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Nation Building and Ethnicity: Towards a Re-conceptualization of Democracy in Africa¹

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Abstract

This paper presents a critique of current conceptualizations of democracy in Africa by tracing their antecedents in colonial anthropological characterizations where Africans were as a people in their unity and in their diversity. It then proceeds to offer a critique of the social, economic, and political policies and practices which have characterised post-colonial Africa. It finally outlines an alternative conceptualization of democracy in African. In this conceptualization of democracy, focus is put on peoples' rights as individuals and as communities rather than putting inordinate emphasis on multipartism and period electioneering. The paper argues that what have been termed as democratic transitions in Africa have often amounted to movement from the authoritarianism of one state party to that of many state parties, with issues of social justice left unattended. It concludes by an appeal to intellectuals to recognise other sites of emancipatory politics such as factories, schools, farms, households, streets, villages, and universities. It argues that such emancipatory politics tend to take their inspiration from a discernible renewal in the search for a Pan-Africanist identity against the backdrop of the marginalization to which various social forces and communities are being subjected by the so-called "globalization".

Introduction

The war that erupted on the night of 6 April 1994 in Rwanda resulted in the massacre of more than half a million people and another two million or more forced to flee their homes. This carnage which was genocidal in scale was one of the many civil wars going on and still going on in the African Continent. On 10th November 1995, the political activist and writer, Kenule Saro-wiwa and eight co-defendants of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) were executed by the Nigerian military regime. Their sin was to accuse the military government—together with the international oil companies—of genocide (through ecological destruction and pollution of the Ogoni lands). Both

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events drew massive international publicity. Thus has been the news "out of Africa". As we enter the new millennium, most popular and academic studies on Africa are preoccupied with "the plight of Africa", "the crisis in Africa", the existence of tension/conflict and civil war areas (Morocco, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, Chad, Congo, Angola, Namibia, etc.) etc. Frantz Fanon's prophetic words, that the "last battle of the colonized against the coloniser will often be the fight of the colonized against each other" seem to be truer today than ever (Prunier, 1995).

A more serious crisis facing Africa relates to the fact that a search for a theory of society is no longer central in contemporary discourse: it is simply taken for granted and not problematized. We are living in an era when the ideology of "globalization" which leads to giving up, is quite perverse and internalized. This myth is a conquering one, to the extent that a search for alternative policy solutions, values and truths, which would lead to the possibility of a construction of humane societies devoid of all forms of arbitrariness, has become real difficult. Today, these issues are viewed as not so chic to discuss about. We are told that knowledge is no longer a cognitive appropriation of *socially determined material transformations for life processes*. Instead, it has become simply a post-industrial *force of production*, since the real substance of knowledge is informed by the so-called developments in science (global cyberspace, theories of everything and progress in genetics and its aims).

The dominant and popular politics are those of the New or Respectable Right, accompanied by the so-called triumph of liberal democracy and a free market economy. It is an era when cosmologies of the human subject are completely marginalized, since technology and economics are supposed to have merged, appearing under labels such as computer economy, electronics, services, information, etc. In sum, it is an era of celebration of the end of history (as Francis Fukuyama would put it), even though all other histories (such as those of workers, peasants, pastoralists, hunter-gatherers, women, children and the youth) are excluded. Popular, academic and political thinking in Africa has increasingly ceased to debate on emancipatory politics—those politics, which would lead to the transformation of societies so that we reach a stage where one's humanity is no longer an issue of contestation.

The so-called post-modernism, under whose influence, many of us seem to have surrendered to, has more or less accepted multiplicity of cultures, societies, etc. to the extent that one might just as well come to the conclusion that: "Anything goes!" Important questions, such as, how is society possible or what is the nature

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of society, are taken for granted. I am of the opinion that it is simply difficult, if not impossible, in contemporary situation to grasp the essence of issues such as nation building, ethnicity, democracy, social justice, equality, etc. without taking into consideration the critique being constantly generated by our sisters and mothers in Africa. Listen to this:

The time has come to say to the male storytellers, the male praise-singers, the male poets, the male novelists, the male historians, the male politicians—you have miserably failed this continent. You allowed the divide to continue between the exploited labour and profitable labour; those who toil for nothing and those who get rich on oil and diamonds and words; you allowed the divide between public and private—where women against all odds get family lives and intimacies going, building private capacities of all their children, while the male formulators of public spaces have failed to establish a public narrative of humanity.

After the oppressors left, the structures of oppression were intact except for the colour—the oppressor was no longer white but black. There remains a link between men of the continent and the money men of the colonies. No narrative has shattered them. The time has come for women's voices to set up plans for changing the sound of the continent.²

What is this, if not a call to theorise on and about Africa from the point of view of *historical forms of consciousness of material transformation* necessary for life process? Is this not a summon for us to come out with theoretical and material arms to equip those who go to bed with empty stomachs, the oppressed, exploited, the marginalized—in short, those in the twilight zone?

“Civilization” and the “Invention Tribes”

The “invention of tribes” became a popular theme in historiography in Africa in the 1970s, following the studies by Ranger and Iliffe (Ranger, 1983). These studies revealed that particular ethnic identities have come into existence in the relatively recent past as a colonial creation: that, these ethnic categories are constructs, which have been changing over time given the nature of the state. It was further demonstrated that accounts (by ethnologists, travellers and missionaries) on 19th century pre-colonial Africa rife with “tribal wars”; descriptions of whole populations perpetually at each other's throats was an imperial creation to justify the intervention and colonisation of Africa (Kjekshus, 1977). All this was constructed by the so-called “humanitarian movements”, advocating for colonisation as a means to bring “civilization” to Africa (in the name of spreading Christianity). It was what the imperial writer, Kipling termed, “white man's burden”—to “civilise” those “half-devil, half-child” peoples of Africa (Wright, 1976). Today, we witness the same thing, whereby, USA can intervene in Somalia under the guise of humanitarianism, a country which it had

previously ceremoniously denied aid). It does so with claims of high moral authority ("doing God's work" as George Bush puts it!).³

Simply, the history of the past 400 years has been the history of intervention of some "superior races" into other areas of the world, within the process which "race", "civilization", "nation", "tribe", ethnicity" became the catchwords. Beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes associated with this process—whether religious or simply idealistic—were by the 19th century being transformed into scientific categories, as an expression of real inequalities and forms of domination. Biology, in the 19th century was mostly concerned with the theories of "monogeny", "hybridisation", and "miscegenation" with the aim to provide the foundation of the genetic differences between "superior" and "inferior" beings.⁴ This elevation of racial categories to science was to find its culmination in the writings of Robert Knox the Scottish anatomist and Arthur de Gobineau the French pseudo scientific racist in 1850 and 1853-55 respectively (Milbury-Steen, 1980).

