the Egyptian civilisation do know for a fact, that well organised educational institutions existed in

Egypt centuries before the crossing of the first Greek in that African land. And the Ancient Egyptians used to call them, not "academia", nor "school", but  pr-anx (per ankh), which means "house of life" that was guided on the principle of *Shem-su*, meaning going, travelling, searching, studying together (corporate approach to teaching and learning). In the same context, education was/is also about exploring relationships, and acquisition of customs and social and cultural codes relevant to people's lives and the survival of their communities. As a comprehensive process, this type of education targets three different areas as identified by Molefi K Asante: feeling, knowing, acting.[27] From an Afro-centric perspective, all these three components are inter-related.

It must be emphasised, once again, how some of the Greek thought pioneers such as Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, have reproduced in Greece Egyptian models of education institutions. Plato founded the "Academy" and Aristotle the "Lycée": two educational institutions unknown until then in Athens. Apart from Solon, Thales and Pythagoras, we know from different sources that Plato and Aristotle had also travelled to Egypt where they remained and studied for five to thirteen years. Plato had fled to Egypt in the aftermath of the unfair trial of his master, Socrates, and the death sentence that followed.

What about other African indigenous educational systems (AIES)?[28]

First, it must be recalled that in spite of a lack of interest on the part of African educationists, teachers, professors, curricula developers and on the part of African researchers themselves, until today, AIES have always performed a critical and irreplaceable role in the process of education, training and socialisation of the African child in the 0 to 6 age group. Education in this context, is not only about acquisition of knowledge; it is also about the teaching and learning of value systems, as well as the capacity to make a distinction between superficial and deep knowledge as transmitted and acquired through initiation and rites of passage; and how to use knowledge. This knowledge is about knowledge of self: first

one's body; but also knowledge of the environment (fauna and flora); knowledge of society and its various institutions and instances; as well as knowledge of the history of the group to which one belongs.

Education here is also about learning or acquisition or reinforcement of fundamental qualities and values such as patience, resilience, self-control, obedience to authority and respect for self and for other people and so on. It is also, finally, about the development of one's spirit and mind by means of intellectual development and language acquisition through various means, including listening to narratives such as myths, legends and stories; in addition to educational games and riddles, amongst others.

In a way, such educational processes aim at a qualitative transformation of one's personality and strengthening of one's character leading to ontological change: it is also an on-going process of integration into one's community (socialisation), with age groups playing an important role. Furthermore, within a context, whereby a clear-cut distinction exists between the superficial knowledge about realities and facts, on the one hand and, on the other hand, the *deep or inner knowledge*, which is co-substantive to real knowledge, it is generally recognised to the old (wo) man bending under the weight of years of accumulated experience and acquired wisdom, the faculty of seeing very far away, whereas the adolescent standing on their tip toes, stares blindly at the horizon. Because "knowledge is too heavy for the dog's head", as a consequence, spiritual development that guarantees a safe and wise management and use of knowledge, constitutes another central objective of AIES.

5.4. African concept(s) of the state

This section is based on a paper contributed by José do Nascimento.

5.4.1. A history of state formation as old as time

To our knowledge, the African oral or written sources have left us no document that outlines what could be considered a systematic presentation on a doctrine of an African state.

However, the state as political institution has been a reality throughout the history of Africa, as evidenced in the case of the best-known political formations including the following areas of civilisation and polities:

- in the region of *Iteru* river (the Nile): *Ta Meri* (ancient Egypt) and *Ta Seti* (ancient Nubia);
- in the region of the Joliba / Djoliba River (the Niger): the *Wagadu, Tekruur, Mande*, the *Songhay* and *Mogho*;
- in the region of the river Congo: *Kongo, Kuba, Ngola* (or *Ndongo*) and *Matamba*;
- in the region of Lake Chad: the *Kanem-Bornu*;
- in southern Africa: *Zimbabwe, Monomotapa* and the *Zulu* confederation at a later stage.

All such polities do meet the criteria from which international law defines a state; namely, a population, a territory, an effective political power. As a matter of fact, it can be said that the existence of the state as such is attested in Africa before 3200 years BCE, i.e. before the period of the unification of Upper Egypt (*Shemau*) and Lower Egypt (*Mehu*) by Narmer. Each one of these two states were formed on the basis of the union of various territorial and political entities under the form of a *Spt* (prefectures in Greek).

5.4.2. The concept of *Per aa / Per âa*

We chose to focus on the concept of *Per âa* as a starting point for our analysis. This choice is dictated by the fact that of all political titles in African languages, *Per âa* is the etymology which provides the most comprehensive information on the African conception of the state. *Per âa* appears to a large extent, as indeed a concept of the ancient Egyptian language that is attested from the Old Kingdom (2686–2181 BCE) onwards. But at this time, according to Egyptologists, *Per âa* was not yet a political title. At this time and until the Middle Kingdom (2040–1782 years BCE), *Per âa* was used to describe the building that used to house the main organs of government. Egyptologists have also translated *Per âa* in the texts of this period by the word palace. Again according to Egyptologists, it is only from the New

Kingdom (1570–1070 BCE) that the term *Per âa* will apply to the person who was the holder of political authority in the state.

An approximation can (also) be made with the title *Pharaoh / Fari*. We find the *Per âa* concept in contemporary literature expressed in European languages under the form of the word Pharaoh. In fact, the word derives from a vocalisation in Semitic and European languages, of the Egyptian word *Per âa*: we have for example, *Par'o* in ancient Hebrew, and *Pharao* in ancient Greek and Latin.

M Delafosse is the first to have made a connection between the title of Pharaoh (*Per âa*) and African languages. Based on the observation that West Africa's most prestigious political title is the title of *Fari*, Delafosse noted that there is, in fact, a generalisation of this title through variations such as: *Fara* in Hausa, *Faran* in Songhay, *Farba, Farima, Farhama, Fama* in Mande, *Farba or Buur Fari* in Wolof. After Maurice Delafosse, Cheikh Anta Diop also wondered about the etymology of the concept of Pharaoh in the lexicon of African languages.[29] Diop endorses the approximation made by Delafosse between Pharaoh and *Fari*. However, Diop proposes an alternative etymology: according to him, the concept of *Fari* is formed with the plural of *per:* the enclosure of the house and, by extension, the house of Pharaoh. This meaning of *per* in Walaf / Wolof is identical to that of *per* in ancient Egyptian.

Let us now further scrutinise the meaning of the concept of *Per âa* and evidence drawn from its uses in African languages. In this regard, African languages testify on how African people live(d) and perceive(d) their historical experience. They are from this point of view the *black box of African history*, according to the beautiful expression of the Egyptologist Alain Anselin. Further evidence can thus be drawn from the scrutiny of the vocabularies of African languages. Let us consider for example, the original uses of the word "house" in African political terminology.

What are these uses? Egyptologist Jean Charles Coovi Gomez points to the fact that in African indigenous languages, the word "house" is often used to designate the country. From further investigation, Do Nascimento found that if this is not true for all African languages, it is certainly true for many of

them. This is actually so in West Africa, in the case of the Ewe, Bambara, More, Dagara and Hausa languages in which the words "house" and "country" are expressed by the same lexeme. The same is also true in Kinyarwanda, Bamiléké, Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinnya; and of course in Pharaonic (ancient) Egyptian. Against the uses of the word per in various African languages, it thus appears clear, that this word is a toponym of attachment or linkage or affiliation. It is used to designate an area of parental, territorial or institutional attachment or affiliation. From this point of view, it appears that the holder of political authority in the Grand (*âa*) State (*Per*) may have received the political title of *Per âa* not only by metonymy but also because s(he) was considered as custodian of the great space of political affiliation constituted by the union (*sematawy*) of the two lands, the union of two *Per* that made up the Pharaonic State. We will examine further elements that attest to their quality as depositary and custodian of authority.

5.4.3. Role of lineages in the history of state formation

The preceding is consistent with the role performed by lineages in the process of historical constitution and emergence of the state in Africa. So to speak, when political society was founded, it was founded by lineages that gave it its first form: that of a federation of land-based lineages as one commonly shared political community. Be it also recalled that lineages in Africa have often given to this political community a qualifier which literally translates by the word "house" or "home". That is why in the political terminology as recorded in the basic vocabularies of many African languages, "home", "country" and "state" are often synonymous.

In reality, the term "lineage" and its substitute "clan", are concepts of European languages that are often used by anthropologists to improperly translate African concepts that refer to different types of social formations and forms of parental solidarity, as stressed by Malian historian Sekene Mody Cissoko, who strongly argues that more suitable alternatives should be looked for in the lexicon of African languages, instead. Take for example the Vili language that belongs to the group

of Kongo languages. In Vili, the notion of family as household, translates by the word *tchivumu* (literally belly). It is composed of those who belong to the same womb as members of the same uterine descent. To speak of the extended family to which is attached a household, we use the word *Likanda* (literally the palm of the hand). This word actually refers to the family as a union of several households structured around uterine sisters who come under the authority of their elder brother (the uncle of their children). Amongst the Vili, a *likanda* is, therefore, a combination of several households (bellies) under the authority (hand) of their older brother also called *makonga likanda*, in recognition of his social status and authority within the *likanda*.

Again, the role of lineages as structures of parenthood and common ascendency in the history of state formation, must be emphasised. The Wolof / Walaf recognise this fact through the meanings and uses of the words *bokk* (to share) and *mbokk* (parenthood, ascendency, descent). Similarly, the Sereer remember well that "it was a maternal stick that drew the territorial borderlines of the polity of Siin". In such a dispensation, a "lineage" has fulfilled its variety of social and political functions as the sum of several households that identify themselves as forming a common home on the basis of a commonly shared relationship. A lineage is virtually a house that brings together several households that share the same spiritual worship community.

5.4.4. Further evidence from the concept of *Nb*

Another term that may shed some light on the understanding of the content and meaning of the concept of political authority is that of *Nb*: a political title that is written in hieroglyphics with the sign of an open basket. The sign itself evokes the idea of a disposition to receive and welcome. *Nb* was also the title attributed to the Supreme God *Ra*. *Ra* was called the *Nb* (Lord or master) of the sky. In the perspective of some Egyptologists, here lies, most probably, the origin of the distinction between two key categories and notions in the terminology of political power and authority in African indigenous languages and

cultures: the category and title of *Lord of Heaven or Sky* as a civil space, as opposed to that of Master of the Soil (land area).

In various African languages, we find the concept of *master of the soil* as custodian and administrator of the land area in competition with the *master of the sky* or custodian of the airspace (i.e. the civil space or political power). Examples can be found in Wolof and Sereer, as well as in the Bambara, More and Kongo languages with the prestige and centrality of the roles performed by the *Laman, Dugutigi, Tengsoba* and *Tchitominsi* as masters or administrators of the land within their respective communities, in competition (rather complementarity) with those institutions and persons in which political power was/ is vested: the *Buur* (Wolof and Sereer), *Mansa* (Bambara), *Naba* (More) and *Ntinu* (Kongo), as custodians of airspace i.e. the civil space.

It appears from the review of these concepts in African indigenous languages, that the holder of political authority in a federation of land-based lineages used to be recognised or granted the quality not of sovereign of political power, but rather that of depositary of socio-political authority derived from his important social and economic functions. He is the *mother* (*Ndey ji Réew* in Walaf / Wolof) or *uncle* of the country. In fact he is the incarnation of political authority within a political space that is perceived primarily as a territorial space or rather, a land-space. His sacramental power over the land gives him authority over men. His power and authority are both exercised as custodian of the interests of all federated lineages. The function of the *uncle or mother of the country* participates both in the public service (as worship officiating officer) and the government (as guarantor of social order and management and administration of land matters).

5.4.5. Worship community and right of establishment

As a cement for statehood and nation-building, ancient African religious beliefs and practices have exerted great influence particularly on the political life of the people as well as the definition of the content and implementation of the law. This is illustrated in polities arising from the coexistence of an

alien people and a native people in the same political space. This was the case for example in ancient Egypt, Wagadu and Mogho. That is why ancient African international law did not recognise the right of conquest since it was prohibited by religious beliefs; whereas marriage could provide a solution of some kind, notwithstanding the fact that contracting marriage and matrimonial alliance with the indigenous people would only grant a mere right of establishment to the non-indigenous people.

A second formality was also required from the newcomers: the obligation to honour the memory of the oldest ancestor of the indigenous people without abandoning the worship of the memory of their own oldest ancestor. As a matter of fact, it was believed, for example, that agricultural and other economic activities amongst the alien people could not be prosperous on the land of the indigenous people, without honouring the memory of the person who first entered into a ritual alliance with the land. In so doing, the alien people could enter into the indigenous people's line of parenthood and descent, inasmuch as this relationship of common parenthood and descent was based on the celebration of the same ancestral figure, memory and heritage, and worship of the same deities.

Ultimately, a major condition of integration was, therefore, that the political leader of the alien people govern the airspace (i.e. the civil space) as custodian of the interests of all political households (*Per spt*) that would be amalgamated and integrated together, and not only as exclusive custodian of the interests of his own people and political home of origin. In other words, he had to promote and defend the general interest, by managing public affairs in all impartiality and equity: two notions that have been central both to the conception and the practice of the state and political power in Africa, at least until the sixteenth century.

5.5. Africa and the history of writing

Be it recalled that this is a context whereby, according to Obenga, orality constitutes only a dominant and not an exclusivity. A context whose peoples have, first produced in the history of

humankind, the most ancient writing systems under the forms of hieroglyphs, demotic and hieratic in addition to Meroitic and Ethiopian graphic systems, for example, Amharinnya, in Ancient Egypt, and/or Ethiopia and Nubia. Such a tradition was/is continued through the use of other indigenous writing systems that include the following: the gicandi (Kikuyu), the Mande syllabic systems in West Africa (Mende, Toma, Gerze), the Vai orthography (Liberia) and so on. A mention must also be made of the *Ajami* traditions as technology of literacy. Part of the legacy derived from this *technology of literacy* as mentioned in the case of Sudan, is constituted by very rich corpora in, for example, Swahili (East Africa) and in West Africa (Hausa, Mandinka, Pulaar, Walaf languages). This is a literary and poetic tradition linked to and to a large extent, inspired by, the Islamic religion and tradition and first written in a graphic system derived from the Arabic writing system that was enriched with a number of graphic signs. In both West and East Africa and elsewhere on the African continent, the development of *Ajami* traditions was also marked by the emergence of intellectual centres some of which with the status of world universities such as Sankore in Timbuktu (Mali), Pir, Kokki (Senegal), Lamu, Pemba, Faza, Unguja (Zanzibar) alongside the Indian Ocean coastline.

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Chapter Six

Preservation, Re-Invention of African Heritage, Survival of Diaspora Communities

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6.1. Africanisms, Africanness / Africanity

Other significant examples of *African* agency, its permanence and primacy in shaping the lives, destinies and identities of Diaspora Africans or peoples of African descent, can be found in the analysis of the history and realities of the communities established by those peoples, through space and time, as *Africanisms* or manifestations, illustrations of the *Africanity* of those communities and peoples. Africanity or *Africanness* can broadly be defined as all traits, characteristics that make it possible to identify, define or characterise as *African* any fact, reality, person, or community. Depending on the context, this concept may refer singularly or holistically, to the origin, the identity, the state and/or essence, the nature of facts, realities, persons or communities in question: consequently, Africanity should, according to Pathé Diagne, be understood in terms of a historical and cultural (not racial) specificity: which does not exclude, either, possibilities of borrowing or mutual exchange with other cultures or areas of civilisation.

The concept of *Africanisms* will, therefore, refer here to all historical experiences, societies, cultural areas or spaces of civilisation, identifiable in time and space, (inside and) mostly

outside Africa; and sharing cultural features that could be linked to the same African cultural, historical and anthropological heritage (s): this despite, beyond specificities and differences that may be noticeable between various historical experiences, societies, cultural areas of civilisation.

The preceding testifies to the existence of a close correlation between the concepts of *Africanism*, *African* and *Africanity* (or *Africanness*) as they make reference to realities and processes, sometimes of a great complexity that only an interdisciplinary research effort will allow to explore, understand, explain in an adequate way, in order to discover and apprehend them with all their connections and significance, beyond the limited confines of this book project.

6.2. Slave trade, chattel slavery and the destiny of Diaspora communities

As a major factor for the dispersion of African peoples, the study of the experience of slavery and the slave trade is essential to understanding the material base of historical and cultural continuity between Africa and the African Diaspora: indeed, their study and knowledge in their different aspects and modalities are of critical importance. It is also important to stress that, even though rarely acknowledged by mainstream scholarship, both the slave trade and chattel slavery have played, as documented by Eric Williams in his seminal works *Capitalism and Slavery and History of the Caribbean*, a fundamental role in the development of the capitalist system. This role was central during the phase of primitive accumulation within the Triangular Trade framework as basis of the European Industrial Revolution as well as, for example, in the emergence of the USA as a global economic powerhouse.[1] In this context, the USA has widely benefited from the experience of *domestic colonialism*, to borrow this expression from Omali Yeshitela etc.[2] Slavery also had a very profound effect on the fate of Africa and Africans. Demographically, the slave trade resulted in a real skimming and decimation of the African population; while ecologically, there has been de-population and impoverishment of entire

regions, like this no man's land reported by the historian Ki Zerbo in the northern Ashanti area.

For all these reasons the impact of the capture, trade, enslavement and exploitation of Africans are yet to be fully assessed, as factors of profound historical regression for Africa and the African people: a reality that has been compounded, at the subjective level, by the ways in which it was used to shape negative visions on Africa and its peoples; without forgetting the psychological and mental impact of such a traumatic experience on the self-image of many Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora.

But as was taught by Steve Bantu Biko[3] "the limits of tyrants are marked by the endurance of those whom they oppress" and strive to keep under bondage, because where there is oppression, there are always resistance and struggle. This spirit of resistance, which had never ceased to develop on the African continent as well as on board the slave ships on the high seas, was still fuelled by the harsh conditions of oppression, of exile and enslavement in foreign lands, where bloody repressions were only stimulating the irreducible spirit of rebellion, freedom and *Ubuntu* of African people.

It is in such a context of ongoing and multifaceted resistance that must be located the saga of the glorious epic of *Neg Mawon la Libete* (Maroons Freedom Fighters), which has played a key role in the historical and cultural continuity between the African continent and the African Diaspora.

6.3. Permanent resistance: anti-Slavery struggles and historical conscience

The saga of the glorious epic of the *Fighting Maroons* was a vast, uninterrupted movement of resistance and search for statehood, nationhood and *Ubuntu*. This movement spans from the Caribbean to the south of the USA through "Latin America", over more than five centuries (1502 to present). Of variable sizes and durations, the independent communities founded by these African freedom fighters ranged from small bands that would survive for less than a year to powerful and well-organised states that lasted several generations.

Such were the cases of the legendary Republic of Palmares in Brazil as well as other polities in Haiti and Guyana. In the latter country, the autonomy of the community founded by the *Bush Negroes* is recognised until today. The very existence of such communities directly undermined the foundations of the slave plantation system inasmuch as these independent communities represented a permanent economic, political and military threat. Hence, the violence and brutality with which the establishment of such communities was opposed by proponents of the plantation system.

It is, therefore, easy to understand why these communities would nestle in the remotest, most inaccessible, repulsive areas where water and arable land were scarce: in deserts and swamps, the marshy wetlands of the Americas, the impenetrable jungles of Guyana or the heights barricaded by canyons and deep gorges of Jamaica's *Cockpit Country*. To deal with the militias, the hordes of mercenaries and other "rangers" and *capitaes do mato* released on their heels with their packs of hounds, by proponents of the plantation system, the *Fighting Maroons* often did not have at their disposal anything but ridiculous and/or insufficient weapons. However, unwavering was their will to fight on and irrepressible their thirst for freedom. Their science of camouflage and defence, their craft in guerrilla warfare in general often testified to a consummate mastery in the art of military strategy and tactics.

One also understands why such communities had the greatest concern for their organisation and economic independence. A high degree of centralisation of authority, coupled with strong internal discipline; whereas the moral weight of the community, the authority of the leaders, as well as religion and the importance of family ties, played a significant role, as the guarantors of the social cohesion and stability of such communities. Beyond a certain diversity of cultural patterns, these independent communities and their founders were bound, in a significant way, by references to a common cultural background that had been forged in the common struggle against the same enemy, and a common ideological loyalty to the same African ancestral heritage.[4]

The first noticeable group of communities are the *Quilombos* (from *Kilombo:* a word meaning "army" in Kikongo) and *palenques* in "Latin America".[5] In Brazil, the famous *palenque* or *quilombo* of Palmares (seventeenth century) which became a true black (African) republic as a (con)federation of smaller independent communities, was considered by the white plantocracy that sat on top of the slave system as "the greatest threat to the future of civilization and of the Brazilian people".[6] Organised according to African governance principles and institutional models, the Republic of Palmares managed throughout the duration of its existence, to ensure both the safety and food security for its own people. Other communities include those established by the *Fighting Maroons* of Jamaica and the *Boni, Saramaka, Paramaka, Njuka, Kwinti and Matavai* of Guyane, Guyana, Suriname, who are amongst the oldest surviving communities.

In this whole process of resistance and search for *Ubuntu* and nationhood, Haiti and the legacy of *Neg Mawon La Libété* represent one major achievement, according to CLR James's testimony in his work *The Black Jacobins*.[7] In Haiti, the fight towards freedom and independence lasted twelve years. Under the leadership of Toussaint Louverture who managed to transform scattered groups of *Fighting Maroons* into a seasoned and disciplined army of liberation, were defeated in turn: the local white people and the soldiers of the French monarchy, a Spanish invasion, a British expedition totalling about 60,000 men and another French expedition equal to the previous one and led by the brother-in-law of Napoleon Bonaparte. The defeat of the latter resulted in the establishment of the Black Republic of Haiti that was proclaimed at Gonaives on 1 January 1804 by J J Dessalines who had fought alongside Toussaint Louverture.

In response to the learned inanities of F W I. Hegel on the so-called a-historicity of Africa and the African people as expression of "an episteme of conquest, dominance and predation" also marked by a "spirit of prejudice, partiality and ignorance", Clinton Hutton locates the epistemological and ontological roots of the Haitian Revolution - considered as the

only successful rebellion of enslaved people in the history of humanity – in African principles and values.[8] The point made by Hutton must be given due consideration, bearing in mind that as a result of permanent resistance to oppression, entire sections of people of African descent only lived in captivity during the journey across the "Middle Passage". Many of them endeavoured to escape bondage soon after setting their feet on the *New World*, in order to establish and defend through space and time, independent African communities ruled by African principles and value systems. It must be recalled, furthermore, that after accession to independence and international sovereignty despite the hostility from Western powers, the Haitian people and leadership, contributed to the independence of the USA, whilst also providing strategic backing, inspiration and active support to the Bolivarian emancipation struggles in South America. Indeed, Alexandre Pétion as Head of State and the Haitian generals did provide strategic and military support to the emancipation struggle led in so-called "Latin America" by Simon Bolivar. Be it remembered that Bolivar visited Haiti twice to request such support; and that it was from a free Haiti that he was able to rest, recuperate, and launch his final offensive against Spanish colonialism.

The superiority from a historico-political and ethical point of view, of the Haitian Revolution as compared to the French Revolution of 1789, lies in the fact that whereas protagonists of the French Revolution were the same who attempted at restoring slavery and bondage in Haiti and elsewhere in the Caribbean, the Haitian experience combined the ideals of abolition and revolution with those of self-determination and social emancipation.

6.4. Gender dimensions of the struggle and role of African women[9]

As pointed out by many analysts, it is critical to acknowledge the historical role of African women in the Diaspora in the biological and cultural survival of the African people. Indeed, over time, these women, representing at least one third of the slave cargoes uprooted from Africa, have played a fundamental

role, either in the socio-economic and socio-cultural spheres of life (education, defence of the African family as an institution, perpetuation of African religions and languages); as well as in the multifaceted resistance against the slave system in general, including in the armed resistance and the *quilombist* movement.

In the economic domain, the role of African women is also a well-established and documented fact, both in the plantation system as such (both as domestic house-workers and in the fields); but also in ensuring food self-sufficiency and the socioeconomic survival of African communities on the plantations, in the *quilombos* and during the post-slavery era (i.e.: after the official abolition).[10] On the socio-cultural level, the permanence of the matrilineal inheritance and greater attachment to the ancestral lands often demonstrated by African women, did not fail to strengthen their role in the defence of the African family as a fundamental institution, in a context where "the geographical and chronological rotation of slaves was such that without greater stability of women, many elements of the African heritage would have been lost".

Similarly, in the direction of the political and military struggles of the African peoples in the Diaspora, we know the key role of African women such as Nanny, a legendary figure who led a long war of resistance (1660-1740) in Jamaica, as embodiment of the image of the African Queen Mother, matriarch, warrior and priestess at the same time, and Harriet Tubman, nicknamed *Moses* and *General Tubman* because of her outstanding leadership abilities as organiser of the "Underground Railroad": a very complex network of terrestrial and fluvial pathways for the escape of Africans from enslavement, in the south of the United States. Closer to us again, we could cite examples of Angela Davis, Claudia Jones (who passed away in December 1964), Queen Mother Moore, in addition to many other well-known and anonymous heroines of the emancipatory struggle of the African people.

6.5. Cultural continuity between Africa and the Diaspora

6.5.1. Aspects of popular culture in Jamaica

Following in the footsteps of Fanon, Amilcar Cabral has demonstrated the organic nature of culture, as a factor of historical continuity. All African music forms attest to this fact: from *jazz* to *reggae* and *rap*, via *samba*, *calypso* and *bidipoko* (music of the "Bush Negroes" of Guyana and Suriname). In addition to many instruments and forms of African origin, the two areas of music and dance have also retained their functional character (beyond mere recreational functions), in a wide range of social occurrences and activities: prayer, work, play, home life, etc. Also worthwhile noting, is the survival of acrobatic and martial dances such as *Capoeira* (Brazil), *The Lagya d'la Mô* (Martinique and Guadeloupe), the *Bwa* (Trinidad, Grenada etc.), which, at the same time, were as many schools for training in the acquisition of skills in the craft of warfare, for example, self-defence and community preservation purposes.

It is true that many African traditional values had to be reinterpreted by reason of multiple contingencies related to the forced exile in foreign lands, thus giving rise to different types of *Africanisms*.[11] It can thus be argued with E Kamau Brathwaite, that the *Middle Passage* is far from being only or mainly a traumatic and destructive experience that separated Diaspora Africans from Africa, thereby creating a gap in their sense of history and tradition. In reality, in a variety of ways, the *Middle Passage* rather was, for many Diaspora African communities and their Afro-descendent members, a pathway, a channel, a bridge between historical and cultural traditions of African origin and their new experiences in foreign lands; especially since "the former African slaves and Creole Caribbean Blacks began upon their first landing, to adapt their African heritage to new and different conditions".[12]

In spite of attempts at diluting the African heritage through meticulously planned and orchestrated systems and policies of cultural miscegenation, the African component not only managed to survive; it has also remained altogether

preponderant, as documented by well-known scholar and *calypsonian* Hollis "Chalkdust" Liverpool, in his seminal work on the Carnival tradition in Trinidad and Tobago.[13] It is, therefore, also in the field of the struggle of Africans in Jamaica, the Caribbean and the Diaspora at large to preserve their African cultural heritage especially against attempts at *Creolisation* and cultural miscegenation, that will be best manifested, their vitality and quest for reaffirming their identity, throughout history. Ample evidence can be found in the fact that for most Jamaicans and other Africans in the Caribbean, the *great tradition* (matrix of all popular culture) is unquestionably African, in the same way as white *Creoles* continue, meanwhile, to refer to their European "tradition".

In the area of spirituality and religion, we can cite: a) the survival of African traditional religious beliefs and practices, such as the theocentric and unitary conception of the world, the humanness and humanity of God, rites of possession, and of celebration of the birth, and funeral ceremonies; as well as b) the many functions assumed by the *Obeahman* (African priest), in a context whereby "religion was not externalized and institutionalized as in Europe".[14] According to Brathwaite, in spite of hardships and challenges associated with slavery it is also, "the inherent nature of the culture that has allowed its transfer from Africa to the Caribbean", while giving it, at the same time, its "potential for reconstruction and explosion".

Let us also mention significant aspects of resistance in the area of language. As noted by Brathwaite, it was perhaps, in language that was best achieved cultural alienation of Africans in the Diaspora. At the same time, it is probably also on that front, that "are best illustrated their willingness and ability of cultural resistance". Suffice to mention: the proliferation of *meta-languages* (coded or esoteric languages) that survived particularly in the context of clandestine spaces of resistance such as religious rituals; as well as the fact that many indices allow to look at different *Creoles* in use in one or another islands of the Caribbean, as African languages. The Haitian national language that displays striking similarities with, for example, IsiZulu, provides one such example.

6.5.2. *Rastafari*, reggae, resistance, renaissance[15]

Many analysts – Rodney,[16] Campbell,[17] Foehr, amongst others – point to the 1930s as the moment for the origin and birth of *Rastafari* as a historical and socio-cultural phenomenon, in the context of Jamaican post-slavery and colonial society. Such a context is deeply and significantly marked, amongst others, by a strict racial hierarchy, by the confiscation and monopolisation of political and economic power by descendants of the white *plantocratic* system and the Creole oligarchs, by the marginalisation and growing deprivation of the huge black / African majority (80% of Jamaica's total population); and by the hegemony of the English language in society and in the educational system in particular, through institutionalisation of its *oxbridgian* version.

Above all, this was a context marked by an intensification and radicalisation of struggles for emancipation of the African masses, as testified by the popular 1938 uprising in Jamaica. This event, similar to the 1865 armed insurrection of Morant Bay, led by Paul Bogle and others, testify to the permanence of the resistance of African people, in this case the African Diaspora who have relentlessly struggled, waged wars against oppression to regain their stolen *Ubuntu* and nationhood: a tradition as old as the institution of slavery and the slave trade.[18] In the case of *Rastafari*, key factors worthwhile being noted in weaving the rich, complex tapestries of the struggles and the memories associated with them include: the impact of "Ethiopianism" or "Africanism" as symbol of historical and cultural continuity and of political legitimacy, and in particular the ideological and symbolic importance of victories against Italian / European invaders (Adwa: 1896) and fascism (1935); in addition to the significance and relevance of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and crowning of Emperor Haile Selassie I (1930). The significance and impact of African Nationalism in this context should also be emphasised: the Nyabingi movement of Kigezi (Uganda); the Land and Freedom Army ("Mau Mau") led by dreadlocked Dedan Kimathi (Kenya); and the Mouvement of struggle against national and racial oppression led by John Chilembwe (Malawi-ex Nyassaland).

From a historical and political standpoint, the 1960s was another deciding moment in the evolution and consolidation of Rastafari. This context of resurgence of Rastafari was marked, amongst others, by the influence of Malcolm X and the Black Power Movement across the whole Caribbean and in Africa, in addition to the impact on the conscience and mobilisation of the African youth, of the National Liberation Movement in southern Africa (South Africa / Azania), Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia) as well as in the former Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Cabo Verde.

Marcus Garvey's legacy and Walter Rodney's influence are also often mentioned as important determinants for Rastafari. As a revolutionary intellectual , Rodney spent a great deal of time interacting and « grounding » (communicating, debating) with Rasta *bredrin and sistrin* (brothers and sisters) in their own communities in the context of Jamaica's mountains and hilltops. Ultimately, together with Marcus Mosiah Garvey's legacy as provider of the ideological cement for racial and political consciousness of African peoples throughout their struggles against bondage and oppression, Rodney, through his leadership role, is arguably amongst the figures who had a most impactful, durable influence on *Rastafari*, as a social and cultural movement with great socio-political significance, despite Rasta declared suspicion against *politrics* and "things political" in general.

Horace Campbell has produced a very pertinent analysis of the historical evolution of African symbolism in the Caribbean, in particular the transition from the symbols of Quashie and Anancy, as an integral part of the cultural heritage of the slavery period, to that of the lion, within the framework of the Rasta movement. Campbell shows in particular how the characters of Quashie (symbol of duality) and Anancy,[19] personification of cunning and resourcefulness (at times to the detriment of other oppressed people in society), were both the result and the reflection of the stigmas with which the slavery system had profoundly marked the self-esteem and self-image of the African community in the Caribbean, in a context where,

precisely, this same community saw no other salvation for itself than in a "strategy for survival".

In contrast, the identification with the symbol of the lion – with its roar (war cry?), its mane (symbolised by the "dreadlocks"), its physical strength and character, its intelligence and nobility – is seen as being more in line with "a people marching in a militant spirit towards self-discovery and its full realization". This is confirmed in particular by the slogan: "Rastaman a lion" (Rastaman is a lion). As for the image of natural "dreadlocks" or "braids", which Rasta youth wear with such pride as a symbol of African cultural identity, their widespread use was greatly encouraged by the identification with the fighters of the Kenya Land and Freedom Army of Dedan Kimathi (commonly called "Mau Mau"), in 1954. This transformed this image of "locks" into a symbol of physical beauty, but also of pride, self-confidence and spiritual and moral strength, in Jamaica, within the African Diaspora and on the African continent.

According to Walter Rodney, as a social and cultural movement, a way of life (lifestyle), a philosophy and worldview, Rastafari can be considered as one of the strongest, more genuine expressions of Pan-Africanism in the twentieth century:

> If we agree that true liberation starts with a re-assessment of ourselves as Africans and of the world from our own viewpoint, then, Rastafari can be perceived as one of the most genuine, advanced /radical expressions of Panafricanism.[20]

In his turn, Leahcim Tufani Semaj emphasises the relevance of *Rastafari* as cultural expression i.e. as an attempt to reconquer, redefine and restructure African people's identity, particularly the African youth, from a physical, mental, social and spiritual point of view, thereby "giving meaning to our very being in addition to providing us with schemes and patterns of interpretation of reality".[21]

All of the preceding identifies with the spirit of revolt, defiance, challenge embodied, carried out through the pulsating riddims (rhythms) and powerful lyrics of reggae or *Jah music* as it is popularly called amongst Rasta communities. Emphasis must be put, here, on the operational value of Rasta and Bob Marley's message as embodied in reggae. As a social and political activist, a freedom fighter, a people's leader, Marley, similarly to Peter Tosh and many other African musicians of the Diaspora, have made important contributions to Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance in many ways: not only through music with beautiful melodies, powerful lyrics, and something of a "healing power" as expressed in Trenchtown Rock;[22] but also through its capacity and impact as an educational, inspirational and motivational factor: for example, the song *Zimbabwe* and its impact on the morale of guerilla fighters of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA),[23] Marley's invaluable contributions can also be assessed by looking at his actions in concrete support both of the National Liberation Movement in Africa, and in favour of the vulnerable and deprived masses in Jamaica and the Caribbean.

6.5.3. Places of memory and meditation[24]

Emphasis is put here on, amongst others, the continuity of African peoples' pluri-secular struggle against dominance and oppression, and for liberation, for personhood and nationhood. These struggles were marked by sacrifices and achievements of immortal figures of heroines and heroes, and by a rich cartography of places of memory that should be revisited and celebrated especially by African children and youth, as places of pilgrimage, of meditation and prayer. In such struggles, African people have always been driven by a solid spirit of liberty, an ethos of resilience and dignity; they were also guided by values and principles of *Maat* and *Ubuntu*. Haiti provides one such example, as demonstrated by Hutton.[25] Be it recalled that Haitians had to defeat a politico-military coalition of Western powers including two military expeditions against the young Black African Republic, one of them being led by the brother-in-law of Napoleon himself; and to remain vigilant and

effectively organised to preserve and defend the integrity and independence of their young state.

Hence the relevance of the *Citadelle* built by King Henry Christophe at Cap Haitien, as another example of that resilient spirit of African people and people of African descent in their commitment to freedom, *Ubuntu* and nationhood.

The *Citadelle* is a piece of military artwork that was conceived as central point of a network of military strongholds overlooking one another's security and defence against foreign threats. The strategic relevance of the *Citadelle* is enhanced by its location at Cap Haitian, the northern trade centre and political and military capital of Santo Domingo (Haiti). As follow-up to an order by Dessalines on 9 April 1804 (four months after the proclamation of Haitian independence), the *Citadelle* was built between 1804 and 1820 on an almost inaccessible site covering one hectare on a mountain top overlooking the entire Cap Haitien. The buildings include strong and thick walls in rock 45 metres high and defended by 163 pieces of artillery distributed in strategically positioned batteries of cannons of Spanish, French, English and Italian origin, some of which having been wrestled away from defeated French generals by the revolutionary armies led by Toussaint Louverture and other Haitian generals who carried on the struggle alongside him and after he was treacherously captured and sent to exile in France where he later died.

6.5.4. Pan-African calendar of events and celebrations: *Kwanzaa* and the *Nguzo Saba*

The *Nguzo Saba* (Seven Principles) are celebrated yearly in the Diaspora and in a growing number of places on the African continent during *Kwanzaa*. As part of a common cultural heritage that is gaining increased recognition and momentum with time, these *Nguzo* provide inspiration and guidance both at community and personal levels. They include the following:

- *Umoja* (Unity);
- *Kujichagulia* (Self-determination);
- *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility);
- *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics);

- *Nia* (Purpose);
- *Kuumba* (Creativity);
- *Imani* (Faith).

Kwanzaa and the *Nguzo Saba* are, from the viewpoint of Maulana Ron Karenga and their proponents in the Diaspora, nurtured by African spiritual traditions, in which it is taught that "we are in the image of the Creator and thus capable of ultimate righteousness and creativity through self-mastery and development in the context of positive support".[26]

Endnotes

1 Cf. Williams, Eric : *Capitalisme et Esclavage*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1968; *L'Histoire des Caraïbes (1492-1969)*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1975.

2 Omali Yeshitela: *Stolen Black Labor – The Political Economy of Domestic Colonialism*, Oakland, Burning Spear Publishing House, 1983.

3 Cf. Bernstein, Hilda, *Steve Biko*, London, IDAF, nº 46, April 1978, p.14; Arnold, Millard (ed), *Steve Biko, Black Consciousness in South Africa*, New York, Vintage Books, May 1979. See also Biko's contributions on Black consciousness and Black theology in South Africa, e.g. "Black consciousness and the quest for a true humanity", first published in 1978 by Selby Semela and Joel Bolnick of the Black Consciousness Movement. This publication was reproduced in *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, UCLA, Permalink https://escholarship.org/uc/item/01k1c0vf. Consulted on 5 July 2025.

4 Mboup, S B : "The Re-foundation of Education and Culture for the Psychological Healing, Spiritual Upliftment and Moral Regeneration of the African People": lead paper, The Global African Diaspora Parliamentarian Summit (GADPS), Pan African Parliament, Midrand (RSA), 22-23 May 2012; a compilation from 3 papers first presented as keynote address at the Bicentennial Global Dialogue & -Diaspora Conference, The African Union/ Commission for Pan-African Affairs (CPAA), Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Barbados, Bridgetown, 21-30 August 2007; then at Primeiro Campus de Reflexão Artístico Cultural (Instituto Superior de Artes e Cultura, Matola, Mozambique: 27-31 October 2010); and as a lead paper at the International Forum Roundtable on African Renaissance, at the Third Festival of Black Arts and Cultures (FESMAN), Dakar, 11 December 2010.

5 "Ladeiras", "mambises" were also alternative designations for such independent African Diaspora communities.

6 Cf. Kent, RK: "Palmares, an African State in Brazil", in Price, Richard (ed.): *Maroon societies*, Ed. Doubleday Anchor Books, 1973, Chap 11 (pp. 170/190). See also: Maestri, Mario, *l'Esclavage au Brésil*, Paris, Editions Karthala, 1991.

7 James, C.L.R., *The Black Jacobins - Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Révolution*, London, Allison and Busby, 1980 (revised edition).

8 Hutton, Clinton A, *The Logic and Historic Significance of the Haitian Revolution & the Cosmological Roots of Haitian Freedom*, Jamaica, Arawak Publications, 2005.

9 See: Mathurin, Lucille, *The Rebel Woman*, African Caribbean Publications, 1975.

10 Cf. Gutzmore, Cecil, *Caribbean Women: Labour and Resistance*, University of London, Institute of Education, 1986.

11 Kotchy, B (et al.), « La Solidarité du Monde Noir et les Conditions de son Expression », in *Revue Présence Africaine Nos* 117/118, p. 61.

12 Brathwaite, E.K. *The Folk Culture of the Slaves in Jamaica*, London, New Beacon Books, 1971, 1974, 1981, p. 6.

13 Hollis « Chalkdust » Liverpool, *Rituals of Power and Rebellion – The Carnival Tradition in Trinidad and Tobago*, 1763-1962, Chicago, Research Associates School Times Publications, 2001.

14 Brathwaite, E K, op. cit., p. 12.

15 See: Mboup, S.B., 2007, "Rastafari, Roots, Reggae, Resistance & Renaissance", lead paper, Ambassadorial Forum in celebration of Jamaica's National Day under the theme "The Role of Reggae Music in the African Liberation Struggle", co-sponsored by the City of Tshwane, the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) and the Jamaican High Commission, Pretoria (Tshwane), 28th February 2012. This paper expands from a former presentation: the Bob Marley Annual Lecture, delivered on the topic "Bob Marley: Artist , Freedom Fighter. His Contribution to the Cause of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance », at the invitation of the Bob Marley Foundation and Rita Marley Foundation, African Youth Forum, University of Johannesburg, Soweto Campus, 11th February 2007.

16 Rodney, W., *The Groundings with my Brothers*, London, Bogle-Louverture Publications, 1969.

17 Campbell, H., *Rasta and Resistance - From Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney*, London, Hansib publications, 1985.

18 In the same context, the Jamaican national language or *Patwa* was/ is used as cultural and political *maquis* (guerilla warfare space) of the toiling African masses, i.e. as both a space and instrument of political and cultural subversion, in its varied functions as the main if not exclusive social vehicular and means of protest. Patwa also served for the interpretation of the Bible: sometimes the only book available to Rasta *bredrin* and *sistrin*.

19 This is obviously the same character as Kaku Ananze the Spider, central to certain tales from continental Africa. See: Dadié, Bernard Binlin, *Le pagne Noir*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1955. by Bernard Dadié. An English translation by Karen C. Hatch under the title *The Black Cloth*, as a collection of African folk tales was published in 1987.

20 Rodney, W., *The Groundings with my brothers*. Quote in "*African History in the Service of Black Revolution*", chap. V, p.61.

21 Semaj, L.T., "Rastafari: from Religion to Social Theory", In: *Caribbean Quarterly*, vol. 26, number 4, dec. 1980, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston, Jamaica, pp. 22/31).

22 "One good thing about music, when it hits you don't bear it…"

23 In addition to the song *Zimbabwe*, which had a strong influence in boosting the morale of guerilla fighters, during the liberation struggle, many other reggae compositions address challenges of globalisation and African Renaissance. See: Mboup, "Rastafari, Roots, Reggae" … .

24 This paragraph is also based on the previously mentioned lead paper presented at the Global African Diaspora Parliamentarians Summit in Midrand (South Africa), in May 2012.

25 Hutton, *The Logic and Historic Significance of the Haitian Revolution*, op. cit.

26 See: Kwanzaa website: www.kwanzaa.com. Consulted on 27th April 2012.

Chapter Seven

African Peoples' Heritage and Identities: A Comparative Study on Commonalities

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7.1. Egypto-Nubian dispersal: lessons from the study on the ethno-genesis of Senegal

From the scrutiny of the ways in which the African narrative unfolded through space and time, it can be considered, according to Theophile Obenga,[1] that African peoples, beyond the specificities of their various contexts and historical experiences, have the same common origin. And that the different areas of civilisation built by them in the western Sudan (West Africa), the Gulf of Benin on the Atlantic coast of Central Africa, the Kasaai, the Great Lakes region, as well as between Chad and Mali, can be considered as originating from the same process of Egypto-Nubian dispersal, since similar areas of civilisation are but multiple *facies* (images) of the same Negro-African world. Indeed, migrations of populations as well as natural conditions favoured exchanges and mutual influences, similar achievements in the fields of production technology, politics and

religion, as well as those of family and language and, therefore, in the modes of perception and thought.