Fundamentally, these racial and exclusivist categories had gender and sexuality implications. In this regard, women were very central in the representation of these categories as the biological "carriers" of a "race" or a "tribe". They concerned material practices of the exploitation of labour and the creation of the states in the colonies. This entailed a racist discourse within reconstruction of patriarchal relations, which defined the private (women) and public (men) spheres, translated into political definitions of identities. The preoccupation by the colonial agents and anthropologists on themes such as kinship, marriage, fertility, sexuality and African religions was central in this process. Their studies resulted into the introduction of so-called customary (native) laws, which led to important changes in "primary group" structures and created new forms of patriarchal powers, reinforcing the so-called cultural identities.⁵ Colonial mythologies of the African male sexual threat to white femininity were one of the main focuses in the process of categorisation of African communities. Not only that: the conquest and domination over the land and people of Africa modelled itself upon the power relations of masculinity and femininity. Simply, racialisation and stereotyping of race and gender went hand in hand with the theorisation of tribes and ethnic identities in Africa, in the process, finally producing an African male hegemonic discourse, associated with the formation of tribes, nations and states. The state was the medium of cultural and political identity.

For these "scientific racists", the inferiority of other races could be explained from the point of view of psychology and intelligence and their incapacity in this

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respect derived from original inequality. The views that Africans were a cursed people whose humanity needed to be questioned, and about African barbarism, superstition, treachery, moral depravity, paganism, sexuality, cunningness, laziness, fatalism, undeveloped intellectual faculties, ugly, etc., entered the scientific vocabulary. In sum:

For at least three hundred years, propositions on the inequality of the biological endowments of varieties of men (sic! —C.S.L.) have been put forth in some 'scientific' guise or other...the hypotheses come and go, but they tend to cluster in time and to be associated with crises about relations of different ethnic and/or racial groups. The first bursts of contentions about the natural inferiority of a racially defined population came with the spread of the Europeans into the New World. The discovery of the American Indians, and the domination, exploitation, or extermination of them, precipitated the classic controversy Las Casas and Sepúlveda...in 1550-51.... Other clusters in history turn up at the time of the French Revolution, with Gobineau and the aristocrats decrying the inferiority of the less privileged; the controversy between the abolitionists and the pro-slavery elements in the American South prior to the Civil War; the rising howl at the flood tide of Eastern and Southern immigration to the United States (Nash, 1972).

After the partition and colonisation of Africa from 1884, these conceptions found their material expression in promulgation of outrageous laws related to native (and creation of such courts), detention without trial, prevention of vagrancy, native pass regulations, land laws which invested the radical title of all land in governors, etc. Violent, brutal massacres and other forms or reprisals of natives ("as a means, of bringing tribesmen to parley", as some colonial officers put it) in the name of civilization were the norm under colonialism right from its establishment. Naked examples are such as those took place in Congo during the time when it was run as a private possession of Leopold II, King of Belgians, from 1885 to 1908 and continued after that. Or take the thousands of people sacrificed during the building of the rail connecting Brazzaville with the port of Pointe-Noire. Characteristically, such massacres have not entered Western historical and moral memory like their later counterparts like Lidice in the former Czechoslovakia—the Nazi Massacre in World War II!

It was within this context that categorisation and definition of African communities and their relationships were done. The conceptualization of "race", "nation", "tribe" "ethnicity" and "ethnic identity" became the main pre-occupation of the colonial agents. In the case of Rwanda and Burundi, for example, explorers, missionaries and other colonial agents who reached these areas were confounded by the fact that people in these areas were linguistically homogeneous, living together and often intermarrying, even though they were differentiated into three groups. These social groupings consisted of the Hutu, Tutsi and the Twa, without any "Hutuland", "Tutsiland" or "Twaland". Their

division was simply in terms of their modes of livelihood—as peasants, cattle herders and hunter-gatherers respectively, a context that placed the cattle-herders at higher social rank as rulers. The explorers and colonial agents, so much obsessed with race issues re-categorised them, alluding, for example that the Tutsi were of Oromo descent from Ethiopia or descendants of ancient Egypt or Middle East. Gérald Prunier quotes some of the obscene things Europeans had to say about these people:

The Bahima (a Tutsi clan) differ absolutely by the beauty of their features and their light colour from the Bantu agriculturists of an inferior type. Tall and well proportioned, they have long thin noses, a wide brow and fine lips. They say they came from the North. Their intelligent and delicate appearance, their love of money, their capacity to adapt to any situation seem to indicate a Semitic-origin (Prunier, 1995: 8).

In sum, anthropologists, missionaries, administrators, diggers, planters, etc. spent most of their time competing with each other in the production of African racial and tribal theories and histories that suited the colonial enterprise, in attempts to find elements among Africans that would collude with imperialism.

The above amounts to the fact that colonial powers in Africa created states, which were based on arbitrary and contradictory classification of people. Distinctions were made between what were considered to be conquerors and conquered, natives and citizens; backward and enlightened “tribes”; etc. From a people who were organized in the form of *social groups* (sometimes language being the basis of that organisation) and *not ethnic groups*, colonial powers (in different ways) ethnicized these groups by creating social political conditions that would lead later to discriminatory tendencies.

It was absolutely imperative to divide and rule these people. In many of the British colonies, this was to take the form of “indirect rule”. When expressed in political terms, as some of the colonial agents were to put it bluntly in Tanganyika (Tanzania) in the 1920s, the biggest fear they had was that of Pan-African ideals of the Ethiopian church and the possibility of Africans holding the conception of Africa for Africans. The paranoia to the emergence of a “detribalised” African (sometimes called the Europeanised African) reached a pathological level. In 1917, for example, the Private Secretary to the East African Protectorates (Kenya) Acting Governor, for example, was to put a suggestion on the best way to implement a “definite policy of encouraging strong and isolated tribal nationalism (as) one of the most effectual barriers against a Pan-African upheaval...” (J. Lonsdale, 1977). It was fear of the impact of the ideas being widely read and reproduced in the colonies by Pan-African papers and journals

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such as, the *New Leader*, *The Keys*, *International African Opinion*, *Negro Worker*, etc., replete with accounts of struggles of African masses all over the world. People who openly proclaimed "Africa for Africans!" spearheaded these.

Response of the "Wretched of the Earth"

The evolution, the systematisation and belief in certain forms of identities and finally their institutionalisation in Africa, is best grasped as part of the reality of a predatory, despotic, totalitarian and destructive imperialist domination, and the struggles of Africans against it. This was a process, which involved attempts to negate African cultures as an expression of real material domination and Africans defending themselves within the context of material resistance. This resistance was expressed in various forms. It included armed struggles, fought almost throughout Africa by communities that often co-operated. The Maji Maji rebellion fought throughout the Southern part of Tanganyika between 1905 and 1907, for example, is a demonstration of the fact that co-operation among communities existed prior to colonial conquest.⁶

Numerous examples can be drawn all over Africa to demonstrate the above. The African masses rebelled against forced labour, land alienation, taxation, etc. The millenarian movements, such as the Watchtower; the movements led by John Chilembwe in Nyasaland, Simon Kimbangu in Belgian Congo, Hanoc Sindano in Tanzania, and many others, were also part of these struggles. Sindano's movement (part of Watch Tower, which had followers in most southern and central African parts of the continent), for example, believed that The world was in its last age; the great empires and nations were instruments of Satan; so were the historic churches, All these would fall in one last struggle. The world would then become the inheritance of the true believers, the witness of the true believers, irrespective of colour or race" (Ranger, 1969).