As a scientist with competence in humanities and social and exact sciences, Cheikh Anta Diop made seminal contributions to, amongst others, the study on the etho-genesis of Senegal, including in one of his posthumous publications.[2] Linguistic demonstration plays a critical role in Diop's argument,[3] in addition to anthropology and onomastics (science of names).[4] The study takes also advantage of the findings of more recent works in archaeology, prehistoric and proto-historic studies, studies on antiquity as well as on contemporary history. The following points stand out:

- assumption on the Nilotic origin of the Wolof and many other Senegalese and West African peoples, with emphasis on the relevance of a Saharan stop-over, on the itineraries of their migrations from the Southern areas of the Nile Valley (Great Lakes region).
- There has been, relatively recently, an East-West migration wave from the Upper Nile that came to overlap in the West-African area, prior North-South migration patterns that started around 7,000 BCE, with the beginning of the desiccation process of the Sahara, and whose latest protagonists might have been the Mandinka-speaking Proto-Wangara;
- A possible confirmation of the hypothesis of the Hannon Expedition based on the interpretation of oral tradition records on a probable Carthaginian presence on the shores of the Senegal River, during antiquity;
- Archaeological artefacts such as the presence of monuments covering the period second century BCE to the CE fifteenth century, in addition to copper, glass and iron objects, iron metallurgy being by far, older (more than eight centuries) than copper metallurgy, on the Middle Basin of the Senegal River;
- More recent confirmations by Aboubacry Moussa Lam, author of important works on the Egyptian origin of the Fulani,[5] amongst other West African peoples, of local oral tradition narratives collected by Yoro Dyaw around 1911 on

the population of the Senegambian area by six migration waves from the Nile Valley, in the twelfth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Finally, two main lessons stem from the study on the ethogenesis of Senegal. First, the role and significance of the Wolof entity: not a distinct ethnic community per se, but rather a linguistic and cultural melting pot and commonly shared space and lingua franca that in many respects, "belong to no one while, at the same time, belonging to all". This is a context characterised by both a relative homogeneity and diversity; and whereby the six main national languages namely Wolof (80% of speakers), Pulaar or Fulfulde (21%), Séréer (13%), Joolaa (7%), Mandinka (6%), and Soninke (2%), can be classified within one of the two branches of the West-Atlantic group of the Niger-Congo sub-family. Second, beyond the portrayal of Senegal as an Africa in miniature, it is possible to glimpse at the whole African narrative.

7.2. Linguistic and cultural affinities, similarities, commonalities

The fundamental linguistic and cultural unity of African peoples can be illustrated by an analysis of the reality of the unity of the Bantu world both at the level of ecology (fauna and flora), agriculture, farming, metallurgy and navigation, as well as at the level of socio-political and religious organisation (family system, political and social institutions, etc.), and even at the level of clothing, diet, music and rhythm, dancing and singing, etc. The notion of the unity of the Bantu is reinforced by the study of the patterns of historical migrations. So to speak, beyond undeniable specificities and differences in their respective habitats, living conditions and lifestyles, nonetheless, Bantu people display a profound unity from a historical, linguistic, cultural and anthropological point of view, metallurgy, pottery and cereal agriculture, being some of the most commonly shared traits on the itineraries of their historical migrations.

We must also look beyond the artificial distinction between literature and *orature*. In the opinion of Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane, writing from a southern African and Nguni perspective,[6] orature conglomerates such "traditional verbal or spoken art forms such as (traditional) narrative forms including *iintsomi, amabali, imilando*; traditional poetry (*izibongo, maboko, lithothokiso*) as well as theatrical forms among which rituals and rites of passage and other traditional verbal art forms (proverbs, riddles)". For Mzamane, whereas orature provides the basis of modern literary forms, both orature and literature use the same tools.[7] The tools used by orature and literature as creative processes include memory, experience, observation and imagination as well as creativity and the mastery of language. If "orature expresses traditional ways of seeing and thinking about issues–– i.e. of making sense of the world in which we live", in similar fashion, "Like all story tellers throughout time, every writer is trying to make sense of the world in which we live".

Within the African context and particularly amongst the Walaf / Wolof of Senegambia, the concept of "creations of the spirit and the mind" (*mbiri xel ak xalaat*) seems to carry more significance and relevance than the artificial distinction between what is written (literature) and what is oral (orature). Beyond aesthetical considerations, the value attached to the art of the word and beautiful speech (*wax ju rafet/kàddu yu rafet* in Wolof; *mashairi matamu* in Swahili*)* has been, in some instances, elevated to the level of a real cult. Without a clear distinction between literature and orature, the creative processes involved also include the following literary categories as expressed, indiscriminately, under written or oral art forms:[8] myths, legends, chronicles; historical narratives, epic songs such as the *Kasala* songs of the Baluba; the *Mvet* of the Fang-Beti; the Nguni praise songs; the *Wayjaloore* (Walaf); but also knowledge texts with a didactic purpose such as proverbs, sentences, riddles, folktales, narratives about origins; in addition to esoteric languages and discourses (e.g. certain initiation songs such as *Kasak*; and meta-languages like *Kàll*).

7.3. Religious worldviews and spirituality

There are indeed many parallels between ancient Egypt and black African cosmogonies, including those of the Copi (Mozambique),[9] Séréer, Joolaa (Senegal), Igbo (Nigeria), Akan (Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana) and Bamileke (Cameroon), being the first notion in the various denominations of God in, for example, Shangaan and Copi and other southern African indigenous languages, about His primacy, greatness and omnipotence: *Nkulunkulu, Nkulukumba, Nluku, Mungu* or else *Hosi / Inkoma* (the preferred denomination by Christian missionaries). Other denominations include *Nyacitimvi* (Up there / in the skies) or *Muvangi* (Creator: from *ku-vanga* = to create, give origin, make, produce). One can also point to the fact that in a number of present-day African languages, the same word is used to describe God and the Sun. In Dagara (Burkina Faso), for example, *Naamwin* means literally "Sun King", as *Wennaam* in Moore. The English anthropologist Jack Goody, who conducted research amongst the Dagara in the early 1950s, wrote about this homonymy: "in many languages of the region, the word 'God' is close to or a homonym of the word 'Sun'".

Elsewhere, amongst the Gonja, the word "rain" shares the same root.[10] Amongst the Copi from the Inhambane province in Mozambique, the attributes of the Supreme Being also make reference to *ndzuma* (the rain); and it is still the same term used to describe the rain and the supreme God (*Deng*) amongst the Dinka of Sudan. Therefore, references to Egypt and today's African languages and cultures are not fortuitous.[11]

In connection with the centrality of the concepts of Life, Force and Unity, there is belief in the dialectical unity between the beings, between God and Man, between life and death, the spirit and matter, etc. The African peoples' generic worldviews are deeply marked by a certain spirituality more than by religion as a structure and instrument of power. Or else, it can be said that African religion is a religion that is not externality and contemplation but rather participation and communion of (Wo) Man with the entire universe of which (s)he is an integral part . Such a vision, devoid of the least notion of original sin and of any pantheon of castigating or avenging gods, recognises to the

human being (*Rmt* of Pharaonic Egypt , the *Mu-Ntu* in the Bantu space, the Wolof *Nit*, Bamileke *Mëtë*, *Neddo* of the Haal Pulaaren or *Móot* of the Fang-Beti) a full and complete responsibility in their actions. It legitimises a conception of freedom almost unknown in the Greek fatalist thought and the Indo-European, Judaeo-Christian or Islamo-Arab traditions,[12] whilst projecting even a "fascinating vision on death" as yet another passage in the human trajectory, as the deceased embarks on a journey into eternity, in the hereafter.

This is about both an anthropocentric worldview (i.e. centred around Man) and anthropomorphic vision on God that looks at God as an immortal being and at men as mortal gods, whilst daring to proclaim with a Yoruba saying quoted by Wole Soyinka, that "if humanity did not exist gods would not exist[13] either"; and whereby the Judaeo-Christian or Islamo-Arab notion of *God* as an self-conscious entity, both anterior and external to matter, is an improper translation of the African concept of *Neter*, as documented by J Do Nascimento.[14] Jean Pliya's contribution adds more arguments to this matter of critical significance: in his comparative study of the religious belief systems and practices of Dahomey to those of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, Pliya also puts particular emphasis on the belief in the immortality of the soul and the importance of the couple *Lissa-Mahu* representing the sun and the moon, respectively.[15] Their godly interventions and deeds are relayed on earth by the *vodun*, while the *bokonun* or adepts of the *Fa* oracle, try to scrutinise the mysteries of the future. In similar fashion, although the official religion in the Fuuta Jàllo / Fouta Djallon was, in the nineteenth century, dominated by a rigorous and purist Islam, certain pre-Islamic belief systems and practices associated with them survived the rise and institutionalisation of the Islamic faith.

7.4. Main features of African social formations

For Ki Zerbo, there is an African matrix that presents many a characteristic of a *sui generis* mode of production, i.e. a mode of production with its own traits and specificities.[16] This mode of production has emerged in the context of the African cradle,

whereby predominant formations are agriculture and sedentary societies centred around – not dominated by – the women. Such societies are characterised by the absence of *fiefs* (large territories owned by feudal landlords) in the European medieval sense, as well as the absence or scarcity of people of a servile condition. With the exception, perhaps, of the different fields of intense European-or Arab-sponsored slave trafficking or under direct foreign control or influence, people of servile status were often treated as captives rather than slaves; and their social condition was in no way comparable to that of the slaves of ancient Greece or Rome. Other traits of this African mode of production include: the generalisation of the principle of collective ownership of land; the modest levels of surpluses produced at community level; and in some respect, the redistributive nature of the economy. Despite differences and contrasts, the following generic features may be regarded as part of a complex anthropological and cultural matrix common to most African social formations:

- the relative immaturity of the whole process and low level of technological development, notwithstanding a dominant trend towards generalisation of the triple phenomenon of metallurgy, pottery and grain farming, especially in Bantu social formations and their respective production systems;
- the weak demographic pressure on the land, natural resources and social services;
- the relative self-sufficiency of social formations, especially for the supply of agricultural tools and products and utilities for domestic use, and of weapons (at least for internal needs: i.e. in the competition and practice of wars against neighbouring polities and communities);
- processes of social class stratification and consolidation of the state occurring in concomitant and interdependent modes;
- the existence of a thriving commercial sector, while accumulation has seldom been the driving force for the development of business and trade;
- the absence of a slave mode of production and inconsistency or lack of an objective material basis for the emergence of feudalism as a mode of production, outside areas such as

the Maghreb, Egypt under Arab domination (from the CE seventh century onwards), within the feudal and Christian State of Ethiopia (Aksum kingdom founded in the first century by a dynasty of Sabean origin), the Nubian states (e.g. Kush or Meroe), subsequently to their colonisation by Aksum;[17]

- the importance of age and experience in the appointment of councillors amongst the most senior and experienced community members as well as in social organisation according to age-sets. Amongst the Kikuyu societies, for instance, despite being non-centralised and highly egalitarian, the following categories could be distinguished from bottom up the social ladder: *Ciana* (the children); *Muno* (initiated youth), *Anake* (the warriors), and *Athuri* (the elders).[18] As elsewhere, initiation rites played an important role in processes of socialisation and social classification. These rites included male and female circumcision according to Kikuyu customs and traditions.[19]

Whether in the Western Sudan, the Great Lakes region or Zimbabwe, the historical establishment and development of monarchy (*mansaya* in the Mandinka language) was also a relatively late phenomenon. Previously, the dominant institutional and social polities were essentially chieftaincies and other formations closer to agrarian democracies (or *lamanates*), under the direction of administrators (not owners) of land and other natural resources (water areas, forests): *Laman* in Wolof, *Tapsoba* in Bambara, *Dugutigi* in More / Mossi. Such societies and their citizens were in the opinion of Pathé Diagne, indeed, supremely "ignorant of" – rather unconcerned about – "the idea and concept of King or kingship".[20]

7.5. African *muntucracies*: concepts and practices of power and authority

To the editor's knowledge, Jose Do-Nascimento it is who first coined (in French) the concept of *Muntucracy*. As in the Yoruba context referred to earlier, it is essential to first stress the differentiation made between the notion of power (*nguur, doole* in the Wolof language) in terms of a crude capacity

of coercion, on the one side, and on the other side, that of authority *(sañsañ)*, considered as both the foundation of the legitimacy and cornerstone of real power. This is also in many ways, a rights-based approach to governance, as exemplified in principles of constitutionalism and shared values central to the spirit and letter of the founding Charter of the Mande as analysed by Youssouph Tata Cissé,[21] and practiced in many African *muntucracies.*

Indeed, the institutions and governance principles of many African polities were inspired on a rights-based approach to governance as illustrated in the founding Charter of the Mande (empire of Mali). At the time of its peak, between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, Mali covered a territory more extensive than three times that of today's France. The founding Charter of the Mande is a solemn declaration pronounced at the end of the year 1236, on the occasion of the enthronement and swearing in ceremony of Soundiata Keita, first Emperor of Mali. This was a declaration of faith from the powerful hunters' brotherhood on their total "opposition to all forms of oppression and human indignity, including servitude, captivity and slavery".

The founding Charter of the Mande or legacy of Kurukan Fuga, as intended "to speak to the ears of the whole world", starts by recalling that "The Mande was founded on harmony and concord, on love, freedom and fraternity"[22]. Which means that there could be no ethnic, racial, gender or other forms of social discrimination in the Mande, because "every human life is a life" and that "there is no calamity worse than hunger and slavery"[23]. The text goes on with references to moral qualities such as sense of honour and nobility of character, but also to nature and social issues such as marriage, etc. In the words of Youssouph Tata Cissé, the Charter of the Mande represents for all humanity a treasure, a hidden treasure. It is "a political text of key importance and relevance that celebrates principles and values such as peace, tolerance, fraternity and solidarity".

Amongst constitutional principles and core values of African democracy or *muntucracy*, the following stand out because of their importance: the people's will as Supreme Law; the sovereign themself is not above the law, they fall

under the law as any other citizen; sovereigns are regarded as leaders rather than rulers, the most respected ones being those who most care for their people's well-being, prosperity and peace, amongst others. Such conception of power, is organised around key notions and values such as *Ubuntu* (humanity as an ontological category or status and as a political and ethical principle) and *Maat* (notion of justice, truth, equity, righteousness, universal balance and harmony)[24]. The same acknowledges basic principles such as the principles of separation and balance of constitutional powers, those of representation, decentralisation and consultation; it also recognises and protects constitutional rights for minorities, for foreigners and of course for women, as testified to by many, including by Ibn Battuta, the Arab historian and traveller, who visited the Mali empire, in the fourteenth century.

One finds these same principles underlying the conceptions and practices of power in various African socio-political formations until today (e.g., amongst the Bamileke and Yoruba chieftaincies, the Igbo and Joolaa communal democracies as well as amongst Tswana and Bantu polities such as Lozi, "Teke" and even Buganda kingdoms), in addition to principles of pluralism and collective leadership; for example, the importance of consensus in decision-making, notwithstanding the outstanding legitimacy of authority, together with the institutionalisation of mechanisms of control and balance of powers etc.

7.6. Gender dimensions of leadership

Despite myths and distortions characteristic of the dominant mainstream discourses, African women were the first women in world history to have enjoyed constitutional rights, in the context of *African Africa*. Within such a context, women have always performed a fundamental role and enjoyed a high status in many respects. Indeed, *African Africa* accounts for a long and rich tradition of female leadership that includes queens, queen mothers, some of whom warrior queens and/or women priests. In the history of the African Diaspora, women have also performed a major role as leaders of the relentless and multi-

faceted resistance against slavery as well as in the struggles for social and national emancipation, in the post-slavery era.

Queen / Pharaoh Hatshepsut (XVIIIth Dynasty) is believed to be the first queen in the history of humanity, thus launching a historico-cultural African tradition of female leadership, despite the reality of a trend of male dominance in the structures and practices of political power: a reality that is commonly shared amongst the African and other peoples of the world. Amongst the most celebrated African queens, we can also mention: Queen Tiye (as co-monarch in ancient Egypt), Queen Makeda (celebrated Queen of Sheba who went to marry King Solomon, thus giving birth to the Solomonide Dynasty), Queen Awra Poku of the Bawle / Baule (one of the main branches of the Akan people), Queen Nzinga, nicknamed "Africa's Eldest Daughter" who led a forty-year war of resistance against slavery and European domination, after unifying the kingdoms of Ndongo (Ngola) and Matamba, as general-in-chief of her armies.

One must further mention the existence of bi-cameral leadership institutions in the context of *African Africa,* under the form of queen-mothers. Such was/is the case with the Makhua *Apwiya* (with equal status as the *Njeyo*: her male counterpart), the Swazi *Ndlovukazi*, Tswana *Mmemokgulu*, Rwandese *Abagabekazi*, and the Wolof *Lingeer* and Lébu *Ndey-ji Réew*.[25] Queen-mothers enjoyed both prestige and political authority as the kings' first advisors; besides, certain decisions taken by the king could be implemented only after being ratified by some of them, in addition to the fact that their respective courts or homesteads were in many cases, regarded as places of political asylum including for those who were wanted following a verdict taken by the local courts or a decision by the king himself.

Within the same *African* context, the principle of *matricentrality* (or *matrifocality*) seems to have been one anthropological trait very widely shared by many African peoples such as the Makhuwa, Swazi, Tswana, Nyanja / Chewa, Makonde (in southern Africa), by the Wolof, Igbo, Akan (Ashanti, Fanti, Bawle) in West Africa (including Twareg communities of the Sahelo-Saharan fringe), as well as amongst East-African communities (e.g. the Zaramo, Kwere, Luguru,

Kami, Kutu, Sagara, Vidunda, Kaguru, Ngulu and Zigula from Eastern Tanzania) and of course, in ancient Egypt, meaning that despite the reality of male dominance in political power structures, African societies were *centred around* women.

This fact can be substantiated with references to the role performed by women and their respective matrilineages in the naming of the children who they gave birth to as well as according to principles and rules for the acquisition and transmission of land and property rights enjoyed by such children, or the determination of their eligibility to social and political functions including leadership positions. Matricentrality in this context, is reinforced by three facts of great cultural significance: first, the principle of gender equity and complementarity in the conception of power and authority – with the male principle (men) viewed as the symbol and personification of power and authority and the female principle (women) as their source; second, the notion of androgyny of the Supreme Being in ancient Egyptian and various other *African African* pantheons; thirdly, the importance of the family as both a social and divine institution: unlike their single Greek counterparts, African goddesses were married without losing anything about their divine status that was equal to the status of their spouses (e.g.: goddess Isis / Ast, married to Osiris / Asar).[26]

7.7. Culture of peace, diplomacy and conflict prevention and resolution

Amongst the Tuareg, the diplomat used to be credited with a very special status as intermediary who would mediate in relationships with personalities. In fact, in many an African society, diplomacy and conflict prevention and management were, since time immemorial, codified and regulated through a number of institutions and mechanisms and a set of codes, principles and values that are still very much alive today in the Bilad-Es-Sudan (West Africa) particularly in the Republic of Mali where they played a critical role in the resolution of the armed conflict that erupted in the North of the country in the 1990s.

The Malian experience illustrates the importance of social capital in general and, in particular, the centrality of certain constitutional principles in the culture of peace and in conflict management in *African Africa*. These constitutional principles include, amongst others, the following: preference for conflicts' prevention over their (management or) resolution; preference for mediation, and (re)conciliatory procedures over contentious approaches and procedures. As a consequence, the trial appears in the judiciary as an exceptional and ultimate option, when all possibilities of settling a dispute or a conflict amicably have been exhausted and failed.

Hence the importance of the role of certain persons and/or institutions for mediation and (re)conciliation, given their status, prerogatives and authority. Such was the case with the *Nyamakala* or *Jeli* (griots) as well as the councils: family councils, councils of elders, inter-village and inter-clanic councils, that were established to serve similar purposes of peace-making, peacebuilding and settling disputes arising from conflicts of interests, as issues of critical importance and of permanent concern in many African historical and cultural traditions.[27]

Various other mechanisms and policies were put in place for the purpose of regulating peaceful relations between communities and even states. They include: extended political and matrimonial alliances such as inter-clanic marriages; mediation; artistic and sports competitions; and the institution of *sanankuya* or symbolic kinship, which institutionalises very strict, compelling codes of conduct, etiquette and mutual obligations between specific clans, ethnic or other social groups, including in times of conflict or as means of preventing conflict from occurring: e.g. between Bozo and Dogon (Mali); Fulani and Séréer (Senegal and the Gambia); Mongo from the Equator region and Baluba from Kasaai, in the DRC. Since time immemorial and until today, members of the Mongo and Baluba communities have engaged in inter-ethnic marriages and social contracts of mutual obligations and responsibilities for the organisation of important events such as weddings and funerals; e.g. a Muluba is always buried by their Mongo counterpart also in charge of their last mortuary bath, and vice versa. The same

type of relationship may also be observed at intra-ethnic level, for instance amongst certain Baluba clans.

In modern-day Botswana, the institution of *Bokgosi* (chieftainship), the *Kgotla* system of consultation and values such as *botho* (humanity, humility) as part of the Tswana pre-colonial cultural heritage have, according to Molomo,[28] contributed in a significant way in the perpetuation of a culture of peace and stability throughout the history of the country and its peoples, despite the loss of constitutional power by *Dikgosi* at a central level in addition to prevailing challenges and discrepancies regarding the respect and equal promotion of the cultural rights of all communities, particularly Basarwa communities. *Kgosi ke kgosi ka batho* ("A chief is a chief by grace of the people"): according to this assertion that supports Tswana traditional democracy, the authority enjoyed by *Dikgosi* (traditional chiefs) was/is based on the respect that they receive(d) from their people. And notwithstanding "the tenuous relationship that exists between *dikgosi* and politicians", indeed their relative institutional balance and complementarity in many areas and matters of governance, together with the great respect and influence enjoyed by *dikgosi* in their respective communities has been an invaluable guarantee of ongoing peace and stability in today's Republic of Botswana:

> The primary functions of *dikgosi* are to mobilise *morafe*, or ethnic groups, for development, and to perform an important judicial function. They have a responsibility to instil a sense of community, discipline and stability within the areas of their jurisdiction.[29]

7.8. Centrality of *Ubuntu* and *Maat*

Let us start by looking at the centrality and relevance of *Ubuntu* in the underlying value system(s). Such an underlying value system includes the following**:** a) community spirit and sense of co-fraternisation; b) respect for life, especially human life, in relation to the importance of Man (human being) as a fundamental value and status, which explains

the anthropomorphic nature and innate humanism of many deities of the African pantheon; c) importance of the family; and d) respect for the elderly as repositories of experience and knowledge etc.