While the African masses were rebelling, the educated Africans who emerged within the colonial forms of exploitation and oppression as a product of manual/mental division of labour (as producers of ideas—real or illusory) in a racially discriminatory system, initially surrendered and adopted the colonisers' culture. The elements had internalised and swallowed the stereotypes Europeans had on them and their quest, as Frantz Fanon put it, was to become European (civilised) (Fanon, 1967). The paradox is that, Europeans regarded them even more disdainfully than the uneducated because of their tendency to regard themselves as equal to the masters after acquiring a sense of western civilization. In Tanganyika, Governor Donald Cameron considered them to be a "bad imitation of a European", while what the colonials needed was a "good African", bound to his/her culture and race (Chachage, 1986).

The educated Africans were outcasts: alienated from the African masses' resistance against exploitation and domination and denied a place in the "civilised circles" as a result of the paternalistic colonial racial forms of discrimination and domination. Whatever they did, they were done! And there was no other future for them, except to turn to rebellion. Henceforth, to be civilised was to be African and proud of the heritage. The solution lay in the discovery of Africa's history and culture to counter Europe's lies. They turned to searching those forms of civilization that did not necessarily contradict westernality. There was no other future, except to remain African and civilised.

This was a transformation of race thinking aimed at combating the negative stereotypes, in the form of interrogation of modes of representation. Colonialism's racial condemnation of Africans was continental in its scope, as reflected in Hegel's contention, for example, that "Africa...is no part historical part of the world;... Africa is the unhistorical, undeveloped spirit...." (Hegel, 1956:91-2); or the claims about the "Dark Continent" as far as pre-colonial Africa was concerned. Logically, the reaction of Africans took the form of continental rehabilitation. Fanon's summation of this:

The efforts of the native to rehabilitate himself and to escape from the claws of colonialism are logically inscribed from the same point of view as that of colonialism. The native intellectual who has gone far beyond the domains of Western culture and who has got it into his head to proclaim the existence of another culture never does so in the name of Angola or Dahomey. The culture which is affirmed is African culture....

....Colonialism did not dream of wasting time in denying the existence of one national culture after another. Therefore the reply of the colonized people was continental in its breadth. In Africa, the native literature of the last twenty years is not a national literature but a Negro literature.... Because the New Guinean or Kenyan intellectuals found themselves above all up against a general ostracism and delivered to the combined contempt of their overlords, their reaction was to sing praises in admiration of each other.

The poets of Negro-ism will not stop at the limits of the continent. From America, black voices will take up the hymn with fuller unison. The 'black world' will see the light of Busia from Ghana, Birago Diop from Senegal, Hampaté Ba from Sudan and Saint-Clair Drake from Chicago will not hesitate to assert the existence of common ties and a motive power that is identical (Fanon, 1967:171).

They too adopted the identity of African masses forms of resistance to European domination, which up to the 1940s tended to take place within the context of *Pan-African identity* and not "tribal", "ethnic" or "national". When Italy invaded Ethiopia in the mid-1930s, Africans from all the three continents reacted by volunteering to fight in Emperor Haile Selassie's army. Kenneth Kaunda, Franz Fanon, etc. are among many examples of people who were to be part of

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independence movements away from their countries of birth. The workers strikes in the late 1940s in many African countries were pan-territorial, and not simply country-based. Sembene Ousmane's *Gods Bits of Wood* (Ousmane, 1986) for example, is one of the most beautiful testaments of struggles of people, who did not stop at being Bambara or Oulof, Malian or Senegalese. Or in this case, one does not need to belabour about the relations between Joshua Nkomo and the African National Congress of South Africa.⁷ The fear by the Europeans of a Pan-African upheaval, was a result of the fact that most anti-colonial struggles, even when localised, tended to emphasise on race as opposed to place or territory.

Pan-African identity in the hands of the African educated elements had its own contradictions. Rather than aiming at grasping the nature of African social formations and understanding their driving force; in order to grasp the kind of transformations which had taken place under colonialism, they only sought to demystify the myths of the "civilising mission" and intermarry pre-colonial cultures and Western Civilisation. In other words, they rejected Western civilization in so far as it denied them equality and appropriated from African civilization what was acceptable in universalistic paradigms. Their demands after World War II, transformed into economic demands in the form of creation of "modern economies" of their countries by governments and the control of resources, translated into what were to become *nationalist* politics, territorially defined by the 1884 states created thereafter.

It was no longer "civilization", since the educated Africans had become perfect candidates for it, by demonstrating the existence of African civilizations that did not contradict westernity (the existence of empires (Songhai, Mali, etc.) before colonialism, but "self-government" and "modernization" as the new challenge. In a way, World War II marked the beginning of the period of "second colonial occupation". For the British colonies, the Development and Welfare Act of 1940, was to constitute the manifesto of what was to be termed "modernizing imperialism". Sir Arthur Dame, a senior official responsible for East Africa in the Colonial Office was to declare in 1942 that the old nineteenth century conceptions were dead. The War was increasingly demonstrating that self-government was becoming an expectation of all colonies. Thus for him, Britain was faced with the problem of formulating methods to reconcile the new forces and the future of British interests in Africa. He rhetorically posed the question: "How are we to bind these people to us in such a way that their material resources of strength will continue to be ranged on the side of Great Britain?" (Chachage, 1986:254). For Britain and other imperial powers, the answer was found in the famous Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). In essence, this was an imperial reorganisation of the colonial societies getting ready for Pax Americana.

This period coincided with the emergence of studies in Europe and USA dealing with “social change”, “patterns of development” and “development strategies” which promote economic prosperity. Modernization thinking’s anchorage was in the reality of the experiences of the epoch. It was in fact, an extension of earlier concepts—“civilization”, “progress”, etc.—under other circumstances. Like in the past centuries, these studies conceptualised change in terms of shift from one type of society to another, one stage to another, etc. It was a continuation of the universalization of European modernity in the name of emancipation of “man”, with “enlightenment” being seen as a struggle against superstitious beliefs (religious doctrines were, of course, not included here!), darkness and ignorance.

It was a globalization of modernity. Societies were viewed in terms of traditional and modern, community and society, agricultural and industrial, tribal and national, rural and urban, particularistic and universalist.⁸ Development thinking in Africa was summarized in the slogan of “War against ignorance, disease and poverty.” Henceforth, the idea of “tribe” was essentialized and considered premodern. The notion of modern/tradition dichotomy, which became the dominant paradigm in viewing societies associated tribes with traditionalism, which was an impediment to modernization and progress. Nations were supposed to be “modern”, therefore, they had rights—social, political and economic, and their demands were considered legitimate. Tribes and ethnic groups were supposed to be “pre-modern”, primitive and archaic. Their demands were illegitimate, reflecting some barbaric premodern sentiments. These were essentially racist, exclusivist conceptions, which were internalized in our countries because of the failure to transcend the territorial elitist history of the colonial masters. It was partly the internalization of those that legitimated some of the most outrageous, repressive, anti-human, undemocratic practices, under colonialism, but now paraded under the banner of “nation building”, “modernization” and “development”.