What about the place and relevance of *Ubuntu* in this context?

Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu. Motho ke motho ka batho. These Nguni and Sotho-Tswana versions of a traditional African aphorism, often translate as: "a person is a person through other persons". Its central concept, *Ubuntu*, means "humanity", "humanness", or even "humaneness". In reality, the content and significance of this maxim is much broader. Amongst others, it encompasses the following principles and values: articulation of "a basic respect and compassion for others"; it is also "both a factual description and a rule of conduct or social ethic".[30] *Ubuntu* means "that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being".[31] Similarly, as further argued by the historian John Lonsdale, one of the major contributions of Africa to "human history could be said to have been precisely the civilized art of living fairly peacefully not in states".[32] What was also distinctive about pre-colonial social formations was the drive to accommodate people as a source of wealth. People were not considered a problem. Justice Mokgoro from South Africa, defines *Ubuntu* as a lifestyle or unifying world-view "of African societies based on respect and understanding between individuals".[33]

In addition to the centrality and relevance of *Ubuntu*, it is also critical to stress the significance of *Maat / Ma'at* or African code of cardinal virtues. So to speak, in the African context, as an area of cultural significance and balance whose main dimensions are constituted by the sacred, the cosmos, the state, society and human beings, the concept of *Maat* (Universal Harmony) occupies a central position, with the multiplicity of its contents and the functions that it performs: be it at the sociological, ideological, cosmological, anthropological or political levels. For T Obenga,[34] it is a capital and permanent

notion, in the pharaonic and post- pharaonic contexts. *Maat* is the goddess of Harmony. It is also often translated by the notions of truth (words in harmony with the actual order of things), order and justice in terms of actions in harmony with the regulatory forces that maintain the same universal order. In Wolof / Walaf for instance, *Maandute* (*Maat*) is the best vehicle towards attainment of truth and justice. In fact, in this West-African idiom as in many other African indigenous languages, the notions of truth / truthfulness, and justice / rightfulness are expressed by the same word *(dëgg)*. For instance, the expression *Loolu dëgg la* can translate either by "that is true" or "that is right / just".

Maat is a rich and complex concept, encompassing several levels of meaning and understanding. In a word, *Maat* can be considered as a just and balanced state of affairs in nature and society, according to the original harmony "characteristic of the act of creation, and from which derive more specialized notions such as law, justice, order and truth".[35]

On a social level, the realisation of *Maat* as both purpose and a principle of action, involves necessarily the pursuit of a number of values such as active solidarity and reciprocity with others. In this perspective, justice appears as "*Maat* one does while acting", and the truth as " *Maat* said while communicating" *Maat* constituting, therefore, the regulatory principle of action and speech.[36] From this point of view, we can say that *Ma'at* is "an essential function of social memory". To those, as simple mortals or Sovereigns, who cultivate and practice *Maat* as a standard of conduct, it shall guarantee, as the case may be, survival in the social memory and/or immortality. The result is a world that men and gods work together to keep running and balanced, as stakeholders and role-players of the same community of participation, collaboration and solidarity, even universal communion. Ultimately, *Maat* appears as the guarantor of the appropriate balance between, on the one hand , the needs, claims and demands of the individual or rather *Mu-Ntu* (i.e.: the human person as status and a higher value) and on the other hand, the cultural needs of the community.

The preceding can be substantiated by an analysis of African indigenous justice systems.

7.9. Administration of justice

In the administration of justice and in conformity with the rights-based approach of African *muntucracies* as emphasised above, leadership and the state are positioned and intervene as "duty-bearers", custodians and guarantors of the fundamental rights to the community of all citizens and others as "rights holders". Central to the duties of all leaders and governance structures at all levels, was the obligation to render services to the peoples and communities placed under their authority. The services to be provided included: protection of life; safety and security of people and their properties; a decent life through access to basic services; access to a fair and equitable justice system; etc. Within the African pre-colonial context, the formal or symbolic recognition of authority especially from individuals and communities seeking protection, arbitration and justice and the pre-eminence of authority over power, made it an obligation for those leaders to whom authority was recognised, to strive to do justice to those who were seeking their arbitration or protection, in a context whereby power seldom provided a legitimate basis for economic exploitation.[37]

From Akinjogbin's viewpoint, amongst the Yoruba, the original conception of power encapsulates two fundamental notions that are intimately interwoven: the notion of *agbara* (legitimacy) in terms of acceptance by others of the right of power holders to use force if necessary for collective governance purposes; and the notion of *ase* (authority). Within this context, power is no longer perceived as *agbara* when it starts being abused: it becomes then *ika* (injustice, inequity), thus legitimising its disqualification and refusal that can even lead to open rebellion and revolt or to the destitution of the authority to whom *agbara* and *ase* were originally granted. Amongst the physical representations and attributes of power, *ase* was symbolised by the sceptre, held by the *Oba* (King). *Ase* was thus perceived as "a constitutional status that can be defined by the

collective will of the constituting organs; and whose limits are defined by the same collective will".[38]

Once institutionalised through the Charter of Kurukan Fuga, the constitutional and governance principles stated above, became a living legacy destined to provide inspiration and guidance to the *Mansa* (Emperor) and to all "duty bearers" within the empire's state apparatus, including in the justice system. For similar reasons, extreme forms of political oppression would trigger off the intervention of counter powers acting as custodians of public liberties and prerogatives, including in the pronouncement and execution of heavy penalties against unpopular or corrupt leaders. In some cases, political and judicial processes conducted according to strict ethical norms and judicial procedures, could lead to public disavow or repudiation, of the sovereign as in the case of Wolof *Dammel* (King) Daaw Demba who, according to oral tradition records, ended up being forced into exile in 1647, as a result of his extremely abusive and oppressive reign.

The preceding can be illustrated in the analysis of some core principles and values of African indigenous justice systems (AIJS). According to Elechi,[39] AIJS can be viewed, first, as essentially negotiative and democratic, despite the generic pattern of dominance of the processes of conflict resolution by male adults – which does not necessarily mean that women were either excluded from such processes, or that their own rights were jeopardised within the same context. As an inclusive, community-based, negotiative and democratic process, justice-making in *African Africa*, is an opportunity for a wide dialogue amongst all stakeholders including judges with their aides, councillors and collaborators together with the litigants themselves, their families and society at large.[40]

The second main characteristic of AIJS is their victim-centredness insofar as their first priority was/is the safety of victims. As a consequence, assistance was/is provided to victims with a view to repairing the injury suffered and/or restoring property lost, together with their sense of security and dignity; the starting point of AIJS being the "victims' needs for information, validation, social support and vindication".

According to Nsereko,[41] African customary legal processes "focused mainly on the victim rather than on the offender", since "the goal of justice was to vindicate the victim and protect his/her rights". In conformity with the same principles as derived from African peoples' worldview(s), value-systems and cultural ethos, "the imposition of punishment on the offender, was designed to bring about the healing of the victim rather than to punish the offender".[42]

Thirdly, the restorative and transformative nature of AIJS must be emphasised: "the restoration of rights, dignity, interests and well-being of victims, offenders, and the entire community", is the goal of African indigenous justice systems, being the empowerment of victims, offenders and the community, their central principle.[43] Furthermore, the justice-making process can perform a transformative role inasmuch as "conflict provides opportunities for stake-holders to examine and bring about changes to the society's social, institutional and economic structures". Besides, rather than punishing the offender for punishment's sake, in many instances, the offender was made to pay compensation to the victim; being well-understood, as emphasised by Nsereko, that compensation "goes beyond restitution. It also represents a form of apology and atonement by the offender to the victim and community". However, despite their victim-centredness, AIJS were at the same time, supportive of offenders themselves by persuading them to understand and accept responsibility for their actions.

Finally, it is important to stress that AIJS operate from a corporate approach to human rights and justice. As stated by Motala, "The individual was always a member of an extended family or community. Membership of the extended family or community bestowed the individual with rights and duties".[44] The preceding has important implications for correctional services. On the one hand, responsibility and accountability for the offences and crimes committed, were/are also a corporate or communal affair. On the other hand, "torture, killings, and other abuses would be objectionable". Furthermore, prisons were rather an exception and not the norm; socialisation of correctional services and practices was the norm, instead; with

most institutions of social control operating as "formal agents of re-socialisation".[45] Chastisement of offenders was thus followed by efforts to reintegrate them back into the community, with responsibilities equally shared between the state, community leaders and society at large, including families, clans, villages as well as age and gender groups and networks, of which offenders were an integral part. But the same would be the first to excommunicate and isolate their own members who had committed serious offences such as homicides, adultery or profanation of sacred places.

These glimpses of AIJS testify to the fact that indeed *Ubuntu* and *Maat* are the two basic threads intertwined in the weaving of the complex tapestries of many African pre-colonial societies. Amongst the Akan for instance, the individual is conceived as being endowed with dignity in a context also marked by the belief in the sanctity of human life as captured in an Akan proverb according to which "All human beings are children of God; no one is a child of the earth". The Wolof of Senegambia express the same principles and values in a similar proverb: *nit nit ay garabam*.[46] In other words, it is only within the larger community that the individual's rights and freedom must be appreciated.

7.10. Samples of good practices and governance lessons

There is, indeed, ample evidence of good practices and governance lessons from the African institutional and political legacies, according to Ki Zerbo in his study of the reality of power and political authority, during *Centuries of Re-Adjustment* (sixteenth/nineteenth centuries) in West Africa.[47] In the Fouta Djallon / Fuuta Jàllo for instance, as a result of Islamic influence, the very elaborate governance system was led by the *Almamy* who had to be elected by four Great Electors as representatives of the four main families of the four companions of Alfa Ba and Ibrahim Sori. However, in order to be constitutionally valid, this designation had to be ratified and approved by acclamation by the Assembly of Free Fulani Citizens. Moreover, collegiality was the governance norm of the day insofar as executive powers

were vested on the Council of Elders that was presided over by the *Almamy* who could be constitutionally disavowed and deposed by the same Council.

In the Tswana context, the *kgotla* system of consultation and consensus, based amongst others, on the principles of *mafoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe* (free speech), is widely regarded as "the cradle of Botswana's democracy". In similar fashion, since time immemorial and until today, the *Mogho Naba* or *Moro-Naba* (Sovereign, King) of the Mossi from Burkina Faso is compelled by governance traditions and etiquette to observe periodically the same ritual: saddle his horse early in the morning and pretend that he is leaving for another destination. If the designated representatives of his subjects prevent the Mogho Naba from leaving by pulling back his horse, it means that they want him to stay and continue as their leader. Otherwise, the Sovereign is "allowed" to ride his horse away from his subjects and kingdom; and to never come back once he has lost their confidence, respect and trust as leader of the Mossi nation.

Furthermore, in observance of the principle that according to the Tswana saying, *Kgosi ke kgosi ka batho*, amongst the Nguni and Sotho, despotic or authoritarian chiefs would be often abandoned by peoples who would form their constituencies in order to migrate to more clement polities led by less authoritarian, more just chiefs. Similarly, in Buganda, it is recalled that because of the cruelty of a Kabaka by the name Sibutwereke, all potential candidates to *obwakabaka* (kingship) that shared the same totem as Sibutwereke were banned from the right to access the throne.

We also remember how Sundiata divided the Mandeŋ into two kinds of provinces: "those which had first rallied to his cause and whose kings preserved their titles, and the conquered provinces, where a governor or *Farin*, ruled on behalf of the *Mansa* (Emperor)", alongside the traditional chiefs, and with the politico-administrative assistance and support from officials and soldiers under his command; and how such a flexible administration and system of governance, respectful of local institutions, was continued under *Mansa* Kankan / Kanku Musa; without forgetting one striking feature of Akan polities: i.e. the

high levels of centralisation counterbalanced by the institutional recognition of cultural difference and relative institutional autonomy at peripheral level.

Accrued centralisation of power and military organisation also played an important role in Buganda and similar polities such as the Zulu confederacy under Shaka. Nevertheless, despite and beyond "cultural and geographical boundaries" as markers of Zulu identity that, at that time, demarcated the *AmaZulu* ("sons and daughters of the Sky") from, for example, their Tonga, Lala and Sotho-Tswana neighbours, there was some evidence of solidarity, inasmuch as "national ceremonies brought people from all parts of the kingdom together", whereas "the king forced all Zulu men to join his army and his harem was made up of women drawn from throughout his lands". As a result, certain groups like the Qwabe and others ended up self-identifying also as *AmaZulu*: a somewhat open identity that was more political than ethnic, therefore, also applicable to non-Nguni individuals and communities. Asante (the Ashanti confederacy or kingdom) constitutes another pre-colonial socio-political formation that was characterised by both ethnic cosmopolitism and diversity: whereas "there were large cultural differences between residents of the Ashanti capital Kumasi", at the same time, "The Ashanti State also had unifying ceremonies and symbols such as the *Odwira* harvest festival and the Golden Stool".[48]

Endnotes

1 Cf. « Prise de conscience des dimensions mondiales de la vie des peuples noirs », an article published in the *Présence Africaine* research journal # 117/118 (pp. 25/35)

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5 Lam, Aboubacry Moussa, *De l'origine égyptienne des Peulhs,* Paris, Présence Africaine-Khepera, 1993 ; *Le Sahara ou la Vallée du Nil*, Khepera – IFAN, 1994 ; *Les chemins du Nil. Les relations entre l'Egypte ancienne et l'Afrique noire*, Paris, Présence Africaine & Khepera, 1997.

6 Cf. Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane, *Syllabus on Story Telling*, mimeo, South Africa, 2011, p.1.

7 Mzamane, Ibidem.

8 Mboup, S (1978) : « Littérature Nationale et Conscience Historique – Essai sur la Perspective Nationaliste dans la Littérature d'Expression Wolof de 1850 à nos Jours » : Doctoral thesis, University of Paris III-Sorbonne, UER Littérature Générale & Comparée.

9 See : Langa, Adriano, *Questões Christãs à Religião Tradicional Africana em Moçambique*, Braga, Editorial Franciscana, 1984.

10 Goody, Jack et Gandah, S. W. D. K, *Une récitation du Bagré*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1980, p. 24.

11 Cf. Evans-Pritchard, E. E., *Les Nuers*, Gallimard, 1994, p. 214-216 ; quote as in Somet, Y., id., p.12

12 Cf. Diagne, Pathé, *Tànn ci Mbindum Walaf (Anthologie de Littérature Walaf)*, Tome 2: *Mbindum Xamxam (Littérature de connaissance)*, mimeo, Dakar (no indication of date), p. IV. For further developments and insights around and in correlation with these aspects of African thought, in particular African concepts and practices of power and authority, see: a) Diop, C.A., *L'Afrique Noire Precoloniale*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1960. Republished in 1987 ; *L'Unité Culturelle de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1959, 1982; b) Diagne, P., P*ouvoir politique traditionnel en Afrique occidentale*. Paris, Présence Africaine, 1967 ; « Le Pouvoir en Afrique », in: *Le Concept de Pouvoir en Afrique*, UNESCO, 1981, pp. 28/55.

13 Cf. a) Diop, C.A., L'Unité Culturelle de l'Afrique Noire, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1959, 1982; b) Diagne, P., Pouvoir politique traditionnel en Afrique occidentale. Paris, Présence Africaine, 1967 ; « Le Pouvoir en Afrique », in: Le Concept de Pouvoir en Afrique, UNESCO, 1981, pp. 28/55.

14 Soyinka (Wole), "Study on the Ritual Archetype", in Myth, Literature and the African World, Cambridge University Press, 1978.

15 Cf. : "Muntu à la Lumière d'Osiris", Paris, 1986 (mimeo, unpublished).

16 Cf. "Histoire. Dahomey", Afrique Occidentale, Civilisations du Monde, Imprimerie nationale du Dahomey, Cotonou, 1967.

17 See: the French version of Walter Rodneys's How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, co-translated by Catherine Belvaude and the editor of this volume, under the title Et l'Europe sous-développa l'Afrique, Paris, Editions Caribéennes, 1986 (pp. 39-78).

18 Cf. Obenga, Les Bantu, p.144.

19 The generalisation of female circumcision as an African tradition and practice remains a debatable, contentious issue. Nonetheless, whatever its origin, this horrendous, unacceptable practice and all associated practices should be banished, once and for all, from Africa and elsewhere in the world.

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23 Cissé, ibid, idem.

24 See: infra…

25 The literal translation for Ndey-ji Réew is « Mother of the Country », a title that can be also held by men, including until today.

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27 Mboup, S., Consolidated Report on an International consultancy for the establishment of a National Programme on Governance, Education to the Culture of Peace and Human Rights in Mali; UN General Secretariat (DESA/UNDP), New York, RAF/97/025 Project on Capacity Development for Social Reconciliation, July/August 1998 (first mission); November/December 1998 (second mission); Conflicting Leadership Paradigms…, p.103. The Report owes a lot to the excellent study on "Endogenous concepts and practices for the culture of peace and education to human rights in Mali", by the team of national experts coordinated by Prof Doulaye Konaté.

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33 Justice Mokgoro as quoted in Elechi, O.O. (2004): « Human Rights and the African Indigenous Justice System ». Paper presented at the 18th International Conference of the International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law, Montreal, Quebec (August 8-12): p. 22.
34 Obenga T., African Philosophy – The Pharaonic Period: -2780-330, translated by Ayi Kwei Armah, Per Ankh, Senegal, 2004.
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36 Assman, Id.
37 For more details, see: Mboup, S. B. 2008, "Conflicting Leadership Paradigms – A Need for An African Renaissance Perspective", International Journal of African Renaissance Studies, Vol. III, # 1, University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, July 2008 …", pp. 104-5.
38 Akinjogbin, I. A. (1981), « Le concept de pouvoir dans l'Afrique traditionnelle: l'aire Yoruba ». In Diagne, P., Le concept de pouvoir en Afrique, pp. 9/27 (quote : p. 12).
39 Elechi, O.O. (2004): « Human Rights and the African Indigenous Justice System ». Paper presented at the 18th International Conference of the International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law, Montreal, Quebec, August 8-12; quote from pp.19 sq.).
40 Elechi: Id. p. 19.
41 Nsereko, N. (1992): "Victims of Crime and their Rights", in Criminology in Africa, by Mwene Mushanga, Tibamanya (ed.). Rome, UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), p. 22.
42 Elechi, id. p.18.
43 Elechi, Ibid. sq.
44 Cf. Motala, Ziyad., 1989, "Human Rights in Africa: A Cultural, Ideological, and legal Examination", in Hastings International and Comparative Law Review No 12.
45 Elechi, 2004, p. 3.
46 Mboup, "Conflicting Leadership Paradigms…", pp. 103-4.
47 Ki-Zerbo, Histoire de l'Afrique Noire, p. 240.
48 See Green, E., op. cit. id. p. 10.

Chapter Eight

Specificities and Differences in the Peoples' Cultural Heritage and Identities: A Contrastive Approach

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8.1. Impact of "great traditions"

Swahili provides here a good case study. Although Kiswahili as language or culture cannot be viewed either as a pidgin or Creole, the seminal analysis by E Kamau Brathwaite of Creole realities and identities in the Caribbean,[1] will provide a relevant theoretical matrix to better understand Swahili realities and identities, as they were shaped, through space and time, by their respective "great traditions". These are the African "great tradition" and the Arab "great tradition". According to Brathwaite, within and beyond *Creolity* as a generic, commonly-shared identity and various *Creolisms* such as carnival as socio-cultural manifestations and expressions of the commonly shared Creolity, Afro-descendants and Euro-descendants refer to their respective, original African and European "great traditions", to inform and shape in a substantive and essential way, their specific Creole identities as perceived and lived by them in social life and throughout history.

Similar patterns of identity determination and differentiation might also apply in the case of Swahili. As a matter of fact, despite and beyond references to Swahili as a commonly-shared patrimony, the ways in which Tanzanian

Afro-descendants and their Arab-descendants country(wo) men including scholars, manage their specific relationships to Swahili have, for instance, fuelled quite a contentious, passionate debate, during the Conference on the Fifty Years of Kiswahili as Language of African Liberation, Unification and Renaissance, organised by the Institute of Swahili Studies of the University of Dar es Salaam, in October 2012.[2]

8.2. Specificities in the socio-economic formations

It is clear that ecology, lifestyle and patterns of settlement and communication as established or modified through space and time, were all factors of differentiation of African social formations with specific modalities of configuration of their institutional tessitura, production modes and relations and their social morphology in general, as well as of attitudes and ways of thinking that resulted from the specific history of each of these social formations. Thus, there was a variety of social formations in place in Africa, at times displaying noticeable contrasts and differences, on the eve of the contacts with Europe (fifteenth century).

In the specific context of southern Africa, it seems that the San and Khoikhoi communities "all began as hunter-gathers, then evolved into nomadic pastoralists, and later into agriculturalists". Here, ownership of cattle had profound socio-political implications; amongst others, it enabled both sedentarism and seasonal nomadism; it also enabled accumulation of surplus and wealth as well as an often-concomitant process of complexification of social structures and hierarchisation of society. Institutionally, a more settled and politically sophisticated society was in the making, thus predicated on a different mode of production. Although the San and Khoe peoples are sometimes blended under the ethnonym Khoisan / Khoi-San / Khoikhoi as the earliest, indigenous peoples of southern Africa, in reality, these two communities must be desegregated on the basis of, for example, differences in physical appearance, stature, lifestyle and culture. From an anthropological viewpoint, Khoi people including the Nama

of Namibia, are groups of pastoral nomads who farm cattle and sheep and have a highly developed socio-political system. Whereas for the San, the basic unit of social organisation is the hunting group, moreover, the San farm neither crops nor cattle, and some of them speak languages that are very close to Khoi languages, notwithstanding structural differences between San and Khoe idioms.