The nationalist leaders who took power after independence were nurtured in the modernization tradition. Their main concern was *development* of their countries in the very modernization fashion. For this process to take place, capital and technology from the West had to be lured into investing in these countries, and the barriers to this process were related to the existence of “traditional subsistence economies”. It was in this way that it became necessary to redefine relations related to land and natural resources. Policies on land tenure, for example, began to increasingly focus on productivity issues and specifically, on the relationship between individualisation of land tenure on the one hand, and the use of credit, land improvements and yields on the other, while ignoring completely issues of equity and justice. In this process, foreign investors and “modern” Africans had more rights over agricultural lands and other natural

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resources than peasants, cattle-herders, hunter-gatherers and above all, women. These groups of people, accordingly, represented relations that militated against “modern” forms of property ownership. From being called “backward” countries in the 1940s, these countries were baptised emerging “undeveloped” in the 1950s, only to be rebaptized “less developed” in the 1960s and “developing” “nations” in the 1970s (also “third world” or “underdeveloped” “nations”).

After independence, the state for the nationalists, became the sphere of moral “universalism”; a representation of some specific interests in the name of general interests—so—called “nation”. These were the interests of the powerful classes in already differentiated communities. With these new conceptions, identity among the African intellectuals took territorial forms. The state was the defining character of nationalism and the nation—corporate in character. Modernization was termed “nation building”. If Europe had nations, why not Africa?

The paradox of the challenge to colonial rule from the 1940s and 1950s was, Pan African identity was being supplanted by other “imagined communities”⁹—the nation and nationalism. In a way, this more or less marked the beginning of the defeat of the rebelling masses. It was an acceptance of the violation of people’s rights committed in 1884 by the imperial powers. The 1963 OAU Charter recognized these territories, and in the process, condoned the domination of Eritrea by Ethiopia and Western Sahara by Morocco. This, in turn had implications, as far as other independent countries were concerned. The new rulers were free to oppress their own people without interference from other African countries. Once identity was reduced to a territory, it was a short step to exploiting “ethnicity”—as a vehicle for accumulation (meaning concentration of wealth and power in a few hands and the ruination and disempowerment of the majority). Henceforth, communities and groups were ranked according to their differential access to resources and power and became hierarchical. The concept ethnicity entered the dictionary for the first time in 1972. “In everyday language the word ethnicity has a ring of ‘minority issues’ and ‘race relations’, but in social anthropology it refers to aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as culturally distinctive.”¹⁰

Independence and the “Uncivil Republics”

The World Bank formulated the models for accumulation and accelerated development in Africa in the first decade of independence. These models stressed the need for state intervention as means to achieve industrialization. They were being implemented as part of what the nationalists considered to be

“Africanism”, claimed to represent some forms of *African exceptionalism*—neither capitalist nor communist (African democracy, African socialism, African way of life, African personality, negritude, authenticity, etc.). The Atlantic world found no problem with these “Africanists” (or even the Mobutus and Bokassas) since they did not necessarily contradict western civilization. It was an “Africanism” which colluded with imperialism, i.e. that of the westernised section of the colonized.¹¹

Developmentalism (or so-called nation-building which was the neo-colonial model) was premised on the need to concentrate powers in the executive arm of the state, and within that, the presidency, while at the same time pledging to deliver social services, industries and infrastructure to the people. In return, people were expected to accept a high degree of social and economic control at the same time offer unified political loyalty. In practice, this meant erosion of political space for the masses to exercise their rights. Bureaucratic reproduction of laws rather than popular participation and political representation without hindrance became the norm. Within such conceptions, the party and the government apparatuses became the central organs in the struggles against “poverty, ignorance and disease”. Development could be only effected if there was unity among the people, expressed in the form of state project. Conflicts and opposition to state were foreign elements as far as the nationalists were concerned. The state had to become monolithic on the one hand and it was necessary to weaken the organisational capacities of the “civil society”—the very basis under which these ruling parties emerged.

Starting with Ghana from 1954, official opposition was refused under the claim that it had no “national basis”. Other African governments followed the same measures. To enforce this further, most of these governments promulgated bills, such as detention without trial, which militated against the rights of people in the name of development. Other bills were those that sought to control or abolish workers, peasants, youth, women, mass, students and professional organizations (e.g. trade unions, co-operatives, etc.). Broadly, this concentration of powers in the executive arm of the state which was taking place after independence was in response to the profound conflicts which were taking place within these countries. The conflicts brought to the fore the social, economic and political questions in relation to the meaning of self-determination as grasped by the different social groups within attempts to control social processes. The leaders of the nationalist movements were committed to modernization, and their general tendency was to view the mass of the people as ignorant, primitive, lazy, superstitious, resistant to change and backward.¹²

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Therefore, for development to take place, it was necessary to defeat the masses by concentrating the powers in the state and eroding the independence of the “civil societies”. Workers were not supposed to ask for more wages as this endangered capital investment and accumulation, and peasants and pastoralists were supposed to desist from demanding for better prices and better conditions of production for the sake of development. Nor were these supposed to defend their lands and resources, when they have to be expropriated for the interests of the investors—foreign and local. It was in this way that the powers of the parliament were also broken alongside the independent mass and political movements and all other autonomous local forms of self-determination so as to create “unity and tranquillity”.

For external purposes, the governments had to institute laws that regulated the outward and inward movements of Africans. Under colonialism, it was Europeans—as an aftermath of World Wars I and II—who could be granted a refugee status (mainly from Eastern Europe or so-called enemy territories). Africans movements were considered to be part of the movement of labour—simply immigrants or labour migrants. Of course, there were deportation laws for Africans if considered undesirable elements. With independence, Africans from neighbouring countries were increasingly being elevated to the position of “aliens”, and their movements were being controlled and administered. In the case of Tanzania, for example, a Refugees (control) Act was enacted in 1966. It was essentially a reproduction of the colonial legislations, but now justified by “national security” and other ideological reasons. Rwandan, Congolese, Ugandan, Kenyan, etc. problems, were no longer African problems, but internal problems that other African countries had no right to interfere.

This developmentalist model seemingly registered some rates of growth in a number of countries. Industry in Africa grew at the rate of 7.5 per cent between 1960 and 1975 and the GDP growth rates between 1965 and 1973 was 6.1 per cent. The state was the major source of investments, employment and social services and these grew substantially by then (Bangura, 1992). This accumulation model resulted in a profound crisis by late 1970s when most Sub-Saharan African countries began experiencing negative per capita GDP growth. These fell from 6.1 per cent in 1965-73 to -1.3 per cent in 1987. This crisis was accompanied by a drastic decline in the rates of growth in agriculture, industry and services. Exports began to decline to the extent that the total debt of Sub-Saharan African countries increased from USD 21.1 billion in 1976 to USD 137.8 billion in 1987 (Bangura, 1992:91-95). This, in essence, was not a mere economic crisis, but as Nzongola Ntalaja suggested it was a “crisis of the state and that the neo-colonial state itself constitute[d] the major obstacles to

development" (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1989:18). Put in other words, it was a crisis of the state that was not responsive and accountable to its subjects. This was a result of the demobilisation of the organisational capacities of the civil society politically and socially, hence leaving very little or no space at all for alternative challenges/questions.