The differential roles of family, kinship and age were also critical in the same context. As emphasised by Do Nascimento in his contribution to the original African Heritage Research Study, clans and lineages did perform a critical role in the early stages of state formation in many regions of the African continent. But at a later stage, social relations in general were more political than based on kinship, notwithstanding the ongoing role of kinship in the competition for access to political power, for example, ascendency to the six main matrilineal lineages as a condition for eligibility to power in the Senegalese kingdom of Kajoor-Bawal (seventeenth/nineteenth centuries). In all cases, the family has always performed a crucial role in the lives of peoples and their communities, both as a social and a divine institution whose symbolic importance must also be emphasised. In fact, for a long time, and to some extent until today, the family household has, thus, been the most important unit of life and production. But as social structures became more sophisticated especially amongst Nguni societies, the age-set group became an important unit of production and socialisation, including in the patterns of military organisation, and in society in general.

8.3. Conceptions and practices on gender and matrimony

Broadly speaking, there seems to be a competition between patrilinearity and matrilinearity on the whole of the African continent. For example, at some point in history, the Bantu-speaking people's social organisation seems to have been predominantly patrilineal with totems indicating some traces of common descent. However, matricentrality also seems to have

been a commonly shared anthropological trait amongst various Bantu communities.

As far as matrimonial conceptions and practices are concerned, there seems to be a general opposition between, on the one hand, endogamy and exogamy; and on the other hand, between matri-locality and viri-locality of marriage. Nguni communities, for instance, were distinguished by strict exogamy rules, forbidding marriage to any partner whose descent can be traced from a common ancestor. Unlike the Sotho-Tswana group that encourages marriage between cross-cousins, the Nguni would consider such a relationship as being of an incestuous kind.

In many if not most communities of today's Africa, virilocality seems to be the dominant pattern. This situation often comes as consequence of Indo-European, Judaeo-Christian or Islamo-Arab influences. But amongst many matri-central communities such as the Makhuwa of Mozambique, matricentrality entails, amongst others, matrilocality of marriage. In this case, the married couple elect the "bride's" community as their matrimonial residence. In fact, in some respect, the "groom" is first accepted in the community only as a potential son-in-law who undergoes a challenging probation period during which he has to prove to his future in-laws, particularly the *Amaama* (mothers and aunts) of his wife to be, his worth as a possible son-in-law. Otherwise, he would purely and simply be sent back to his community of origin, in case of failure of various tests, during the probation period.

Similarly, amongst the matrilineal peoples of Eastern Tanzania such as the Zaramo, Kwere, Luguru (and Kami), Kutu, Sagara, Vidunda, Kaguru, Ngulu and Zigula, whereby "male daughters and female husbands"[3] have been enjoying a high status from a social and symbolic viewpoint, even "influential and senior men resided with their matrikin and succeeded in forcing both male and female affines to reside with them". Besides, "The majority of men appear to have resided in their wives' natal settlements, or to have allowed their wives to remain in their settlements and to have visited them from time

to time while they themselves remained in their own nearby natal settlements".[4]

8.4. Case study on the Baganda and their neighbours[5]

In many African traditional communities, body and facial scarifications, specific haircuts have been, and, to some extent still are, distinctive markers of ethnic identity associated with organised belief systems and sometimes compelling codes of conduct as well as dietary and social prohibitions. For Green, attributes of Ganda ethnicity that bind them together as a community distinct from other neighbouring communities, include the following: a belief in common descent; a unique name; a common history; a common culture; a common territory or homeland; a sense of solidarity; a common language. Not only do these attributes bind the Baganda together; in many instances, they are also markers of ethnic differences with neighbouring peoples who not only have their own history, languages, territory, cultures that define and identify them as members of their respective communities; in addition, there are also differences in the way that these peoples may relate to such attributes, because of various considerations.

Firstly, whereas the belief in common descent amongst the Baganda puts emphasis on Kintu, the first *Kabaka*, amongst neighbouring other communities, there is a proliferation of competing myths of origin. In Burundi for instance, "one myth puts the kingdom's origin in the Buha court of modern-day Tanzania, while another places the events in Rwanda".[6] Moreover, for all other polities, (e.g. Busoga, Bunyoro, Toro), the ruling elites' classes are presented in the local narratives as immigrants from elsewhere, whereas the lower classes are indigenous to the region. This feature is also commonly shared by the Baganda themselves, the only difference with other communities in this regard might be more of a subjective nature than it is an objective fact. So to speak, given that the Baganda elite are also known to originate from a distant land, the difference here lies in the greater *rootedness* of the Baganda elite, according to kiganda official narratives relative to the new

initiation rite institutionalised in the 1760s by the then *Kabaka* that puts greater emphasis on the foundational role of Kintu, the first *Kabaka*.

Secondly, "Whereas there has never been any ambiguity about the name of Buganda, other ethnic groups in the region have been called other names over time, several of which have been coined by outsiders", as in the case of the Nyamwezi, Acholi and Nubians.[7]

Thirdly, regarding knowledge of and identification with own history, other interlacustrine kingdoms such as Bunyoro and Burundi "have poorly recorded histories with a legacy of constant rewriting of royal genealogies and an inability or unwillingness to separate history, religion and legends". In contrast, "Shared historical memories are abundant in Buganda, both physically in the shrines of all previous *Kabakas* that are scattered around Busiro and orally, in the way all shrines' custodians learnt to repeat the names of all previous *Kabakas* – plus their respective wives and chiefs under their command – in chronological order".[8]

Fourthly, in addition to the impact of "myths of common descent and shared historical memories" in the consolidation of Kiganda cultural identity and heritage, the Baganda are bound together by a common sense of belonging to the same territory or homeland, the kingdom of Buganda whose external boundaries have always been demarcated, since time immemorial, by "sharp edges: one was either in it or outside it", according to Kiwanuka's formula[9]. According to certain records, the safety and security of the kingdom's borders were also maintained through ritual means, for example, by ways of sacrifice of human and animal victims called *Byonzire*, in addition to rites performed at the four major shrines located at the four compass extremes of the kingdom. In contrast, other polities in the region were either fragmented (e.g. Burundi and Bunyoro as remnants of the once powerful Bunyoro-Kitara) and/or instable, with poorly demarcated boundaries, as in the case of Buhaya (in pre-colonial north-west Tanzania), Rwanda and Buzinza (a region that was plagued by a history of slave raiding).

Finally, the relevance and impact of kiganda (also called luganda), as the language spoken by the Baganda, constitute one powerful marker of identity. As part and parcel of a commonly shared heritage and identity, this linguistic unity is reinforced by a common sense of belonging and solidarity in which loyalty from all the Baganda subjects and reference to the Baganda clans occupy a central place, whereas certain languages spoken by neighbouring groups such as Lusoga are often fragmented into various dialects, and their respective societies split and stratified between classes (or castes) of cattle keepers (*Bahima* in Ankole; *Tutsi* in Rwanda and Burundi), farmers (*Bairu* in Ankole; *Hutu* in Rwanda and Burundi), in addition to an outcast, underclass group named the *Twa* (Pygmies).[10]

It is important to emphasise that Buganda's unity had a heavy price – war and slavery – that was paid by the Baganda themselves and by the neighbouring communities as well. Indeed, war and institutionalised violence performed a critical role in the processes of creation, maintenance and consolidation of Bugandan identity, unity and stability. Moreover, in nineteenth century Buganda, there were slaves who, despite a few opportunities of social mobility, found themselves caught in the social straightjacket of both an inferior status and a social infra-humane condition of lack and vulnerability:

> These slaves, who were either captured in war or descended from those who were captured, were distinguished by the fact that they were not members of the Bugandan clans and therefore were barred from becoming chiefs; a position reserved for people who could prove that they were Baganda by tracing their ancestry back to the original founders of the clan. Unlike other Baganda, slaves could not own property, and when they died their bodies did not receive the funeral rites granted to other Baganda but were merely thrown into the forest.[11]

8.5. Differential impact of certain leaders and/or institutional reforms

As earlier noted, through the sets of institutional reforms and constitutional changes that were introduced under the reign of the *Askiyas* (Songhay empire), it is possible to identify the rationale and indices of a transition towards certain forms of feudalism, with the rise in the state hierarchy of state officials such as the *Fari Mondzo* (Minister of agriculture) who must have been concerned with the management of imperial estates scattered throughout the empire and which brought in large revenues every year, in a context whereby the administration of natural resources and the settlement of land disputes were an important issue; similar functions being performed by state officials in charge of waters and lakes, of forests, and of property. Of note is also the apparent correlation between the processes of centralisation of power and authority and the development of captivity and/or slavery in the Songhay empire as well as in nineteenth century Buganda whereby the status of slaves was compounded by their infra-humane condition: a pattern different from what may be observed elsewhere in Africa, e.g. amongst the Walaf of Senegal, whereby in the framework of the caste system, status (defined by ideology) did/does not necessarily match social condition.[12]

8.6. Combined impact of ethnicity, religion, language, and culture

In certain regions of Africa, the history of imported religions has often been marked by the development of negative stereotypes and ethnotypes: examples of derogatory appellation of *Kaffir* or the myth of the *Curse on Ham* and his descent. There are also in the framework of northern Nigeria, the Kanem-Bornu and around Lake Chad areas, negative stereotypes such as *Maguzawa* (probably derived from Arabic *madjus*, originally meaning fire-worshippers, pagans) by which Hausa used to designate non-Muslim neighbouring communities.

We further recall how in East Africa, the configuration of social formations and inter-community relationships were shaped by the cultural and symbolic legacy of two major

historical factors: Islam and slavery, both on the mainland and on most Indian Ocean islands; whereas in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, the following factors stand out as markers of differential, sometimes conflicting ethnic identities: the impact of biological and cultural miscegenation, in addition to religion and language, and by the transposition of discriminatory conceptions and practices, having some of such conceptions and practices, been systematised and consolidated within the feudal state ideology. Without forgetting the Maghreb-Mashrek case, within which a complex relationship between religion, language, ethnicity and race has also performed an important role in processes of social classification and identification of individuals and the communities to which they belong.

Finally, in areas such as the Great Lakes region was noted a phenomenon of overlapping between class and caste boundaries; the dominant pattern, in some cases, being one of correspondence between status and social condition, with caste overlapping class, so to speak, while extending and reinforcing it as a reality, in a certain way. In this context, the impact of ideology must also be taken into consideration given its role in the mechanisms of social differentiation and classification.

Sudan can, in a variety of ways, be seen as epitome of conflicting images of Self and Other since all the ingredients of problematic Afro-Arab relationships as analysed above can be found in this country and other parts of the Afro-Arab Borderlands, notwithstanding the reality of ample and convincing evidence about the Africanity of Sudan and its people in general, in spite of the significance and social impact of the *ta'rib* supremacist ideology and strategy of cultural assimilation, in the north of the country and beyond.

Endnotes

1 Brathwaite, *The Folk Culture of the Slaves in Jamaica…*

2 *Kongamano la Miaka 50 ya Kiswahili Kama Lugha ya Umoja, Ukombozi na Mvuvumko wa Afrika, Blue Pearl Hotel, Dar es Salaam, 04/06 October 2012*. At this conference whose main working languages were English and Swahili, many presentations were thus, made and proceedings conducted in Swahili.

3 See: Amadiume, Ifi, *Male daughters, female husbands. Gender and sex in an African society*, London and New Jersey, Zed Books, 1987; *Afrikan Matriarchal Foundations*, London, Karnak House, 1987.

4 See Beidelman, T. O., *The Matrilineal Peoples of Eastern Tanzania*, London, International African Institute, 1967, pp. xiii-xiv.

5 See Green, Elliott D., "Ethnicity and Nationhood in Precolonial Africa: The Case of Buganda", in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 16, Issue 1, January 2010, pages 1–21.

6 Green, "Ethnicity and Nationhood in Precolonial Africa… », p. 3.

7 Green, Ibid.

8 Green, Id., pp. 3-4.

9 Kiwanuka, M. S. M., *A History of Buganda: From the Foundation of the Kingdom to 1900*, London, Longman, 1971, p. 138. Quote from Green, p. 4.

10 Green, Id., pp 5-6.

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12 See: Diop, Abdoulaye Bara, *La Société Wolof. Tradition et Changement*, Paris, Editions Karthala, 1981.

Chapter Nine

Generic Features of Peoples' Heritage and Identities: A Tentative Synthesis on Findings and Conclusions

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9.1. Multiplicity of factors of change, and primacy of African agency

African peoples' destinies, their cultural identities and heritage have been shaped by a combination of historical factors that produced complex ethno-cultural and linguistic groupings and tapestries in the whole of the continent. Yet despite the undeniable impact of exogenous factors, the primacy and permanence of African agency including "the forgotten geography of soils and peoples", constitutes a fundamental fact whose impact outweighs the impact of any other factor. More often than is generally recognised in the dominant discourses on history, African people also assumed the first initiative in their relationships with neighbouring peoples of the Middle East, in the framework of ancient geopolitics. This fact confirms that for a long period of time, African peoples not only were self-sufficient in the area of military technology and organisation as well as in other areas; under certain circumstances, they even enjoyed supremacy of some kind over other world regions, as demonstrated by Walter Rodney in the second chapter of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.*

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Again, it is important to stress that military superiority in itself – which was one major factor for foreign conquest of the African continent – is by no means a proof of absolute superiority in terms of historical development; without forgetting that African history – including in the Diaspora – presents examples of illustrious battlefields such as Isandlwana (South Africa), Adwa (Ethiopia), Vertières, la Ravine-aux-Couleuvres (Haiti), where African armies, despite an evident deficit in terms of military technology and firepower, have stood up against well-armed imperialist armies, and inflicted memorable defeats to some of them.

The permanence of African resistance against oppression and attempts at cultural negation and erasure, on the continent and in the Diaspora, is indeed a significant historical factor and a reason why the different modalities of foreign domination may be viewed as *just other episodes* in African history. In reality, African resistance has expressed itself under various forms, including through examples of apparent or false proselytism in the cases of, for example, religious conversion of members of communities of runaway enslaved individuals or groups of people from the Kenya coast and hinterland, that would embrace the Christian Faith at the Church Missionary Society missions where they had rushed to for protection against the threat from hordes of slave raiders.

As emphasised earlier, certain communities have played, at certain moments in history, an important role as key actors in driving or influencing the historical processes, for instance in the areas of institution and state-building (Nguni, Shona, "Teke", Lozi, Baganda, Mandinka), within the regional and/or inter-regional trade networks (Hausa, Soninke and Jula), or in the spread of certain economic activities and lifestyles as evidenced in the adoption of cattle-breeding by Bantu communities such as the Tswana and Nguni under influence from the Khoikhoi who also left their imprint on the lexicon and sound system of languages such as IsiZulu and IsiXhosa. In the case of the Fulani, the Islamic Faith was taken advantage of as an ideological cement of national unity to first wage wars of resistance against the dominance of oppressive local

aristocracies, and to raise up to regional hegemony, at a later stage, in the West and Western Central Africa, notwithstanding the fact that certain Fulani communities, often nomadic pastoralists, have, until today, observed a certain distance and in some cases, manifested a defiant attitude towards the Islamic Faith.

9.2. Land, lifestyle, heritage and self-consciousness

It is believed in many parts of West Africa and beyond, that "it is fitting for every good person to know and be able to recite his/her own song of praise",[1] the one that connects us to our own ancestry, our ancestrality. The relevance, the centrality of birthplaces and toponymy in groups' epic songs like in the *Mvet* of the Beti-Fang or the *Kasala* song of the Baluba people, as well as in titulatures, cartouches and praise songs tell a lot about their role as individual or group identity markers. The attachment to ancestral land, natural habitat, lifestyle, language, traditional religion and culture surely has performed a critical role in the modalities of self-consciousness and self-affirmation, as well as in processes of African resistance against foreign subjugation and exploitation.

Take, for instance, the case of the Chagga people. Although in all probability, the Chagga migrated into their current habitat from elsewhere, nevertheless, "one striking feature which characterises the Chagga themselves is an old precise deep-rooted sense of place".[2] This sense of place is first about deep attachment to the ecosystem of the Kilimanjaro with its river and lake system reaching far beyond Chaggaland and the three main tops - the Shira Plateau, the Mawensi and of course the Kibo as the highest of the three and indeed the highest mountain summit on the African continent reaching a height of 19,000 feet. This sense of place is also about attachment to "sites of shrines, old battlefields, old boundaries, the ancestral homes of clans and chiefs," amongst others.[3]

Furthermore, even though more centralised polities such as kingdoms and empires were, at first sight, better equipped to oppose the military might of their armies against foreign

domination, nonetheless some of such polities eventually became caught into the Indian Ocean or Atlantic slave trade networks, whereas peoples living in smaller socio-political formations such as Eastern African Giriama[4] and Kikuyu chieftaincies, continued to impose a strong resistance to foreign imperialist endeavours. The Giriama did not draw on a traditional military system - their military organisation was designed to offer defence when necessary, but that system was neither permanent, nor aggressive or particularly strong. "Nor did they draw on a political bureaucracy to organise all Giriama" as "their traditional political organization, based on councils of elders, reflected regional and economic differentiation…"

9.3. Unity beyond diversity

As reflected in analyses and reflexions made in the previous chapters, certain communities, realities or processes have played a major role in the consolidation of the anthropological and cultural unity of African peoples beyond undeniable diversity, specificities and differences. Through a "journey alongside corridors of history", it is possible to learn a number of important lessons from, for example, the study of migration patterns. The first lesson is about the Nilotic origin of African peoples. Linguistic and anthropological evidence gathered and analysed by C A Diop also substantiates the assumption on the Nilotic origin of the Wolof / Walaf and other Senegalese and West African peoples; and commonly shared life experiences on the itineraries of migrations and in places of arrival and/ or dispersal of certain migrations have, thus, resulted in convergent or overlapping identities amongst communities.

Important lessons stem from the role performed by the Swahili culture and Bantu migrations amongst major unifying factors. The Bantu entity is, arguably, the most sizeable and homogeneous African entity from a linguistic and cultural point of view, notwithstanding its great diversity, as can be seen in the forms of socio-political organisation, and through the specificity of Southern Bantu languages of the Nguni group, distinguishable by, for example, a phonetism that has been

reshaped, enriched, following their prolonged contacts with neighbouring Khoi and San languages.

In correlation with migration patterns, the study of names can also be quite a productive source for the confirmation of the fundamental cultural unity of African peoples. The unity of African names of peoples and communities indeed expresses itself through a whole network of correspondences between clan and totem names from one group to another: between Tsonga and Ndau of Mozambique, between Bambara and Walaf / Wolof (ethnonyms Jóob / Diop, Jara / Diarra, Njaay / Ndiaye, Keyta / Keita); between some Cameroonian, southern African and West African populations (e.g.: the toponym Koki; ethnonyms and/ or anthroponyms Ndongo; Ndumbe; Katanga; Kunde; Sena / Seen / Sène; Ndaw / Ndau; Samba; Pende / Penda; Mbenge / Mbengue, etc.).

The convergence of peoples and cultures has been a reality since the very early stages of the history of the continent, whereby co-habitation and mutual influences were a commonly shared norm amongst African communities, as testified from the study on the ethno-genesis of Senegal: a permanent fact in African history to the point of literally blurring the very borders of certain ethno-cultural communities. Similar to Cameroon, often depicted as an *Africa in miniature,* Senegal offers a window through which it is possible to glimpse of the whole African narrative.

In similar fashion, the rise to political hegemony of the Ashanti in the eleventh/twelfth centuries, in the wake of the establishment of small principalities or chieftaincies on the fringes of the forest, was marked by the association between groups of Akan and local communities whose languages (and customs) were probably adopted by the Akan newcomers, as has often been the case in Africa, including in the Great Lakes region, whereby the Bachwezi have introduced a religion based on the phases of the moon, whilst adopting the indigenous Bantu languages of the region, in the framework of an African cultural synthesis in which, more often than not, local cultural elements seem to have prevailed.

In the area of spirituality and religion, *Ntr* (whose graphic representation in the hieroglyphic writing system is an axe, and that is improperly translated in Eurocentric scholarship by "God"), is in reality the active principle thanks to which, for example, *Rmt* (human being as expression and form of matter that has reached the advanced stage of consciousness), extricates itself from the primordial water *Nun*, through a process of categorial conversion. It is also important to stress, once again, the many affinities and similarities between Egyptian and African cosmogonies such as the cosmogony of the Dogon of Mali. In fact, beyond the Dogon case, there are many other parallels between ancient Egypt and black African cosmogonies, including those of the Copi (Mozambique), Séréer, Joolaa (Senegal), Igbo (Nigeria) Akan (Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana) and Bamileke (Cameroon). The belief systems and modes of worship were/are very close and mediated through similar means. Culture contacts, mutual influences, assimilation and cultural synthesis were very common processes.

Last, but not least, there is the unifying role of African languages and linguistics. Here, one must recall again the key role of language in shaping up cultural identities in all societies and times; and that, in the African context, linguistic and cultural similarities and affinities far outweigh differences. Despite differences noticeable when comparing the past or present lexicons of two or more African languages, the genetic relatedness between Pharaonic Egyptian and current black African languages on both the synchronic and diachronic scales, is an undisputable fact, in a socio-cultural and anthropological dispensation whereby an idiom like Setswana, has also preserved its intrinsic identity as a Bantu language by retaining "the basic Proto-Bantu linguistic features such as the grammar, sound system and the basic core vocabulary".

Commonalities between the Nguni and Sotho-Tswana communities are also worthwhile mentioning at this point. Whereas the Nguni, Sotho and Tswana settlements were easy to identify as distinct, the two languages and cultures were by no means clearly different, except, perhaps, regarding aspects of the phonetism, as a result of differential influences from

neighbouring Khoe and San languages. In similar fashion, language classification and language practice and dynamics have been used to substantiate the fundamental cultural and anthropological unity amongst many Sudanese African communities: the apparent diversity cannot undermine the fact that the weaving of the ethno-linguistic fabric in Sudan reflects fundamental unity if not homogeneity, in the opinion of scholars like Mohamed Jalal Hashim.

9.4. Typology and morphology of socio-economic formations and polities

First on the historical record, there is the legacy of the Neolithic Revolution: a starting point for profound changes in the peoples' material conditions of life, with the transition from gathering to agriculture, on the one hand, and on the other hand, from hunting to domestication and later to breeding of animals: which also partially mirrors the state and conditions of most ancient communities in the early stages of social formation (e.g. the San). At a later stage, many communities have kept alive this legacy even within more complex modes of production and socio-economic formations. It has also been recorded how, on the whole, as pre-colonial people extracted basic and regular supplies of food, clothing and shelter from their natural environments, their developmental trajectories evolved from stone technology to iron technology, from hunting and foraging to pastoralism and agriculture, as well as from living in small families, kinships and clans to chiefdoms and kingdoms.

Secondly, despite the existence of centralised polities in pre-colonial Africa, the proliferation of small and medium size communities such as village dwellings and chieftaincies, and mixed economies seems to have been a dominant trend almost everywhere, particularly amongst Bantu communities, with the exception of groups such as the Herero; in a context within which land, territoriality and a sense of solidarity built around the allegiance to a common historical and cultural heritage have also played a major role in the processes of state formation while cementing the ideological unity amongst people and communities.

Thirdly, because of a conjunction of factors, a general trend towards increased complexity of socio-economic formations can be observed in some instances. The following facts emerged in the framework of such a process: the apparition of indigenous currencies and "monetary" systems organised around social and/or economic functions as performed by specific or rare products such as the kola nuts and cowrie shells (e.g. amongst West African communities); the consequences of the control of labour power on processes of social stratification, as at some point, the continuous creation, control, and appropriation of labour power became a dynamic principle of social differentiation and classification upon which certain African pre-colonial societies were founded.

Fourthly, the importance of prosperous cities and urban life was another factor and indication of transformations occurred in certain social formations, as in the development of Swahili civilisation and history, socio-political organisation and cultural heritage of the Yoruba people for whom African spirituality and religion has also played a key role, alongside urbanisation and the development of urban culture.

Fifthly, the relevance of a number of features and common governance principles and values are to be acknowledged and fully assessed. Generally quoted amongst such principles and values are: a) a clear distinction and separation between the control of political power on the one side and, on the other side, the administration of land and other natural resources; b) the key role of councils amongst chieftaincies and kingdoms, as well as in the less-centralised socio-political formations; c) the preservation and consolidation of democratic institutions, principles and values through counter-powers entrusted with, amongst others, functions of oversight of the way in which the executive and judiciary perform their constitutional duties. Part of such a political legacy was preserved and enriched throughout the African Diaspora's history and cultural heritage.

9.5. Interconnections, intersections between religion, power and authority

Let us start by re-emphasising the existence of strong convergences and interfaces between the worldviews, religious practices and value systems, as can be seen in the study of the affinities and similarities between Egyptian and African cosmogonies such as the cosmogony of the Dogon. There are also a number of values and issues that can be gleaned from the study of the San way of life; they include: the social unity of the group as a condition for success in hunting; the development of a symbiotic relationship with and a profound respect for environment and nature; gender equity and the principle of reciprocity. These values and principles are commonly shared within the context of African Africa, together with a certain cultural availability and open-mindedness to accommodate minorities and strangers, based on the central principle of *Ubuntu*.

We have encountered, in the course of the research for this book project, examples illustrative of the belief in the sacredness of the leader and leadership as another common feature of African institutional heritage, amongst many other instances of interconnections and inter-sections between religion, political power and authority; for example, in the Lozi myth of origin, in Yoruba mythology centred around Oduduwa, son of Olodumare, the Supreme God and common ancestor of all Yoruba sovereigns, in addition to the political and symbolic attachment to the main polity and capital, Ile-Ife, as centre of political power and spiritual life and home to historical legitimacy, where mortal rests of all Yoruba sovereigns had to be returned for burial at their death, together with their insignia.

Further reference can be made to an area not very distant from the Yoruba, home to the Ashanti people, amongst whom must be stressed the importance of the royal throne or *Sikadwa* (Golden Stool), and its significance as symbol of national unity amongst various peoples. Finally, in the north-eastern regions of the continent, not only did the South or "Land of the Cataracts" (Upper Egypt) provide some of the basic elements of civilisation such as, amongst others, the

prototype of the pyramids; moreover, from a historical point of view, the South has often performed the role of last bastion and shelter of African legitimacy particularly during troubled times consecutive to foreign invasions.

9.6. Relevance of heritage in philosophy, knowledge production, education

As cradle of human civilisation, Africa is also the birthplace of philosophy and knowledge production and application. In this original context, there was no clear-cut distinction between what, from a European perspective, is termed philosophy on the one hand and, on the other hand, matters falling in the realm of spirituality and religion; while the legacies from African indigenous educational systems have left a durable impact on societies and peoples, and continue playing a key role in shaping social and mental structures, and in particular for the development of the African child in the 0 to 6 age group.

Education in this context, is not only about development of cognitive capacities through acquisition of knowledge; it was/ is also "about the teaching and learning of value systems, as well as acquisition of customs and social and cultural codes relevant to people's lives and the survival of their communities (socialisation)".

Regarding "technologies of literacy" and transmission of knowledge, Obenga recalls that the African context is one whereby "orality is only a dominant and not an exclusivity"; a context whose peoples have produced the most ancient writing systems in human history (Hieroglyphs, Demotic and Hieratic), in addition to Meroitic and Ethiopian graphic systems, and other indigenous writing systems as identified, analysed by Obenga in their specificities and their structural interconnections and similarities, in his book *L'Afrique dans l'Antiquité*.

To conclude on these matters, the importance and relevance of African languages and IKS as immaterial heritage must be emphasised when looking at and beyond the great variety of roles that they perform in society and peoples' lifestyle and in shaping their historical and cultural memories. Let us remember again the example of Tanzanian ethnic

community languages (ECLs) that impart a lot of knowledge to bring about development, as highlighted by Rubagumya with the example of the Ruhaya language spoken in the Kagera region. This is a context whereby, notwithstanding "limitations in the domains of use" and "congestion of different languages" caused by "community interactions along with urbanization", yet, a Ruhaya speaker can distinguish more than 12 types of bananas according to their types, shapes, parts and uses; knowledge also being imparted through proverbs, sayings, songs and stories.

9.7. Matricentrality and principles of gender equity and complementarity

Despite what seems to have become the dominant trend in the Africa of today – i.e. male dominance in most areas of society and political power – gender equity and complementarity can be viewed as an integral part of the historical and cultural heritage commonly shared by many African communities. In the conception of power, the male (man) is considered as the symbol and personification of political power and authority, whereas the female (woman) is the source of this power. Amongst the San society, whereby men and women were/are both equally dependent upon each other, there was/is a clear division of hunting and gathering on a gender basis; whereas in the Kanem-Bornu as a feudal monarchy ruled by the *Maï* who was "revered like a god", nonetheless, certain women used to play an important role within state institutions and society, in similar fashion as the *Mazvirira* (First Spouse of the King) and the *Nehanda* (Queen Mother) in ancient Zimbabwe.

The Zaramo, Kwere, Luguru (and Kami), Kutu, Sagara, Vidunda, Kaguru, Ngulu and Zigula peoples from Eastern Tanzania are another typical example of matrilineal communities that are bound by a profound linguistic unity. In the framework of societies that were "traditionally organised in small neighbourhoods whose citizens were linked through common ties to a dominant matrilineal group", marriage was and still is, somehow, matrilocal; while matrilineages were/are granted the exclusive prerogative to "allocate rights to land for house-sites and cultivation".[5]

All the above-mentioned cases and others analysed elsewhere in this volume, testify to the reality of gender balance and complementarity as a broadly shared anthropological feature amongst various African communities.

9.8. IKS and vestiges of material heritage

In the area of monumental architecture, the architects and builders of the pyramids of ancient Egypt and major buildings of Great Zimbabwe as can be seen still standing today at Masvingo, used similar building techniques that consisted in shaping and piling up building blocks of different sizes and shapes without bothering to bond them together with cement or another bonding material. Today, there is consensus on the fact that such a technique was also based on the knowledge of the geo-morphological configuration of the sites on which such monuments and buildings were erected. African monumental architecture also includes military artworks like the network of military fortresses that were built with baked bricks, probably by Sao architects and blacksmiths, in the framework of the Kanem Bornu empire, and whose vestiges can be seen standing until today, in remote places. In the area of fine arts and crafts, the Yoruba, Ashanti and Benin polities are famous for having developed traditions of refined artworks that flourished in the context of court life, often in celebration of the splendours of the kingdom and achievements of its most outstanding leaders. Some of these pieces of art work used to convey strong political messages and, in some cases, programmes of governance or projects of society.[6]

9.9. Heritage from "tougher" times and societies

It is evident, as previously noted, that pre-colonial African societies such as Buganda were not exempt from either conflicts of interest or social antagonisms; and that a distinction must be made between two different periods in the history of political systems, particularly in West Africa. The most recent one, which is contemporaneous with the domination of market capital and the slave trade in many a social formation, was marked, according to testimonies from Pathé Diagne and Bathily,[7] by

the advent of warring and predatory states on their way to political disruption and moral decline, in a context of *tougher* societies that "had adopted the gun and gunpowder": such were societies organised along more hierarchical lines, and within which resorting to violence, brute force, was the prerogative of states in general and of their main institutions: the army and the judiciary in particular. Nevertheless, in all cases, certain mechanisms of social and political regulation have never ceased to be in place in such contexts, supported as they were, by a "common will to live together" beyond the specificities in the cultures and lifestyles of certain groups or in terms of functional specificities of the various regions within the same socio-political formations.

Endnotes

1 "*Xam sa wayu bopp baax na ca*", in the Walaf idiom of the Senegambian socio-cultural space.

2 See Stahl, Kathleen M., *History of the Chagga people of Kilimanjaro*, London-The Hague-Paris, Mouton & Co., 1964, p.19.

3 Stahl, K M., id. p. 29.

4 See: Brantley, Cynthia: *The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800-1920*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press, 1981, pp.1-2.

5 See Beidelman, T. O., *The Matrilineal Peoples of Eastern Tanzania*, London, International African Institute, 1967, p.xiii.

6 Elsewhere, in places such as the Kajoor-Bawal (Cayor-Baol), in the Senegambian region, some of such messages were relayed by names given to horses or elements of war weaponry. Cf. Mbuub, S., «Défi , bravade et antagonisme dans la tradition et la société Wolof », in the *Littérature Orale* Journal of INALCO / Sorbonne , Paris, 1986.

7 Bathily Abdoulaye, « The West African State in historical perspectuive », book chapter in Osaghae, Eghosa, *Between State and civil society in Africa: perspectives on development*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 1994.

Chapter Ten

Claiming Back the Epistemological Initiative and Sovereignty: An Epilogue and Way Forward

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A study on African identities and heritage entails clarity on the approach as well as the conceptual tools and methodology used to conduct such study, including the perspective from which the study was conducted. In this regard, the legacy consolidated by C A Diop and the African school of scholarship that is grounded on the mastery of both "universal" knowledge and African IKS, was central to the conceptual approach of this book project. Such an option entails to critically assess and mainstream this legacy both in scholarship as well as in the project of transformation of school curricula and pedagogic approaches, with the view of re-formatting the hearts and mindsets of African youth back into self-knowledge, self-respect and-confidence.

This is *a sine qua non* condition for better preparedness, greater readiness to tackle the challenges of African Renaissance as an alternative project of society and civilisation, a strategic goal and a process of transformation and self-transformation of Africans in the world of today and tomorrow. Such a project has, since then (2012-2014), matured with time and found in teaching, research, scholarship in general, an environment that allowed its translation into modules, thematic seminars, workshops and publications.

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10.1. Need for an institutional space, search for alternative theoretical models

The urgency of forging and implementing durable responses to major challenges facing Africa, today, engages in a critical way, the responsibility of its political and intellectual elites. For Theophile Obenga, this requires operating from an *intentional sciences* paradigm; i.e. from a more holistic approach to research, scholarship, academia, that would have more relevance and responsiveness to societal challenges such as: adequate management of linguistic and cultural diversity, social integration and citizenship, and viable statehood and nation-building. The shift that is advocated for, responds to the need to craft and consolidate an institutional space in all relevant areas of humanities and social sciences for the promotion of an alternative paradigm for the study of African realities.

This task echoes a call made in a previous contribution; the expectation was about opening up into an era that would signal the end in South Africa and the broader SADC region, of a dominant trend of relative epistemological and intellectual insularity, as a result of the combined legacies of "apartheid (and post-apartheid) scholarship": an intellectual tradition that was/is still marked by the pervasive influence of Eurocentric epistemologies and orthodoxies, despite their questionable value in the areas of knowledge production and application.[1]

The stake was/is also about "taking South(ern) African scholarship to Africa, to the Diaspora and to the global world"; while bringing African and *Diasporan* as well as global scholarship into South(ern) Africa, to pave the way for a possibility of a renewal of conceptual approaches that would have significant implications for publishing (especially educational publishing) as well as for tuition and community outreach and engagement. Other tasks include: to produce out of the many monographs in, for example, the area of theoretical and descriptive linguistics, as well as for linguistic and cultural anthropology, a theoretical endogenous model that will allow to bridge the prevailing theoretical and epistemic gaps in the description, documentation and (re)classification of (southern) African indigenous languages and knowledge

systems; and to fast-track the mobilisation and marshalling of intellectual resources towards their modernisation, and implementation of multi-lingual mother-tongue based education (MLMTBE) policies.

As advocated by Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane, there is also a need to look beyond the artificial distinction between literature and *orature*, in a context in which there is no legitimacy to impose the teaching of Shakespeare, Hemingway or any other British or American writer at faculties where powerful (southern) African voices such as Mzamane himself, Mphahlele, Mazisi Kunene and others are silenced as scholars and creative writers. Kunene, a highly regarded and acclaimed poet, writer and academic, published in 1970 his first volume of poetry, *Zulu Poems*, which was banned for years in South Africa. It was first written in IsiZulu and then translated to English, as were all of his works, including his two epic poems, *Emperor Shaka the Great* and *The Ancestors and the Sacred Mountain*, and his other collections of poetry *Anthem of the Decades-– A Zulu Epic*. As noted in 1993 by Ntongela Masilela, Mazisi Kunene is "one of the greatest living African poets" who "draws his lineage directly from the ancestral roots into the present day".

An assessment of the role and relevance of Marxist epistemology remains one important related stake. This so given what has been said by the likes of Ayi Kwei Armah, showing how the utility of the perspective especially for struggles against exploitation is limited by its Eurocentric base and its tendency to see false dichotomies between race and class.

10.2. Relevance of *Afrikology* and Transdisciplinarity

Dani Wadada Nabudere's seminal work is, arguably, one of the most convincing contributions for the documentation and establishment of *Afrikology* as an alternative paradigm anchored in inter- and transdisciplinarity to be used for knowledge production and application in order to transform both our vision of reality and the world as well as reality and the world themselves. The starting point of Nabudere's monograph on *Afrikology* is a study conducted in five African

countries (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Sudan) by a cross-disciplinary team from the Marcus Garvey Pan African Institute (MGPAI) in 2006/2008, the research object being about "examining the epistemology of restorative rights in view of the continuing violation of rights in all aspects of life" in Africa and elsewhere, on the theme Restorative Justice and its relationship to International Humanitarian Law.[2] The study resulted in a report that was later discussed at an international conference in Nairobi, in August 2008.

From Nabudere's perspective, a number of artificial dichotomies, though entrenched in the conceptions and practices of many judicial systems on the African continent and elsewhere, are irrelevant and should, therefore, be questioned, and refuted. They include dichotomies between a) international law and national legislations; b) peace and justice, preference being given to peace; c) the need for justice and reconciliation; d) tradition and modernity; and e) national state security and human security.[3] The research also corresponded to a moment of "sharp debate about the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Africa".[4]

The study's aim was to relate the concept of Restorative Justice in its broad and cross-disciplinary meaning to the epistemology of *Afrikology* and transdisciplinarity, with the purpose of breaking down disciplinary boundaries between the different academic disciplines, taking into account the extent to which disciplinary boundaries "inhibit our capabilities of looking at realities in a comprehensive, holistic manner; leading to the adoption of fragmented solutions to problems, which inevitably fail to address those problems".

As a response to the counterproductive dominance of the combined traditions of entrenched monodisciplinary and academic territoriality, at some point, transdisciplinarity presented itself as an epistemological imperative: it is under these conditions that after many wanderings, trials and errors, transdisciplinarity ended up, with researchers such as Basarab Nicolescu, author of *A Manifest of Transdisciplinarity,*[5] by imposing itself as an epistemological and strategic imperative capable of questioning and judiciously replacing the classical Greek vision

of the universe, of history, of society, of natural and human phenomena. In reality, the demand for a transdisciplinary approach came mainly from researchers and knowledge producers in "exact" sciences, precisely theoretical mechanics and quantum physics: Nicolescu himself being a quantum physicist who built on the legacies of pioneers such as Nicolai Hartmann (1882–1950) and Werner Heisenberg (1901–1976): two important thinkers of the first (and second) half of the twentieth century, especially on the problem of "levels of reality". The call for transdisciplinarity was, therefore, originally, a call in the field of natural sciences to overcome the limits of Aristotelian and Cartesian logic, "to reconnect with the original holistic and integrative vision of the world as a more adequate epistemology of reality".

Afrikology is thus anchored in inter- and transdisciplinarity. As a new transdisciplinary epistemology, *Afrikology* thus carries a holistic and ethical conception of reality that, from Nadudere's viewpoint, can take us out of the current predicament created by the entrenched dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies characterised by the arbitrary disqualification and exclusion of non-European epistemologies, and by a pervasive tradition of intellectual territoriality and monodisciplinarity in the areas of knowledge production and utilisation.

Nabudere stresses that *Afrikology* "seeks to retrace the evolution of knowledge and wisdom from its source to the current epistemologies"; whilst trying to situate them in their historical and cultural contexts, especially "with a view to producing a new science for generating and accessing knowledge for sustainable use."[6] As a new transdisciplinary epistemology, *Afrikology* "insists on wholeness and interconnectedness of all phenomena". It thus "carries a holistic and ethical conception of reality" that, from Nadudere's viewpoint, can take us out of the current predicament created by the institutionalisation of intellectual territoriality and monodisciplinarity in the areas of knowledge production and utilisation.

Cheikh Anta Diop recognised that it was within the natural sciences themselves that a space was opened for self-

reflection that enabled both the experiences to emerge, and the physics and mechanics of science to resolve the Greek classical problem of the Aristotelian *excluded middle* that had blocked further progress in theoretical mechanics and physics: it is this questioning that resulted in the « quantum revolution » that led to the demand for a transdisciplinary epistemology that could overcome the Cartesian closed system of knowing. In his critique of Einstein, Cheikh Anta Diop concluded on the impossibility to establish a complete theory of knowledge based on classical physics because quantum physics had demonstrated that classical logic was "nothing but the sum of mental habits, of provisional rules that can change":

> The principles of determinism and locality of classical physics, which Einstein held so dear, are hardly applicable to quantum mechanics, which remains indeterministic, non-objective, nonlocal, but valid and complete.[7]

From Diop's critical standpoint this "reasoning reason, supported by the experience of microphysics and astrophysics, is going to give birth to a super-logic that will no longer be hampered by the archaeological materials of thought inherited from the previous phases of the evolution of the scientific mind". The search for an alternative has led Cheikh Anta Diop to the establishment of operative concepts such as those of "Crisis of reason" and "Logical probability of the mind" or "Logical availability of the mind".[8] This is, as emphasised by Nabudere, about a totally different, new philosophy flexible enough to respond to the new needs and developments in knowledge without foreclosing anything.[9]

Somehow, this is also what African Renaissance is about, as an alternative paradigm to the paradigm based on the "theories of development" associated with a distorted vision of Africa's history, societies and cultures. For Do Nascimento et al.,[10] the modernisation of African societies should not be viewed in terms of the so-called "liberal big push" advocated by Western-inspired epistemology. Historical and social progress in Africa will, on the contrary, come only as a result of a holistic process of re-foundation, renewal and transformation of both

the social fabrics as well as of African peoples themselves: their mindsets, world outlook, visions of Self and Other, together with their position in the world. The preceding entails, amongst others, the need to rethink critically, issues of institution-building, constitutionalism, shared values and "ways of doing things" including in the area of economic management.

10.3. Mainstreaming the legacy of Diop and the African School of thought

10.3.1. Childhood education, character development[11]

Both family and community performed a key role in the education and integral development of Cheikh Anta Diop. His namesake and maternal uncle, Cheikh Anta Mbacké, was one of the younger brothers of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Mbacké, an (end nineteenth-beginning twentieth centuries) outstanding spiritual and community leader, a visionary educationist and a talented, prolific writer. Cheikh Anta Mbacké himself founded the village of Caytu where Cheikh Anta Diop was born and was finally laid to rest. Cheikh Anta's family is part of a lineage whose cradle is Koki-Diop (or Kokki or Coki), which is the cradle of the marabouts (spiritual guides) of the Dorobe dynasty. At a young age, Diop was sent to Koki in order to learn the Qur'an and be educated in the Islamic tradition. His first childhood years were thus spent in a typical Mouride environment which has contributed to not only the intellectual development but also to shaping his character and personality; having amongst others, stimulated the young child's intellect, his propensity for studies and thirst for knowledge: which he would later on pursue with dedication and passion in Western types of educational institutions in Senegal and France.

10.3.2. Political and intellectual profile

Born in Senegal in 1923, Diop has always been a tireless defender for the cause of Africa as well as oppressed peoples. A committed Pan-Africanist, he was one of the first of his generation to clearly articulate the need for African political independence and unity, after a documented proposal for

intensive reforestation of the continent, within the framework of a global strategy to combat drought and for environmental preservation, in the early 1950s. In the 1960s, Diop also tried to draw the attention of African people and leadership as well as that of international public opinion, to the nuclear threat represented for the collective security of the continent by the then apartheid regime, in its drive to build around Pelindaba and Koeberg, a nuclear arsenal that would enable it with the capacity to target any point on the African continent with a nuclear missile.