What did such state forms entail? Those who manned the state power, did so by virtual of conquest, all sorts of repressive forms, corruption, nepotism and arbitrariness. In many ways, the states manipulated the so-called ethnic sentiments. There was no legal succession as such, but only coup d'état and army mutinies. Fanon had predicted such outcome as far back as 1961. He saw then the tendency for the independent states was to disarm everybody politically, bully them, etc. and institute the single party system which was the "modern form of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, unmasked, unpainted, unscrupulous and cynical". According to him: "...Such a dictatorship does not go very far. It cannot halt the process of its own contradictions. Since the bourgeoisie has not the economic means to ensure domination and throw a few crumbs to the rest of the country; since moreover, it is preoccupied with filling its pockets as rapidly as possible, the country sinks all the more deeply into stagnation." (Fanon, 1974:133)

It was these forms of authoritarian rule and their accumulation forms that brought about the crisis in Africa. Fanon had broken off from those forms of "Africanism" being paraded by many African governments by the late 1950s. He regarded "Africinity" in the manner in which it was being consolidated then as part of the pitfalls of national consciousness given that it championed the interests of the wealthy. The task, according to him, was to complete the liberation of Africa in terms of total transformation of society. Rather than a creation of black republics, the issue for him was the place people would be given by these African leaders, "the kind of social relations they decide to set up and the conception that they have of the future humanity.... Adherence to African-Negro culture and the cultural unity of Africa is arrived at in the first place by upholding unconditionally the peoples' struggle for freedom" (Fanon, 1974: 188-89).

By the end of the 1960s the modernist conceptions of development had reached an embarrassing situation, and a few regimes had been toppled by the armies which instituted the worst forms of dictatorship and abuse of human rights in the name of stamping down "tribalism", corruption and exploitation. In many African countries corruption, embezzlement, fraud, abuse of power, abuse of human rights and unaccountability had become endemic. People had been left defenceless *vis á vis* the states, and hence they had reached a position whereby

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they could not fight against the arbitrary actions of the states and their violation of the independence contract, or defend their living standards, wages, prices of their produce, working conditions, etc.

Thus, the Kenyan moral philosopher Oruka, was to point out by the early 1980s that the average man and woman in Africa had become a citizen of an “Uncivil Republic”, who did not have the right to liberty which embraces “freedom of thought and opinion, freedom of speech and assembly and freedom of emigration”. These did not exist for the average man or woman in Africa:

Those who live below the economic base line of humanity are denied the right to liberty. The average person in the uncivil republic has no complicated thought and opinion. They have but one concern: they are hungry and jobless. This is what he or she wants to express but which they cannot express because they lack the means and the right to liberty. Those who stand up to speak for them are easily silenced or wiped out by the tools of legal terrorism.¹³

Oruka was to further point out that all rights to work, minimum standards of life, fair wages, social security, freedom from hunger, and freedom to join trade unions and other associations are absent. Instead, the only right guaranteed is the right to property, which is meaningful, to the few wealthy ones (Oruka, 1985: 117-18).

There are other philosophers in Africa who had also articulated Oruka’s position earlier on (1970s). For Paulin Hountondji and Marcien Towa, for instance, “the necessity of freedom of thought and freedom in general for development of science” is absolutely important (Hountondji, 1983:69). They were of the view that it was simply impossible to have any meaningful development (including development of thought and philosophy) without freedom of expression. Freedom of expression, for them, was seen as the precondition for the development of science, theoretical development and real economic and political progress. To achieve any meaningful development, they suggested, it was necessary to “begin at the beginning; we must restore the right to criticism and free expression which are seriously threatened by our regimes of terror and ideological confusion” (*ibid*).

Renewal of Resistance and Struggles for Democracy

With the crisis of developmentalism the state legitimacy was in the collapse by late 1970s. From this period onwards, many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa began to witness an increasing tendency of active and passive resistance, most of which were in response to the implementation of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)

since mid-1970s. SAPs insisted that liberalization and further reliance on the market forces with less state intervention as the only way to stimulate production of traditional exports and overcome the crisis. Therefore, it also meant the intensification of the processes already taking place under the independence model. This process was accompanied by the devaluation of the currencies, price decontrols, imposition of various forms of taxation, introduction of user charge fees (so-called cost-sharing in health, education, etc.), removal of subsidies for inputs for the rural producers or food for the urban working people, as well as the retrenchment of the workers in the civil and public sector.

Active and passive resistance which was taking place in Africa aimed at reshaping and restructuring power relations within these countries. It was the reawakening of the masses at grassroots level and their mobilisation for democratic rights against the monopolisation of politics by the dominant structures of the state. This process was accompanied by a "growing critique of the role of the state and its role in human liberation" (Kothari, 1984:14) The developmentalist model of the state was no longer credible; instead, there was increasingly a "reconsideration of the relationship between the state and civil society." There was a "rediscovery of the civil society as an autonomous expression of human social will: the whole process of decentralisation and of rediscovery of identities." This process was also enriched and enlivened by a range of social movement which have become important contemporarily—in particular, women, ecological and peace movements (*ibid*).

In many countries in Africa (as exemplified by Sudan, Zaire, Zambia, Cote d'Ivoire, etc.) internal pressures for democracy and respect for human rights had been simmering covertly for many years.¹⁴ These pressures in some instances were accompanied by a redefinition of the societies, and the direction tended towards viewing society as a self-creative entity. It was, therefore necessary to create social and political capacities to challenge state monopolisation of politics and decision-making. Civil society as concept by early 1980s had been transformed to embrace social and political movements, and the whole question of emancipation of the people.¹⁵

It may be the case that in some military state ruled countries such as Nigeria and Ghana the question of democracy and human rights was posed in terms of establishment of a multi-party system. Otherwise, this question was posed in broader terms. Beyond the demand for various freedoms (of speech, conscience, thinking, press, etc) there was a challenge of the need to create autonomous civil organizations and the need to re-conceptualise the type of politics and political organizations which would enable these countries to transcend the colonial and neo-colonial established arrangements.

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The popular democratic opposition to SAPs that emerged in the 1980s seemingly was in some instances threatening to destroy the fundamental basis of the liberal order and the institutions of privatization and market forces. For the Atlantic world, this was support for totalitarianism and against political and civil liberties, as it was against economic freedom for private capital. The history of the last fifty years or so demonstrates one fact: authoritarian (or totalitarian) regimes of the Right which protect private capital even if they go against political and civil liberties are more preferred than the so called Left authoritarian (or totalitarian) regimes, that may mess around with private property for the sake of the majority of the mass of the oppressed people.