Diop was trained in various disciplines of humanities and social science (history, linguistics, anthropology, Egyptology, philosophy) as well as exact sciences: mathematics and chemistry. In the first instance, Diop was specialised in nuclear physics. In this capacity, he established in Dakar and managed, until his death (7 February 1986), the radiocarbon laboratory for dating of archaeological and paleontological artefacts, where other radiometric methods such as potassium argon were also in use, making it possible to achieve absolute chronologies in dating processes. As a member of the UNESCO international scientific committees for both *A General History of Africa* and a new version of the *History of Humanity*, Diop made an outstanding contribution to the Cairo Colloquium on *The Population of Ancient Egypt and Deciphering of Meroïtic Writing System*(Jan / Feb 1974), as testified in the general conclusion of the *Report on the Cairo Colloquium:* indeed, one of the most convincing testimonies about the outstanding quality and relevance of the intellectual works produced within the framework of the African school of scholarship and thought established by Cheikh Anta Diop:

> Although the preparatory working paper (see Appendix 3, p. 135) sent out by UNESCO gave particulars of what was desired, not all participants had prepared communications comparable with the painstakingly researched contributions of Professors Cheikh Anta Diop and Obenga. There was consequently a real lack of balance in the discussions.[12]

Diop was also Chairperson for the Association of Black Researchers and Scientists and full Professor in History at the University of Dakar, now renamed after him. During the World Festival on Black Arts and Cultures in Dakar (1966), he shared with another African intellectual giant, Prof W E B Dubois, the Award to the Black Scientist whose work most positively impacted on the education of the black youth and people, in the twentieth century. Diop's work reflects a careful scrutiny and profound knowledge of Africa: its history and the realities of its peoples, their cultures, lifestyles, value systems and other systems of representations stemming from their inter-relation with their own habitats and environment.

Diop contributed to historiography through the establishment of, amongst others, two assertions: that Africa is the cradle of humankind and of human civilisation; and that beyond undeniable specificities even differences, there is a profound historical, linguistic, anthropological and cultural unity of African peoples. These two assertions have given birth to related research themes in a variety of research areas. They include: a) the delimitation of the Black World (up to the Indus river valley); b) the population of Ancient Egypt and Nubia; c) the identity of the builders of Nile Valley civilisations (Ancient Egypt and Nubia); d) the African (black) origin / essence of Nile Valley civilisations; e) the origin and nature of the Semitic world; f) the genetic linguistic relatedness of African languages; g) Africa's invaluable contributions to (Western) civilisation and wealth; h) the characterisation of African pre-colonial social economic formations; i) African languages competence for science.

Diop's is a political strategy based on a *Vision of the Future*[13] and on high political ethics and principles. His concerns as a thinker cover some of the main challenges and stakes for Africa's future. Amongst the said challenges: a) Africa's global security ("a precondition for development"); b) the need for a secular state; c) the status and role of women and the importance of gender equity or balance: *African Africa* being a source of inspiration; d) the need for organic intellectuals tied to their people's fate; e) the need for a cultural policy for the

promotion of African languages and Swahili in particular; f) the need for a consistent research policy and capacity-building; g) the need for a continental policy and doctrine on energy and for industrialisation; h) the development of an African economic market and management of African national resources for Africa's development; i) the need for an organic re-connection with the Diaspora.

If, according to J Do-Nascimento, Diop's purpose was to lay out the scientific foundations for the consolidation of an all-African political and historical conscience, the major concern of his work aims at the creation of the objective conditions for the renaissance of Africa, as a scientific, technological as well as an economic and political pole of initiative and decision-making, in the world of today and tomorrow.[14] From Mboup's viewpoint,[15] since the International Cairo Colloquium, the scientific establishment of the two aforementioned assertions has now become a matter of evidence almost universally accepted. Besides, such scientific fact is becoming a fact of historical and political conscience for a growing number of Africans on the continent and throughout the Diaspora. Of relevance is also Diop's strong advocacy for the need for conceptual independence and maturity for African scholarship, because, to be successful, the process of reformatting the hearts and mindsets of African peoples back into self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence, requires a qualitative change in the perspectives and conceptual tools used for knowledge production and application.

10.3.3. Option for transdisciplinarity: before, beyond Nicolescu's *Manifesto*

As early as the 1950s, Diop was grappling with the creation of a value-laden knowledge reflecting the African worldview: which, as emphasised by Nabudere, led him to move between Egyptology, anthropology, linguistics, nuclear physics, biochemistry and palaeontology. As a result, Diop created 14 dating methods that are still used today, thus providing scientific data previously unattainable within disciplines such as Egyptology and anthropology (e.g. Melanin dosage test). As stressed by Spady and recalled by Nabudere, "What Diop did

here was to move between History (Egyptology), Anthropology and the Physics laboratory., [thus] *occupying all the empty spaces* between them in order to bring facts to life to support the writing of an indigenous, authentic history of Africa".[16] Diop's intellectual journey as glimpsed in *Civilization or Barbarism*[17] started before and extends beyond Nicolescu's (2002) Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity in order to embrace *a vision of the future* as stressed by Nabudere. This journey which has led Diop, inter alia, to the establishment of the operational concept of *Logical Availability of the Mind* will, as stated earlier, create conditions that will allow us to overcome the *crisis of reason* and embark on a new logic built on the basis of modern physics as manifested in microphysics and astrophysics.[18]

10.3.4. A living legacy

Today, Diop's work has become a living legacy being perpetuated, but also critically re-assessed, completed and expanded by his disciples, amongst them, the team organised around the *ANKH Journal of African Civilisations*, edited by T Obenga with the involvement of a group of young, competent, conscious African scholars, most of whom also involved in the Shabaka association. The first issue of the *ANKH Journal* – regularly published since February 1992, includes, amongst others, a presentation of the laser AmonFont, invented by Cheikh Mbacke and Samory Candace Diop: a computer software program for the composition of hieroglyphic texts on Macintosh computers.

In the same publication, features a summary by its author, young Cameroonian nuclear physicist and astrophysicist Jean Paul Mbelek, of his book published in 1991, under the title of *Photons and Gravitons - Incompletedness of the Equations of Electro-dynamics and Gravitation*. Mbelek proposes a reformulation of the Rutherford Soddy axiomatic law on the disintegration of radioactive nucleuses, with important implications in the areas of nuclear physics, radioactivity theory and cosmo-chronology, particularly for the determination of the age of the solar system and the study of nucleo-synthesis processes in the stars. The author also succeeds in recapturing and reintroducing the

African concept of *Nun* (the original materia prima), as an operational, modern concept, in the area of cosmology.[19]

As stated already, mainstreaming Diop's legacy entails the fulfilment of two important tasks: a critical re-assessment and ownership of his work, while investigating and operationalising African Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Clearly, as ancestors of humankind and human civilisation, African peoples have also built institutions and produced discourses about their own practices. Hence the need to (re)discover, recapture and re-actualise the theoretical principles underlying their own discourses on God, the being, society, politics, as well as on economics or the nature of power. As demonstrated by Pathé Diagne, the African continent is home to a history of knowledge as old as time; "and whose singularity should be stressed not in terms of a racial phenomenon as such, but rather as a purely cultural and historical one". Obviously, the specificities of this intellectual context, particularly its discourses and orders of discourses, "could escape neither the mark of time and history nor diversity, nor even contradictions or conflicting interests".

Nevertheless, it is possible today to retrace, through space and time, and to reconstruct the continuity and the coherence of such African thought and discourse, demarcating them from thoughts and discourses from the Indo-European as well as from the Semitic, intellectual and cultural contexts. We also need to bear in mind with Diagne, that the first significant scientific revolution in history took place within the context of pharaonic Egypt; and that, out of such original context, the same scientific spirit of observation, experimentation, analysis and conceptualisation never deserted the African peoples and societies, as proven in many respects, throughout the history of knowledge production and utilisation in post-pharaonic contexts, including in the African Diaspora.

Therefore, Diagne alerts that to contend building a "theory of liberation and development, of democracy or social progress" while ignoring such African national thought and knowledge, would be the same as "digging under our own feet, a vacuum of several centuries" if not millennia that could be filled by no political or scientific dissertation, learned and brilliant as such

a dissertation might be. Within a context whereby, a clear-cut distinction was made between the superficial knowledge about life realities and facts, on the one hand and, on the other hand, the *deep or inner knowledge* which is co-substantive and in many ways the same as scientific knowledge, it is generally recognised to the old (wo)man bending under the weight of years of accumulative experience and acquired wisdom, "the faculty of seeing very far away, whereas the adolescent standing on his/her tip toes, stares blindly at the horizon".[20]

Once again, the preceding may provide conceptual as well as theoretical and practical guidelines to reform school curricula and pedagogy projects in teaching. It may, amongst others, make it possible to critically revisit the African and southern Bantu linguistic and cultural maps, whilst overcoming the legacy of monographic traditions and dispersal of contents, as emphasised by Obenga. The intellectual warfare against "unchallenged epistemologies and orthodoxies" underway that this publication builds from, should also be intensified and escalated**.** For example, despite fallacies about Africa's "marginality" in world trade and economic systems, indeed, as stated elsewhere by many others, our continent has always occupied a very special place, because of its geo-strategic position on the world map, its abundant resource base, both natural and human - including its predominantly young population, and through its critical role in global geopolitics, for instance in the outcome of World War II.

10.4. Final considerations and way forward

Most suggestions and proposals made as follow-up to the AHRS report, focus mostly on issues of scholarship, research and epistemology. Once reworked, updated, many of them can be fitted in the perspective of the way forward for this book project.

10.4.1. Beyond dividing lines and avatars of the Colonial Pact

In some of such dividing lines, lies one of Africa's greatest, most serious and complex problems in the area of knowledge generation and application. Be it recalled, in the opinion of

Paulin Hountondji, that the Colonial Pact, as replica in the area of knowledge production of the same type of imbalanced relationships between Africa and world dominant powers in the area of economic production, consists in coopting – rather than integrating – African scholars into the global system of knowledge production, thereby confining them to the role of mere producers of raw materials such as case studies and monographs that are exported without added value to foreign laboratories and think-tanks where they are processed, transformed into theoretical models for re-exportation back to Africa, and consumption, often without questioning their quality or heuristic value.

Subjacent to the quest for a way out of the current epistemological predicament in many areas of social sciences and humanities, a number of issues should deserve special attention. Such issues include the tendency to the "nationalisation of perspectives" according to colonial legacy lines: these are artificial lines of demarcation or divide between, for example, anglophones, francophones, lusophones in terms of theoretical approaches and intellectual references, and the sources used for research and knowledge generation; being the relative epistemological insularity of south(ern) African scholarship, only one avatar of such artificial divisions. Serious intellectual gaps and lines of demarcation also separate representatives of the three sources of knowledge, intellectual traditions and schools of thought in Africa: a) African scholars who were educated, trained, formatted in Western types of academic institutions; b) scholars who were educated, trained, formatted in Eastern types, Islamic-inspired institutions using Arabic as language of teaching and learning, and including an *Ajami* sub-space; c) the "custodians, bearers of knowledge and of the word" as representatives of the African pre-colonial, ante Islamic intellectual traditions and spaces of IKS.

10.4.2. Filling up research gaps

Because of the scarcity of works of synthesis in addition to scarcity of time and space, the study of certain issues was not as holistic as one would have wished. Aesthetics and

artistic creation are amongst the areas and issues that were not properly covered neither by the AHRS, nor in the current publication, notwithstanding their importance and relevance. In the study of Danxome / Dahomey, in the period sixteenth to nineteenth centuries Ki Zerbo, focuses on artistic creation in its relationships to royalty and court life; art also being one in celebration of both the achievements of the Sovereign and his dynasty and the splendours of court life, as well. In this context, the courts of famous sovereigns such as Ghezo, Glele, Gbehanzin and Toffa were home to rich history museums: bas-reliefs, wall coverings and hangings as well as sceptres and *asin* i.e. moving metal altars dedicated to the cult of royal ancestors and vivid illustrations of the kings' mottos.[21] As previously stated, some of these pieces of art work used to convey strong political messages and, in some cases, programmes of governance or projects of society.

It is hoped that some of the above-mentioned research gaps will be filled in the follow-up to this volume.

10.4.3. Inter-disciplinary research teams, regional hubs, training opportunities

Some of the challenges faced whilst compiling the AHRS report shed some light on what must be the priorities and focus areas of follow-up activities in the aftermath of the publication of this book in the future, towards the development of African research and scholarship. For instance, as a result of the debilitating impact of a legacy of entrenched monodisciplinarity in scholarship and scarcity of works of generalisation, many interviewees including experienced and highly-regarded scholars, have expressed certain difficulty to respond satisfactorily to some of the research questions posed from a comprehensive perspective, and not one that would focus on individual languages, ethnic communities or specific aspects of their cultural identities and heritage.

These challenges point to the necessity to put in place multi- and inter-disciplinary research teams, in order to give continuity to the research started in the framework of the AHRS and further developed in this book. In this regard, and

as previously recommended by key stakeholders and partners, it will be opportune to also think of putting in place regional research hubs that, in the aftermath of the publication of this book, will be working together with MINDS and the University of Johannesburg Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC). Some of these hubs could be structured around a network of partner institutions such as CERDOTOLA (Yaounde), AFCAS/CAHE (Porto-Novo), CICIBA (Libreville), CELHTO (Niamey) and the Centre for Strategic and Policy Studies (CSPS) in Juba, with the possibility of organising thematic workshops in the same institutions that would be attended by, amongst others, sponsored junior researchers in need of training in the methodology of research and knowledge production. Such workshops could provide excellent platforms for inter-generational engagement and dialogue with seasoned African and other scholars. Works on *Afrikology* and African IKS and the eight-volume *General History of Africa,* whose potential remains untapped so far, should also be amongst the primary sources for the training of such young African researchers.

10.4.4. Significance and implications of the linguistic unity

The example of the Great Lakes region is illustrative of the linguistic unity on the African continent: a reality that is more obvious than what the apparent diversity might suggest, in certain contexts. A relative linguistic unity may even prevail in the most conflictive inter-community relations. For instance, there are many similarities between, for example, the basic and cultural vocabularies of Tamasheq, the Berber language spoken by most Twareg communities, and other African idioms such as Songhay, Jerma, Wolof or Soninke, thus confirming the notion of close cultural ties amongst the Sahelo-Saharan African communities and their Twareg neighbours. As a consequence of the fundamental linguistic unity, in southern Africa for instance, notwithstanding the challenge of certain psycho-linguistic factors such as peoples' negative attitudes as compounded by misconceptions and mis-representations on, for example, the capacities of their own languages for

science, an alternative linguistic policy could be envisaged and implemented successfully in South Africa with the promotion of five indigenous African languages (IsiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenda and Xitsonga) in addition to English and Afrikaans, provided that such a linguistic policy is well thought-out and well-planned.

For instance, the choice of IsiZulu textbooks and readers surely would accommodate the educational needs of South African Xhosaphone and to some extent Zimbabwean Ndebelephone schoolchildren; at the same time, didactic materials in Sesotho or Setswana would be amenable to school children whose father- and/or mother-tongue is Sesotho sa Leboa (SePedi); whereas Swaziphone schoolchildren could well read and understand the content of books in Xitsonga. Additionally, it will be possible to take advantage of the genetic relatedness between South African languages and other regional cross-border languages (e.g. Tshivenda with CiShona; Xitsonga with related idioms such as XiTswha, CiRonga and Shangaan spoken in Mozambique), in order to rethink school curricula and pedagogy, while boosting the production of learning and teaching materials in African languages.

The stake that the discussion points to here is about linguistic decolonisation policies and practices, with a variety of implications, including reform of information and educational systems, to which the promotion of Swahili as language for true liberation and unity and for African sovereignty and cultural renaissance, features as one top priority.

Linguistic problems in today's Africa are many and often rather complex. A reflection on these problems in the perspective of the African Renaissance will lead us to examine two sets of issues whose aspects were addressed unevenly and so far, rather unsatisfactorily in scholarship as well as in governance (policymaking and implementation), on our continent. There are, first, theoretical issues, particularly those related to the scarcity of systematic work and to the relative state of underdevelopment of historical and comparative linguistics; the second set of issues being about operational and practical aspects of linguistic problems. For both sets of issues,

African scholars and decision-makers of the first decade of the post-colonial era seem to have adopted, often times, a generally timid or "neutral", and sometimes something of a glottophagic, suicidal attitude, as they only dealt with the description of mechanisms and the inventory of problems, without almost ever suggesting durable solutions.[22]

Here are suggestions about some directions and lines of thought and action for the development and implementation of alternative research practices and linguistic and cultural policies, for the lack of proposals of solutions to all or most problems encountered:[23]

- Completing by continuing and critiquing the work already performed in linguistic description and analysis and in comparatism;
- Critically revisiting most classification taxonomies and paradigms for a systematic re-ordering of the linguistic landscape in Africa, on the basis of the seminal contributions of African linguists and others in areas of descriptive and theoretical as well as historical and comparative linguistics;
- Reinforcing the notion of a profound linguistic and cultural but also historical and anthropological unity between African peoples, by taking stock of the genetic relatedness between all African languages both on synchronic and diachronic scales; and further completing one critical interdisciplinary task identified by Obenga at the confluence of physical, social and cultural anthropology and history, and aiming at "restoring the people and the society glimpsed by linguistic paleontology";[24]
- Reconstructing the Proto-African i.e. the phonetism, basic and cultural vocabularies as well as the morpho-syntactic structures of the pre-dialectal macro-language that is the point of convergence of all African languages, using the comparative and inductive method. Reconstructing the Proto-African stands out as another important contribution to document the historical and cultural unity that links the African peoples of today and yesteryear to the original Nile Valley civilisations;
- Deciphering the Meroitic script.[25]

Deciphering of the Meroitic script was indeed a main stake at the International Colloquium held under the aegis of UNESCO, in Cairo, Egypt, from 28 January to 3 February 1974, on the theme *Population of ancient Egypt and deciphering of the Meroitic script*; and whose debates also focused on research topics and results relating to, amongst others, skin colour, morphology, cosmogony, religion, totemism, matriarchy, social structure, art, royalty, etc. It should be noted that in linguistic matters, a consensus was reached between the participants concerning the belonging of Ancient Egyptian to the African context: this despite borrowings from other cultures from the East (Semitic, Persian…); borrowings which, however, did not affect the deep structures of the Egyptian language (Pharaonic, Coptic) which remained essentially African, in its morphology, its syntax, its cultural or basic vocabulary.

Two of the recommendations made at the Cairo Colloquium are relevant to our discussion here. The said recommendations are about: cooperation between specialists in comparative linguistics to establish all possible correlations between African languages and ancient Egyptian; putting in place and fully equipping and empowering an inter-disciplinary team tasked with the deciphering of the Meroitic script by means of the same computer processes that made possible the partial deciphering of Maya hieroglyphs. This is another huge task awaiting African linguists and specialists in other disciplines, and one that surely would help comparative and historical linguistics in Africa make significant progress.

Towards the advent of equitable, coordinated multilingualism in Africa in lieu and place of the current predicament of ordinated, hierarchical, asymmetrical multilingualism, the promotion of the social usage of national languages; their introduction as languages of education; the creation or/and reinforcement of the operational capacities of language study centres are amongst the policy objectives that will guide some of the operational and practical priority tasks and initiatives such as the following: linguistic modernisation with a focus on lexical modernisation, using all resources available including AI (artificial intelligence) and information

technology resources and procedures,[26] standardisation of spelling and other tasks in the area of codification.

In some cases, the issue is simply about first, imposing the respect of official norms of transcription like in Senegal, in a context whereby, despite the fact that norms of spelling including principles of segmentation of words for Walaf/Wolof and the most spoken languages spoken at various degrees and in a variety of modalities, by about 80 percent of the population, have been standardised, one commonly shared practice in the media, in publications and amongst artists and writers as well as by intellectual and political elites amongst whom most government officials and managers of key state institutions, is the practice of orthographic lynching of the national languages in total impunity and general indifference: an expression of a rather irresponsible, highly suicidal attitude from almost everybody, starting with certain linguistic and cultural policymakers themselves.

Regarding the promotion of Swahili, the analyses, proposals, recommendations must start by taking full stock of the fact that Swahili has recently been promoted as a working language for the African Union, which means that proficiency in this language, its social use must be promoted everywhere in Africa (and beyond), without prejudice to other national idioms, cross-border languages and minority languages, some of which threatened with disappearance or extinction. Let us further recall in particular that Swahili presents the advantage of having a particularly thriving and quality written scientific and literary corpus dating from the seventeenth century as well as excellent educational materials likely to make learning easier; and that it is taught in many universities in Africa and the world, especially in the USA.

Furthermore, being introduced to Swahili, the most-spoken African language in Africa (more than 240 million speakers), first AU African working language and one of the two official languages of the Community of East African States(CEAS), provides a valuable gateway to African decision-makers, captains of industry, development actors from all Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the Diaspora

in search for strategic, economic, technical partnerships, as well as for students looking for academic, learning, training opportunities. For all these reasons, in addition to the fact that it is widely spoken on the African continent (more than French and English in sub-Saharan Africa), Swahili may become a language of unity and integration, not only at sub-regional level but also at continental level, as a language for science and education, diplomacy and politics.[27]

10.4.5. Onomastics, transcription issues, search for cultural models and archetypes

Names are a means by which each people demarcate the boundaries of their own territory and give substance and life to their socio-historical experience. For this reason, they are loaded with meaning and history. From a methodological point of view, onomastics or the science of names, which encompasses toponymy (names of places), anthroponymy (names of persons), ethnonymy (names of ethnic communities) and linguonymy (names of languages), has shown evidence of great productivity, for example, in the study of migrations. From that point of view, there are several hypotheses that have been put forward by multidisciplinary teams (including historians, linguists, archaeologists and other researchers) involved in research programmes on regional or interregional pre-colonial history, in institutions such as the Centre for the Study of Literature and History through Oral Tradition (CELHTO) of Niamey, the CICIBA International Centre of Bantu Civilisations (CICIBA) or the Fundamental Institute of Black Africa(IFAN), Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, etc.