For the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and their local supporters in Africa, the problem was not lack of mass democracy; rather it was that of how to put forward a defence of capitalism by trying to justify economic liberalization and commercialisation of public and civil institutions and its consequences as far as the majority of the people are concerned. SAPs, if anything, merely restructured capital (private and public) which benefited from the statist model of the 1960s and 1970s around newly deregulated branches (mainly import-export activities and the plunder of natural resources). For the working people these meant further marginalization, aggravation of tensions and more hierarchization. The practical problem for the IFIs and their local supporters was how to win popular support for the SAPs measures and the market order, which are essentially anti-people and anti-human rights.

As demonstrated in the history of the Atlantic world in terms of safeguarding the so-called "economic freedoms", the struggle for or against democracy and human rights has always been in terms of how to institute/elect regimes which would not set out to destroy the fundamental basis of market economies and the functioning of capital in general. The struggle over the nature of democracy and human rights at the time of independence was more or less dominated by this assumption covertly or overtly. Regardless of whether we are talking about the Western world or Africa the biggest fear is the *rule of the majority of oppressed*. Democracy and the struggle for human rights in this sense are regarded as principles, which can undermine the ideals of economic liberty. Therefore, even in the case of Africa, the problem has been how to safeguard economic liberty in a mass democracy situation (if this can not be prevented). In other words, how to make the modern state, which claims to represent the interests of all, exercise its legitimacy in the face of mass opposition. It is in this way that the struggle for broad democracy was derailed in Africa by the late 1980s. Instead, the whole question of democracy was reduced to multi-partism.

The fact that single or multi-party regimes all over the world have made some totalitarian demands on their members/groups/sections of groups/classes and even individuals at every time in the interests of the nation/country (read government) is indisputable. And the struggle since the emergence of the modern state has been in terms of whether the state can dominate the "civil society" or the "civil society" dominates the state (not as dichotomies, but as mutually exclusive entities) (Gamble, 1981:151 ff.). SAPs and their implementation and civil and political liberties are incompatible, since the former strives to go against the very rights that the majority of the poor people are struggling for.

Towards a Reconceptualization of Democracy

Literature emerging currently on the experience of democracy in Africa indicates that there is a dire need for critique of multi-party politics in Africa (Olukoshi, 1998). While the emergence of opposition parties that aim at constitutional changes in Africa is an important turning point in the process of political change, however, without exception, most of the parties that have emerged/exist so far are elite parties. There are hardly any organic representatives of mass or community organizations in these parties. There is a clear acceptance of the universal concept of liberal democracy and human rights among most of these parties, whereby the connotation is simply accountability of the ruler as the major issue. Democracy and human rights are viewed in terms of forms of rule that includes the right of representation, organisation and expression. It is *individual rights* that override in this conception, rather than *peoples' rights as individuals and communities*. It is a matter of the ballot box, and it does not matter what means one uses to get the votes.

In essence, the forms of democracy which have been introduced in Africa in the 1990s, rather than deal with the crisis facing the continent, have sowed more seeds of discord given that they defend politics of exclusion and inclusion, privileges and denials. The winning and losing of votes is based on *mobilisation*, which includes mobilisation of even forms of identities, imagined or real. The simple game is, who ever is in power will definitely exclude the community that voted against them. Thus, in this context, the issues of "Who originates from where among those in power" or "which party represents which people", become the real stuff. In other words, the situation, like in the past the issue becomes that of which interest group is in a position to influence legislation. The result is reinforcement of discriminatory tendencies. Here, I have in mind the "Zanzibar Question" in Tanzania, whereby, with multi-partism what has emerged is what some people have termed "Pemba nationalism". Tanzania as a country that was said to have dealt with problems related to "ethnicity" is today marred with

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politics that tend to raise such issues. Not only those, but even religious (inter and intra) conflicts have increasingly arisen with multi-partyism.

It is the cult of the “universal” that dominates in the conceptualization of democracy and human rights. This “universal” is defended unquestionably without seeking to uncover its anchorage in Africa. The fact that democracy has always existed as a historical mode of politics is completely forgotten. Democratic revolutions in the world have always taken place within the context of redefining relationships, so that the oppressors have always been the enemies and the masses have always been those in the oppressed camp (even if these are also differentiated). In this way, for example, struggles for democracy in France in the 18th Century were directed against the feudal aristocracy and the monarch, and the bourgeoisie was part of the masses. The major issues being dealt with were political ones. When the *issues of social justice* came to the fore later on, the bourgeoisie was already representing different interests, other than those of the oppressed masses. In Africa today, democracy has to be viewed from the point of view of those who are victims of the prevailing systems.

Democratic “transitions” in Africa currently have not taken into account issues of social justice. That is they are not directed at questions of redressing imbalances, inequalities, exploitation, etc, and all the talk is simply about setting-up “democratic institutions” and “good governance.”¹⁶ Clearly, the change taking place in Africa is in terms of movement from the authoritarianism of one state party to that of many state parties. The existing and emerging parties, without exception have confined themselves to the realm of fighting to remain or to enter the state houses (read the treasury). As far as popular politics are concerned, the broad masses are only mobilised for voting or support of policies.

These parties have even put a wedge between politics and economics by insisting that the only site of politics is the parliament. They have even failed to organize or facilitate the emergence and consolidation of independent labour, peasant, women, youths and peoples’ movements. Often than not, the tendency for these parties has been to distance themselves from such organizations and such activities. Inevitably, such forms of politics are resulting into further social and political demobilisation of the civil organizations, as it is happening in countries such as Zambia and Tanzania where all attempts have been/ are being made to muzzle the trade unions and other more organic organizations. Clearly, multi-party politics are still imprisoned in the state-controlled conceptions of politics. These politics are doing even more harm by reinforcing the politics of “them” and “us”. As it turns out now, for example, Kenneth Kaunda’s citizenship is being questioned. Not only that, Ivorians are now clamouring for Cote d’Ivoire for Ivorians only! In South Africa, it is the *Makwerekwere* (foreigners from

“Africa”) who are causing hardships in the country! Citizenship and “ethnic” issues are being politicised than ever before, and in the process, some people or communities becoming the scapegoats while the real oppressors are let to go free with impunity. The milieu of racism under which these conceptions were conceived is completely forgotten!

In actual fact, political liberalization that continues currently in Africa is taking the form of another monopolisation of political participation by very narrow circles of elites. This process is also increasingly accompanied by further weakening of the civil society’s organisational capacities. The reason is, this political liberalization does not preclude the predominance of state repressive relations to the civil society, since most of the emerging parties are pro-liberalization in one way or another. The SAPs measures in Africa in general cannot be sustained without repressing the producers who demand for better working/production conditions or provision of the social services as community based rather than individual responsibilities. I have in mind here the Nigerian experience of 1989 when the people rejected SAPs through a referendum and the government had to use force, including shooting those who protested against the measures, to implement them.

People who are concerned with a serious social project need to consider the question of people’s rights and democracy with a sense of social and political determinism rather than economic determinism. Emphasis should be on viewing society from a relational point of view, whereby collective phenomena are seen primarily as expressions of enduring relationships. Such a conception entails a “*transformational model of social activity*” with emphasis on the question of change and history (Bhaskar, 1979:34). With such premises, democracy and peoples rights can only be viewed from the point of view of relations among people and how they treat/resolve their differences and also between the people and the state. The issue is how the differences between workers and bosses, peasants and merchants, students and teachers, men and women, youths and elders, Moslems and Christians, Africans and Asians/Arabs/Europeans, majority and minorities, people and state, etc are resolved/treated. It is in this light that one can understand why workers, peasants, professionals, students, youth, women, communities have been demanding for autonomous organizations against party and state authoritarianism as a means to reconstruct the relations between the people and the state, and create the possibility of domination of the state by the civil society.

In this regard, *democratisation* as a process involving relational aspects is inevitably a political process that must focus on the people rather than the state. Its central problem should be the question of treatment/resolution of differences

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among the people themselves in society, rather than the question of forms of governance/state. One of the most important issues, within this context, should be the question of a social project in terms of the possibility to conceptualise the type of society people would like to build. Questions like what is the motive force of society (intellectuals? bureaucracy? economic forces? social struggles?). Transition to what? In what way do people want their societies/communities organized? Which is the most advanced class/group to undertake such a project politically? are quite pertinent.

Democracy and human rights as a process of transforming the state, requires one to focus on the politics of social and political emancipation of the people. We need to deal with issues such as: in which way is production organized? Who is producing, and who is appropriating the surplus? What forms of accumulation are taking place? —In sum, the relations of subordination and resistance at the level of production. Questions such as who is demanding for democracy and human rights are quite legitimate. Therefore, of paramount importance are the questions of the historical experiences and the practices of concrete social groups in terms of how they define their social and political project, or how they arrive at one position as opposed to another (including their ideological expressions).

I believe democracy and the quest for human rights has to make sense to the interests of the contending groups. It has to be linked to the whole question of restructuring social relations so that individuals, groups and organizations are able to pose the questions of the control of resources and those of social and political emancipation more sharply. Politics of “nation-building” and multi-partyism in Africa simply reduce politics to the number of parties and the number of votes. It is for this reason that such politics are elitist, since their assumption is people do not and are incapable of thinking, and therefore, they must be represented. People are incapable of making their own history; it is only the parties and the state which are capable of doing so. Here the attempt is to deny the existence of politics outside the parties and the state.¹⁷

Emancipation politics require that one recognises that the other sites of politics beyond the parliamentary building are such as the factory, the farm, the household, the street, the village, the school, the university, etc. They require the involvement of all the people in resisting state arbitrariness and all forms of domination and exploitation. Such politics, in this world today, requires a renewal of Pan-African politics, which aim at redressing the wrongs under which Africa has been subjected for centuries. “Nation building”, in its current form leads to balkanisation. Salvation lies in the renewal of a militant Pan-Africanist identity (of those who have been enslaved, colonized, dominated and neo-colonized historically), which singles out the collaborators and those who have

benefited or still benefit from the current chaos,¹⁸ organized around the questions of redressing imbalances in their various ramifications. Wole Soyinka has made the following observation:

Beginning with the Organization of African Unity, which formally consecrated this act (the division of Africa—CSL) of arrogant aggression, reinforced by civil wars on varied scales of mutual destruction in defence of imperial mandate, the continent as a whole appears, however, to have swallowed intact this explosive seed of disunity—under the iron banner of unity. If only African leaders could become acquainted with how much—just to illustrate the hollowness of such beginnings—the division of India and Pakistan (and the allocation of their respective boundaries) owed to the whimsical decisions of a mere civil servant imported straight from Whitehall, someone who had never even visited the Asian continent until then, but was selected for the ‘objective’ distancing that that very arrogance was presumed to confer on him, was given a deadline of a mere twenty-eight days to complete his task in order to ensure that the continent was effectively divided before Independence Day—such leaders and cheerleaders would learn to be less cocky about the mangy claims of ‘national sovereignty’. Much of the division of Africa owed more to a case of brandy and a box of cigars than to any intrinsic claims of what the boundaries enclosed (Soyinka, 1999: 36-7).

These words must be taken seriously. In this case, the first and foremost task is to reconstruct our history to demystify and combat the “nation-building” histories that are leading to more partitioning of Africa. We need historical forms of knowledge whose content represents an intervention in the current social reality; historical knowledge that analyses possibilities of social transformations, helps to present the social identity of the African masses beyond these 1884 false boundaries. The current fundamental issue is to examine the weaknesses and strengths of the rebelling classes and seek ways to equip them as history makers, within the specific historical moment and in a specific social milieu (class, gender, caste or race specific). We need forms of historical knowledge which will equip us with such knowledge that would enable us to struggle for building a future that has no place for contesting one’s humanity.

“Globalization” in this epoch is mere reinforcement of the universalistic cult (which has always defined and categorized us) of a *program of desired* than an empirically supported understanding of more general trends in international relations. As it is increasingly revealed in many African countries, the paradox of globalization is that the inclination of the state to intervene in economic affairs has tended to increase over the years. This is regardless of the political, economic and ideological rhetoric. This tendency has been increasing when its effectiveness has been on the decline. The intervention has been in terms of adjustments to cope with inflation, trade policies, land and natural resources policies and laws, labour laws, tax incentives, export subsidies, privatization,

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sectoral policies (in terms of planning and integration of activities), research policies, regulations and controls. Part of the reason is, measures which seek to reduce public expenditure, human development and welfare are incompatible with democracy and people's rights. People have been resisting against these measures. This has, on the whole, meant the expansion of state bureaucracy with a weakening power in the economic sphere.

Notes

1. This paper was originally prepared for the Pan African Civic Educators Network (PACE-NET) Conference (7-10 September 1999), on behalf of Tanzania Gender Networking Group Programme (TGNP). The author was then based at the University of Cape Town (Department of Sociology). He is wholly responsible for the views expressed. One of the criticism the author anticipates is that the whole issue of "citizenship" both as a judicial concept (statist) and as a concept of civil society (social and civil) is not adequately dealt with as a prelude to discussing ethnicity and nation building in post-colonial Africa. The issue of 'ethnicity', 'nation', and 'identities' are also not treated adequately in this paper. All of these issues merit treatment in a separate paper which will be submitted to *UTAFITI* in the near future.
2. This was sounded by Antjie Krog in the Book Fair in Harare (Zimbabwe) in early August 1999. The theme of the Book Fair was on "Women Voices, Gender, Books and Development". Quoted by *The Sunday Independent*, 8 August 1999.
3. P. Williams & Laura Chrisman (eds), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994, p. 3. They further on state that, "...articles and editorials in respectable newspapers such as the *Sunday Telegraph* can call the West to go back to Africa and sort out the mess into which their national governments have led them—all these indicate how much of the room for manoeuvre of the colonial period remain in place."
4. H. Spencer, "The Primitive Man-intellectual" in *Source Book for Social Origins*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967, p. vi. Spencer drew an analogue between Africans and children in his account.
5. The concept "extended family", for example, which is today taken as given is a eurocentric one. It defined other primary relations from the point of view of European forms of organization—the "nuclear family". In reality, this meant redefining the social roles. Thus, today, "civilized Africans" call their father's brothers and mother's sister's uncles and aunts respectively, instead of elder or younger father and mother. This has resulted into the creation of exclusionist relations in wider relations and negation of social roles attendant with them. To be "civilized" is to belong in a "nuclear family"! Very few African languages have the equivalence of the concept "family" and concepts are an expression of social relations.