Similarities between the names of places and peoples in use in two geographical areas, even far from each other, make it possible to raise legitimate questions about the nature of historical ties between their respective populations. However, because to the "right to name" often usurped by foreigners, many names of places and peoples far from corresponding to authentic endogenous names, were on the contrary arbitrarily given by European colonisers, unless that has been the result of often pejorative designations by neighbouring or/and rival

populations. To the extent that today a true decolonisation of African onomastics remains one of the issues on the agenda for a linguistic decolonisation and African cultural renaissance. Finally, it is important to transcribe correctly the data of African onomastics by using the principles of spelling of the African Reference Alphabet, (ARA) agreed on at the 1978 Niamey Linguistic Conference, and enriched by recommendations from the subsequent UNESCO Colloquium on African Ethnonyms and Toponyms. An important landmark surely was achieved with the establishment of the ARA. However, despite increasing opportunities offered through ICT (information communication technology) developments and AI, some adjustments remain to be made in order to reach a system that makes it possible to adequately transcribe implosive consonants (KhoiSan "clicks", Pulaar / Fulfulde laryngeals), Hausa ejectives, Tamasheq emphatic consonants, in addition to tones (which may have a grammatical or semantic value in some African languages), and ideophones such as the well-known Wolof *ciipatu* or Bamileke *fiask*: an expression of disdain or dismay, depending on circumstances, that is often improperly signalled in, for example, *Nollywood* film subtitles by the expression "sucking teeth".

Based on the conclusive results and outcomes of the AHRS report and looking at them through the lenses of this book's theoretical framework and from its comparative perspective, it is possible to undertake future research aimed at identifying cultural models, prototypes and archetypes in Africa, using both a deductive and an inductive approach and methodology. Such an approach takes into consideration what is known about the fundamental unity of African peoples beyond their specificities and differences, from a historical, linguistic, anthropological and cultural viewpoint; being interesting contributions expected from African onomastics.

10.4.6. Image-(re)building and packaging: towards a comprehensive study

Issues of image awareness and image-building are critical for the consolidation of an all-African conscience as cornerstone

for African Renaissance. This entails a dismissal of many Eurocentric "unchallenged orthodoxies and epistemologies" including new revisionist trends in history and historiography that aim at, for example, throwing the blame of crimes against humanity such as the Arab- and European-sponsored and engineered systems of slave trade on African peoples themselves and their cultures! The task consisting in undoing the distorted image of Africa and replacing it with a more consistent one, based on a more adequate assessment of the historical experience and operational value of the cultural patrimony of the African people, should constitute a priority, following the publication of this book.

This task implies, amongst others: a) the need to adequately picture in its entirety, the whole African historical process and narrative, from the Nile Valley civilisations to post-pharaonic areas of civilisation, including the experience of the African Diaspora in the "New World" and Africa's contribution to world history and to the "wealth of nations"; b) a clear and convincing explanation on reasons behind Africa's historical and cultural decline, as a result of alterations to original balances and check-systems including the original endogenous value systems and principles and above all, the confiscation and subversion, through foreign domination, of its historical process and cultural personality, must deserve particular attention as well.

A comprehensive assessment of the ecological, demographic, historical and psychological impact of the slave trades should also be central to this task; with emphasis being put on both the unity of African peoples and cultures, and on the permanence of African resistance, in the bid to shape common references, values and principles towards the dissemination of a positive image on Africa, its peoples and their cultural heritage, as a driving force, for the ownership and implementation of the African Renaissance agenda. There is also a need to fully study the history, sociology and political economy of images of Self and Other, because of their importance and complexity. In this regard, the following issues must deserve special attention:

There is, first, the Semitisation process; secondly, the importance of zones of inter-cultural exchange such as the birthplace of the Semitic world, and other areas of contact and dialogue between cultures and civilisations. Such areas bear testimony to the complexity of historical processes that support the evolution of the material and symbolic inter-community ties, in close relationship with the evolution of institutional and political systems as well as the superstructures of social formations encountered in areas of our continent such as surrounding island-states (e.g. Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Cabo Verde), the Nile Valley, the Horn of Africa, the Sahelo-Saharan fringe or Afro-Arab Borderlands, and the Maghreb-Mashrek. The role of Aksum and the Nubian States must also be assessed in the same regard.

Thirdly, particular emphasis should be put on issues of conquest, territorial expansion and substitution of legitimacy; with a focus on, amongst others, the expansion of Aksum beyond its original context that resulted in the conquest and integration of one of the last bastions of ancient African civilisation: the Nubian States, heirs of Kush. Another key moment in the same process of substitution of legitimacy did take place here in the fourteenth century, when the Nubian States succumbed to Arabo-Islamic pressure and yoke. And of course, in West Africa, the history of conquest and/or destruction of some important centres of African civilisation such as Ghana, Mali and Songhay, as this history is also linked to the process of pushback to the south, of African populations.

In the fourth place, the functions of religious discourses should not be overlooked either, as organised attempts at the justification of European or Arab superiority through, for example, the over-imposition onto the psyche of too many Africans, of the Islamic notion of *Kaffi*r (mis-believer, pagan, heathen), similarly to the biblical myth of the *Curse on Ham and his descent*. As we know, these ideological constructs aimed at persuading Africans to accept white and Arab supremacy as both a burden and an order of things stamped by God's will (fatalism). In contexts such as the Great Lakes region, the

importance of ideology cannot be underestimated either, given its role in the mechanisms of social classification.

Obviously, the weaknesses and negative aspects of African cultures must also be critically looked at and assessed against their conformity and compatibility with the goals of African Renaissance as an alternative and global project of society and civilisation that aims at the creation of objective and subjective conditions for the re-birth of Africa as an independent and competitive pole of decision-making in the world of today and tomorrow. In this regard, it must be made clear that whatever their purpose or origin, practices such as female circumcision should, *hic et nunc*, be simply abandoned once and for all.

10.4.7. Intellectual vigilance and monitoring systems

In the fight for epistemic sovereignty against the illegitimate diktat from representatives of imperialist epistemology, it is important to bear in mind the warnings issued by Cheikh Anta to African researchers, especially those belonging to the younger generations also targeted by this work, to "get rid of subordination reflexes", "demonstrate intellectual sagacity," and to opt for "direct access to knowledge" instead of looking at reality through someone else's eyes. It is also necessary to remain alert and vigilant, and to put in place one or more strategic monitoring systems to identify and confront, better to anticipate, pre-empt, nullify in the spaces of production and dissemination of knowledge and learning, the slightest initiatives of intellectual and ideological subversion by the same representatives of imperialist epistemologies, regardless of their operational modalities: dissuasive or persuasive.

The obligation of vigilance implies, amongst other things, paying particular attention to vocabulary, to the lexicon, insofar as these projects of intellectual subversion often begin in the lexicon by the introduction, sometimes innocuously, of "neutral", "objective" terms, words, before these same terms and words are taken up and worked on to transform them into operational concepts. This approach, well known amongst proponents of revisionist trends in the field of historiography, devotes today great attention and arouses a deployment of

important resources and a lot of energy around, for example, the issue of slavery and the slave trade, with the aim of lifting the fundamental responsibility in this internationally recognised "crime against humanity" from Western imperialist powers, and insidiously throwing it onto the back of Africans themselves with their cultures, customs and social practices.

This is achieved through, amongst others, a cleverly maintained confusion, in publications and programmes in certain ideological apparatuses such as radio and television networks, between the notions of slavery itself on the one side and, on the other side, those of servility and captivity, whether it be domestic captivity, war captivity, or so-called "crown" captivity; sometimes, slavery is even confused with the status of certain categories of serfs or courtiers assigned to specific tasks or functions in the courts of African kingdoms.

It is not certain that the authors of this volume, starting with the editor himself, have not sometimes fallen unwillingly and without realising it into this kind of trap, through an abusive or inappropriate use of the terms "slave" and "slavery."

10.4.8. Call for platforms of inter-disciplinary, inter-generational dialogue

The theoretical and conceptual framework that this volume draws inspiration from, is clearly, the Afrocentric, interdisciplinary framework laid out and established with convincing intellectual authority by Cheikh Anta Diop, the founder of the African School of thought and scholarship or *Afrikology,* and his disciples. The plea in favour of an option for *Afrikology* also entails a capacity to create conditions for a critical engagement and open dialogue amongst representatives of all three sources of knowledge and intellectual traditions mentioned earlier.

Symptomatic of the prevailing lines of demarcation and divide that still hamper intellectual maturity and effectiveness in many a space of knowledge production in the African context, are the ways in which Cheikh Anta Diop's intellectual legacy is being handled in sections of African scholarship, including by certain scholars and academics, on behalf or under the influence

of Eurocentric, Islamist or Marxist epistemologies. Some of such scholars, for the lack of treating Diop like an academic leper, often opt, nonetheless, for a posture of intellectual avoidance consisting in either ignoring him in their publications or quoting him out of context; when they do not try to disqualify or dismiss his intellectual contributions as irrelevant, and going as far as disrespecting or trying to ridicule him.

One publication on Cheikh Anta by such a highly regarded intellectual like Souleymane Bachir Diagne, has generated much controversy in Senegal and suscitated, legitimately enough, a robust response from the writer Boubacar Boris Diop. Besides, it is difficult to understand the surprising omission of Cheikh Anta from entries into *Pan African Pantheon* edited by Adekeye Adebajo, whereas Diop's testimonies on the history of religions are often inappropriately dismissed as expression of heathen if not atheism, in African Islamist scholarship and discourses. Felwine Sarr, author of the acclaimed *Afrotopia* certainly, could also have made a better use of Diop's seminal works on several issues dealt with in this well-researched, beautifully written publication.[28]

On these matters, the editor of this volume has, occasionally, attempted to engage in discussions with esteemed Marxist colleagues. In reality, apart from insignificant intellectual skirmishes looking more like a "dialogue of the deaf" or a tacit consensus to "agree to disagree", the context and modalities of such exchanges with Marxist colleagues, seldom have allowed a real, serious discussion on substantive issues of conceptual approach and methodology, except with the late Ntongela Masilela and Thandika Mkandawire, whose open-mindedness, intellectual humility, honesty and wisdom must be celebrated as key assets for such a debate to take place.

The editing process of *From Ivory Towers to Ebony Towers - Transforming Humanities Curricula in South Africa, Africa and African-American Studies*, published in 2020 and edited by Oluwaseun Tella and Shireen Motala, with one chapter contributed by the editor of the current book project, is another avatar of this kind of problematic working relationship. Another missed opportunity was during the conferences of prefiguration

of the Museum of Black Civilisations in July 2016 at the Dakar King Fahd Palace hotel and later at the premises of the Museum itself, to which the editor of this volume contributed, amongst others, a paper (in French) on the topic "Africanisms, Africanity, African Africa – their relevance for the conceptual and strategic vision and sustainability of the Museum of Back Civilisations project".

Ultimately, the stake is about the political will and capacity to create, beyond current artificial cleavages and divisions amongst African researchers, scholars and academics, intellectual platforms for inter-disciplinary, inter-generational dialogue, with - why not ? - the possibility of joint research projects and publications. This would, surely, provide opportunities to build durable intellectual bridges and synergies, and to reach operational consensuses on "The Africa we want", the project of society, the nature of the state, the purposes and functions of the educational systems that we want, as well as the languages of learning and teaching to be used in such systems, in the search for durable responses to main societal challenges facing Africa and the African people at home and abroad**.** Such were amongst the issues debated at 10 -12 February 2020 International Multi-disciplinary Symposium in tribute to Professor Samir Amin, that was organised by the Third World Forum (*Forum du Tiers-Monde*) think-tank, at UCAD 2 academic campus, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar), in which, as part of the proceedings, moving testimonies by Amin's comrades and companions were made and high-quality research and discussion papers presented.[29]

Endnotes

1 Cf. Mboup, S B, 2020, "The Dakar School of Culture", in Oluwaseun Tella & Shireen Motala (eds.) 2020, *From Ivory Towers to Ebony Towers – Transforming Humanities Curricula in South Africa, Africa and African-American Studies*, Johannesburg, Fanele (chap. 15, pp. 255/265).

2 Nabudere, D.W., *Afrikology, Philosophy and Wholeness: An Epistemology* (Vol. 1), Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa, 2011; *Afrikology and Transdisciplinarity: A Restorative Epistemology* (Vol. 2), Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa, 2012.

3 Nabudere, *Afrikology*, Vol. 2, pp. 13/16.

4 See: Introduction to Vol 2, p. 1.

5 Nicolescu, B., *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity*, State University of New York Press, 2002.

6 Nabudere, Afrikology, Vol 1, p. 4.

7 Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism*, p. 370.

8 Diop, Id., p. 371.

9 Nabudere, Afrikology, vol. 2, p. 39.

10 Do Nascimento, J. (ed.), *La Renaissance Africaine comme alternative au développement. Les termes du choix politique en Afrique*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2008.

11 Cf. Diop, Cheikh Mbacké, *Cheikh Anta Diop, l'Homme et l'Oeuvre*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 2003, pp. 23 sq…

12 *The Peopling of Ancient Egypt and the Deciphering of Meroitic Script*, published in Paris by UNESCO, *The General History of Africa: Studies and Documents No 1*, 1978. (Quote: p. 102).

13 Cf. *Fondements économiques et culturels d'un Etat fédéral d'Afrique Noire*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1960, 1974.

14 Do Nascimento, J., (1987), "Sur le Caractère Opératoire de l'Oeuvre de Cheikh Anta Diop", In: *Revue Nomade*, Nos 1/2, pp. 286/299.

15 Cf. « Recherche scientifique, réflexion politique et Renaissance africaine », in Do Nascimento, *La Renaissance Africaine comme Alternative au Développement*, op. cit. , 3rd Part, chap. III, pp. 141/198.

16 Spady, James G., "The changing perception of C.A. Diop and his work: the preeminence of a scientific spirit", in Van Sertima, Ivan (ed.), *Great African Thinkers*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick (USA) and Oxford (UK), 1986, pp. _89/101, (quote p. 98). Also see: Nabudere, D.W., 2006, "Towards an Afrikology of knowledge production and African regeneration". *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 7-32); "Cheikh Anta Diop. The social sciences, humanities, physical sciences and transdisciplinarity", *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 2, # 1, July 2007.

17 Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism*, pp. 363-365.

18 Diop, Id., pp. 370-371.

19 Also see: Mboup, "The Dakar School of Culture", op. cit.

20 Diagne, P., *L'Europhilosophie*… Quote in Mboup, S B (2013) "A strategy for the promotion of Swahili in Africa and its relevance to the linguistic de-colonization and African cultural renaissance projects", Chapter # 25 of the book Perspectives on Thought

Leadership for Africa's Renewal (Ed. by Kwandiwe Kondlo), AISA, ISBN 978- 0-7983-0452-8 , pp. 361-387.

21 Ki Zerbo, Joseph, *Histoire de l'Afrique Noire*, p. 280.

22 Cf. Mboup, S.B., 2008, "Linguistic decolonization and African renaissance: role of African languages as factors of socio-historical development and viable statehood and nation building", in Mutasa Davie E. & Ogutu, Emily Etieno (eds.), *Teaching and administering in African Languages. A Roadmap to African Renaissance*, Pretoria, Simba Guru Publisher, , chapter 2, pp. 60/130. This paper was also reproduced in the online platform of the University of South Africa (UNISA), for academic citizenship purposes.

23 Mboup, Idem, pp. 104/8.

24 This task is consistent with a couple of recommendations made at the 1974 Cairo Colloquium: using the multi- and inter-disciplinary methodology applied to studies in the Nile Valley and all its outskirts (peripheries), and in particular mobilisation of physical anthropology know-how in particular, to fix, in a very precise and rigorous way, the definition of races and the racial identification of exhumed skeletons, and to help document migrations of populations having occupied the Nile Valley, non-Pharaonic burials, Paleo-African remains in Egyptian iconography, etc. Cf. Diop, B. and Mboup, SB, "Celebration of the Centenary of the Birth of Cheikh Anta Diop and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Cairo Colloquium. Elements for a Briefing Note", Dakar, July 2023. This note was compiled from sources including a "Draft Terms of Reference" by a Pan-Africanist Task Force based in Abidjan-Cote d'Ivoire.

25 Meroe or Kush is the name of a brilliant African civilisation that developed in the region of the middle course of the Nile between the eighth century B.C. and the fourth century A.D., and whose capitals were successively Napata and Meroe. Amongst other evidence of historical and socio-cultural dynamism, the Meroe civilisation developed a script: the Meroitic script under the form of 23 graphic signs that, alas, have not been deciphered up to now. For this reason, all 900 texts written in Meroitic script have remained "silent" to date, so to speak.

26 Mboup, Id., pp. 118/122.

27 Cf. Mboup, S.B., 2013, "A strategy for the promotion of Swahili in Africa and its relevance to the linguistic de-colonization and African cultural renaissance projects, in Kwandiwe Kondlo (Ed.), *Perspectives on Thought Leadership for Africa's Renewal*, Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa: a revised, updated version of a presentation to the Colloquium in celebration of the Fifty Years of Swahili as Language for African Unity, Liberation and Renaissance (*Kongamano la Miaka 50 ya Kiswahili kama Lugha ya Umoja, Ukombozi na Mvuvumko wa Afrika*), co-sponsored by UNESCO and ACALAN, University of Dar es Salaam, Blue Pearl Hotel , October 04/06 2012. On the same issue, also see: Mboup, S.B., 2008, "Beyond the Mafunzo ya Kiswahili initiative: advocating for the promotion of Swahili as a language for African Renaissance", in Mutasa Davie E. & Ogutu, Emily Etieno (eds.), *Teaching and administering in African Languages*..., chap. 3, pp. 131/165.

28 Sarr, Felwine, *Afrotopia – Réinventer l'Afrique*, French and European Publications Inc, 2016.

29 A summary of some stakes and challenges for the implementation of such inter-generational and inter-disciplinary platforms for dialogue can be found in my paper to the Symposium, titled (original in French) "Afrikology and/or Marxism? Theoretical benchmarks and research pathways for the consolidation of an epistemology of reality and a political ideology for the African Renaissance project".

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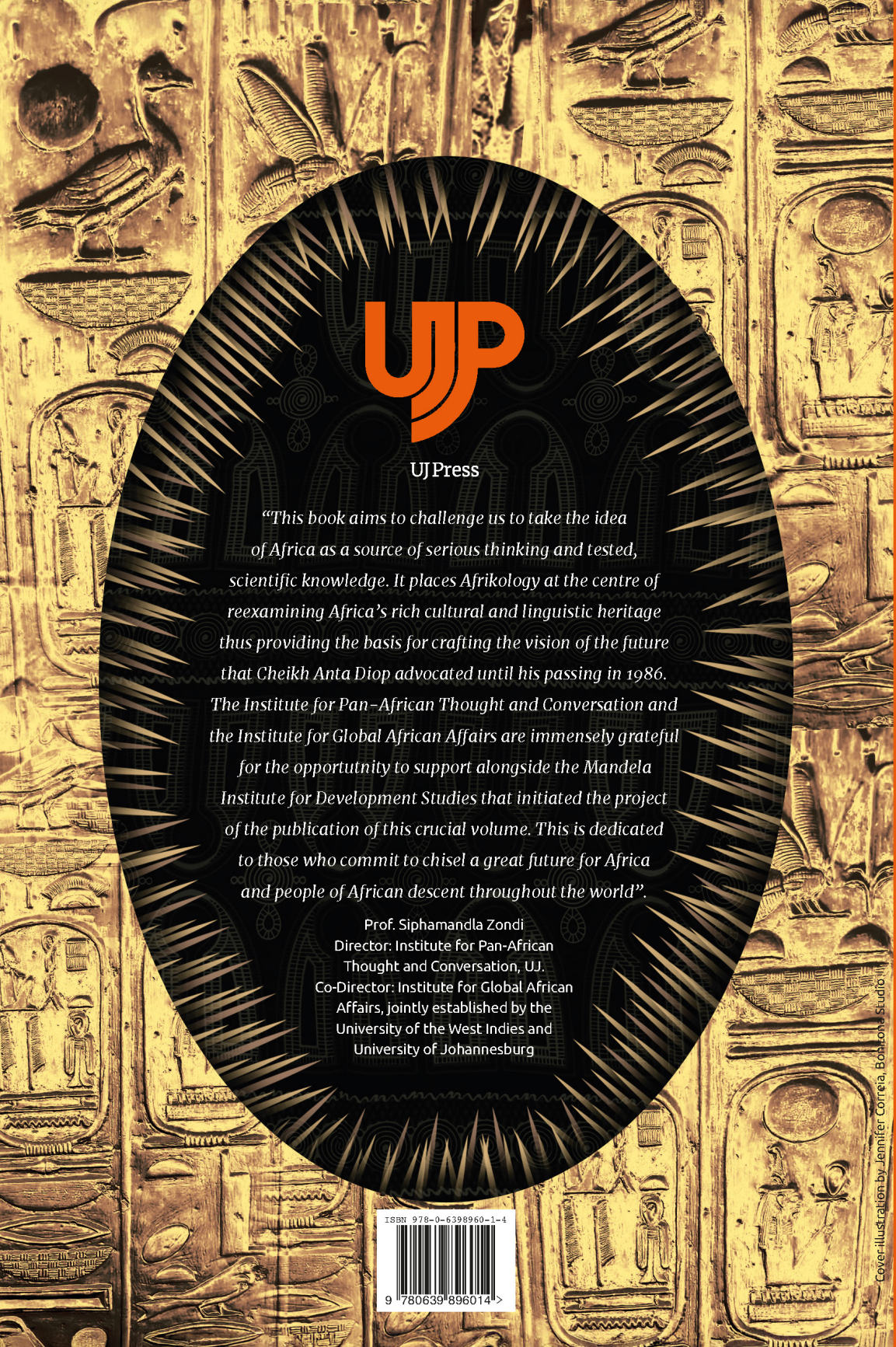
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