6. G.C.K. Gwassa, "Kinjikitile and the Ideology of Maji Maji", in T.O. Ranger & I. Kimambo (eds) *The Historical Study of African Religion*, Heinemann, London, 1972. On pg. 203, he noted: "Most of the peoples of the Maji Maji area were organized on small scale, usually clans which constituted political units.... Yet despite this apparent diversity and extreme disunity, the effects of the slave trade and of raids of the Ngoni and Yao and the constant movements of peoples had produced so complex an ethnic admixture that it became impossible to draw meaningful ethnic boundaries...the Ngindo, who played an important role in Maji Maji...were scattered over the whole area between Rufiji and Ruvuma rivers and between the coast and Lake Nyasa...."

"...the old view that southern Tanzanian peoples had had little in common, that they were perpetually at each other's throats, that they were so divided and weak that it was impossible to combine, falls away.... a complex web of cultural inter-mixture, and of wide ranging social and marital relationships had been woven by events taking place before and during the nineteenth century."

7. It is ironical that after his death on 1st July 1999, the South African press hardly covered the event the way that it deserved. It pains one to imagine that the South African Broadcasting Corporation had to look for Ian Smith and interview him about Nkomo, rather than activists from Zimbabwe, South Africa and elsewhere who worked with him. Compare this with the coverage of the death of J.F. Kennedy Jr. by the same press!
8. For details on modernization theories, see M. Blomstrom & B. Hettne, *Development Theory in Transition*, Zed Press, London, 1985; A. Webster, *Introduction to Sociology of Development*, MacMillan, London, 1984. Even Marxism was an Universalist theory of modernity, which conceived history as universal and globalizing. His comments (together with Engels) on the Latin American Spaniards whom he considered as degenerates; Engels' view that the conquest of Algeria by the French was "an important and fortunate fact for the progress and civilization " of those Bedouins; Marx's remarks on the "civilizing mission" of British imperialism or his remark that the Chinese had to be fed with opium in order to be brought to civilization; etc. are quite revealing in this regard (see Jorge Larraín, *Ideology and Cultural Identity: Modernity and the Third World*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1994).
9. This concept was introduced by Benedict Anderson in his, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso Press, London, 1983. On page 15 he stated that a nation "is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." "It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in their minds of each lives the image of their communion".
10. T. H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, Pluto Press, London, 1993, p. 4. According to him, the concept is derived from Greek word *ethnos*, which originally meant heathen or pagan. That is how it was used in English from mid-14th century until mid-19th century, when it began to refer to racial characteristics. In USA, the word came into currency after WW II, as a polite term to refer to Jews, Italians, Irish, and other people who were considered inferior to dominant groups—the British.
11. No wonder Senghor (the first President of Senegal), one of the founders of Negritude and African Socialism, once said, he could sing his negritude better in French.

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12. Andreas Fuglesang in "The Myth of People's Ignorance" in *Development Dialogue* (1984: 1-2, p.45) states that "the myth that poverty somehow results from ignorance is an elitist, ethnocentric interpretation of an international problem, the roots of which lie not in reality but in prevalent middle-class attitudes originating in the North. The attitudes are espoused by professionals educated in European traditions." Within the North this elitism, according to E.P. Thompson in *The Poverty of Theory* (Merlin Press, London, 1978, p.377) "stands as direct successor in the old lineage: Benthamism, Coleridgean 'clerisy', Fabianism, and leavisism of the more arrogant variety. Once again, the intellectuals--a chosen band of these have been given a task of enlightening people--(it is) marked by...very heavy emphasis upon the ineluctable weight of ideological modes of domination which destroys every space for the initiative or creativity of the mass of the people--a domination which only the enlightened minority of intellectuals can struggle free."
13. Henry Odera Orika, *Punishment and Terrorism in Africa*, Kenya Literature Bureau, Nairobi, 1985, p.117-18. By legal terrorism Orika is referring to the state.
14. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o (ed), *Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa*, Zed Books, London, 1987. According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (*Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Africa*, Zed Books Ltd, London, 1987 p. 92.), Congolese ordinary people had come to the conclusion that what was required in their country was a "second independence." According to them, the 1960s independence had failed; that independence was "meaningless without a better standard of living, greater civil liberties, and the promise of a better life for children. Instead of making these promised benefits available to the masses, the politicians who inherited state power from the Belgians lived in much greater luxury than most of their European predecessors and used violence and arbitrary force against the people."
15. I.G. Shivji, *Fight my Beloved Continent: New Democracy in Africa*, SAPES, Harare, 1988. This civil society/state relationship discourse is radically different from the other one that supports liberalization and the operation of market forces in response to what they termed "informal" or "second" economy. The World Bank and the IMF mainly promote the latter conception of civil society. Examples of authors who use the concept in this manner are: R.H. Bates (*Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa*, CUP, Cambridge, 1983) and Janet MacGaffey, ("Initiative from Below: Zaire's 'Other Path' to Social and Economic Restructuring", in G. Hyden & M. Bratton (eds), *Governance and Politics in Africa: Perestroika Without Glasnost?* Lynne Rienner, Colorado)
16. The political vocabulary in Africa nowadays is devoid of words such as exploitation, oppression, domination, class interests, neo-colonialism and imperialism. Instead, words like participatory/grassroots development, economic liberalization and donors/partners in development have become so ubiquitous.
17. Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, (Heinemann, London, 1987) which sought to transcend the elitist politics remained trapped in the power games within the state. Ifi Amadiume's ("Class and Gender in *Anthills of Savannah*: A critique", *Pal Platform* Vol 1 No 1, 1987, pp. 8 ff) criticism of the book is very interesting on this regard.
18. Current literature by Western analysts seems to be celebrating the chaos in Africa by coming out arrogantly with open racist conceptions. One of the example is the book by Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument*,

C. S. L. Chachage

James Curry in Association with the International African Institute, Oxford, 1999. According to them, “disorder”, rather than being viewed negatively—as “a state of dereliction. It should be seen as a condition which offers opportunities for those who know how to play that system.” (p. xix) They even talk openly about the fact that there is this thing called “Black Africa”—“that is former European colonies lying south of the Sahara—excluding, thereby, the countries of North Africa (from Morocco to Egypt). We also leave South Africa, whose history is so distinct as to make comparison difficult at this stage.” (p. xxi)

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