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Editorial: Africa, the African Diaspora & Development

A B Zack-Williams & Giles Mohan

In 1995 Zack-Williams commented in this journal: 'development studies has maintained its ostrich-like detachment from issues of race and diasporan concerns' (1995:351). Now, seven years later, we address this 'detachment' and the implications of bringing these two strands of study together in understanding the development of both Africa and its diaspora. In between, there has been a number of books and articles on the African diaspora (for example, Okpewho, Davies, and Mazrui, 1999; Byfield, 2000) but they have tended to be theoretical, cultural and historical as opposed to dealing with pressing questions of the political economy of Africa and its diaspora. Theorising and analysing the diaspora and development is increasingly important given that migration is becoming a key part of many household survival strategies. In other contexts the diaspora has been one of the pillars of development and industrialisation. For example, the Chinese diaspora numbers 50 million and in 1999 generated $700 billion which is equivalent to two-thirds of China's GDP (Devan and Tewari, 2001). While on a smaller scale, remittances from Ghanaians outstripped foreign direct investment for every year of the 1990s (Akyeampong, 2000). So, the financial power of the diaspora is clearly formidable. However, development is more than money and the diaspora contributes in a myriad of other ways. These include political lobbying, cultural exchange, religious networks, and institutional linkages. We can say that an increasingly confident diaspora yearns for Africa, wants to speak and work with Africa in its moment of crisis (Zack-Williams, Frost & Thomson, 2002). In the articles gathered here we address all of these issues although we have attempted to synthesise them in the article which immediately follows this editorial.

Reacting to Zack-Williams' call for an overdue dialogue between the concerns of African diasporic cultural studies and those development studies in Africa itself, Hakim Adi (in this Volume) has warned that:

Those concerned with the study of African political economy and 'development' in Africa have often neglected those ideas that emerged from the African diaspora. While those who study the African diaspora have often been more concerned with issues of 'identity' than with the political future of Africa.

Hakim goes on to argue that many key anti-colonial ideas (such as Pan-Africanism, which is his own concern in this collection) were developed as much in the diaspora and in the capital cities of Europe, as they were within the African continent. For Adi, many of these diaspora-originated ideas soon formed the basis of 'a modern African political theory'.
Definitions

One of the main problems with African diasporic theorisation is in defining and delimiting the diaspora. This is more than simply an academic exercise in semantics because the definition of diaspora is politically contested and opens up different implications for the types of consciousness we find and the functional relationships between the diaspora and an African 'home'.

Running through these articles is the question of periodisation. In terms of the formation of the diaspora different processes have operated in different phases, which then cautions us against seeing a monolithic and unchanging 'diasporic experience'. Clearly, the slave trade inaugurated the African diaspora and was a period of traumatic exile. Shipping ports soon became major loci in the construction and development of the diaspora as the article of Ishemo on the 'Abakua secret societies' in Cuba demonstrates, as well as the contributions of Frost and Uduku. However, subsequent mass movements of African people have been less impelled although the pressures to move have often been a result, directly or indirectly, of underdevelopment. For example, the lack of educational opportunities saw many Africans travelling to the metropoles in the 1950s while the recent political and economic crises have seen families and individuals moving to a wider range of countries to escape persecution and to make a living. Without reducing migration and displacement to the results of some uniform capitalist logic, much diasporic formation is linked to the demands of the international labour market combined with the lack of opportunities domestically.

A second problem in defining the African diaspora is in 'mapping' its geography. Much has been made of the 'Black Atlantic' diaspora, which is characterised as a dynamic and swirling exchange of people, ideas and commodities. Such a characterisation of the African diaspora reflects, in part, the relative intellectual and political power of academics and activists in Europe and North America who drive the debates and make certain experiences more visible than others. Indeed, most of the empirical studies included in this issue focus on 'Atlantic' diasporas. However, Gilroy's Black Atlantic focus is somehow incomplete, since it fails to recognise the post-slavery and post-colonial diasporas, which have emerged in places like Chicago (Reynolds in this issue); Liverpool (Frost and Uduku's contributions in this issue), or the African presence on the European continent. Furthermore, the African diaspora is spread more widely with flows and linkages across the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the Pacific.

Such complex movements and displacements suggest that rather than seeing diaspora as comprising home and exile, we need to look at multiple sites of displacement which may well be linked to each other more strongly than they are to an actual or mythical 'home'. For example, many black British have much stronger linkages with the Caribbean than they do with Africa and we should be wary of essentialising a diaspora experience purely upon the basis of skin colour and assumed 'origins'. All identities are fluid, overlapping and changing so that we should resist attempts, such as those of the more dogmatic Afrocentrists, to find a singular and authentic 'African identity'. That said, the ongoing experience of racism is a condition that shapes and, in some senses, unites people of African descent (see Ishemo in this volume for the African experience in pre-revolutionary Cuba). Hence, certain identities are not 'negotiable' and become important axes of political and cultural belonging. In all cases we need to situate discourses about Africa, identity and belonging (such as Afrocentrism and Pan-Africanism) within the context of a diaspora in which racism plays a central part.
Processes

A second set of issues that run through the contributions in this issue are the processes which unite the Africa diaspora. We have already touched upon the question of identity and the debates about essentialism and anti-essentialism. Diasporic consciousness is shaped relationally in terms of the racial hierarchy and discrimination that underpins capitalism. However, beyond this crucial factor there is no fixed and immutable ‘African-ness’ or ‘black-ness’. The studies by Frost show that consciousness developed quite differently among the Kru people in Liverpool. Additionally, the very act of moving generates new forms of identity as groups come into contact with one another and multiple hybrid cultures are created. On top of that is the way that exile can strengthen one’s attachment to ‘home’ even if one never returns there. We see this support of home in various activities and to varying degrees ranging from developmentally-oriented Igbo hometown associations (Reynolds & Uduku in this volume) to support for nationalist struggles to recognise and cement a nation-state as in the case of Somalia. These cases reinforce Scholte’s (1996:588) assertion that ‘global communications have made it that much easier for a people to sustain its sense of national solidarity while being dispersed across the planet’. In the case of the US, it is by now incontrovertible that an African American cultural trope plays a major role in what today is perceived as American identity. In a similar light, Ishemo reminds us: ‘The Abakua contribution, like that of other African derived cultural forms, to Cuban popular culture has been greatly acknowledged in the areas of religious beliefs, music, musical instruments, dance, and popular language’.

A key element, which some of the articles in this issue address, but which is rarely discussed in other studies of diaspora, is the question of class; class is a vital element in understanding the genesis and internal dynamics of diasporas. Again, there has been an implicit assumption that because cultural affinity unites diasporas, other social divisions – most obviously class and gender – are less important. However, class position affects a person’s ability to migrate and the types of opportunities afforded to them in diaspora. For example, Arthur’s (2000) study of middle-class Africans in the United States demonstrates how much easier it is for them to gain professional employment compared with the uneducated, sojourning illegal traders of MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga’s (2000) study. Additionally, the labour process entered into in a diasporic location may engender proletarianisation, which would not have occurred had displacement not occurred. For example, Frost’s study of Kru seamen in this issue shows that as they became more deeply incorporated into the wage system their consciousness was transformed away from a purely ethnic one to a more complex articulation with class. The result was that subsequent political activity was both class- and culturally-based.

A final set of processes that most articles in this issue illuminate is the institutionalisation of diasporic relationships. As we have argued in our substantive chapter the motivations for moving out of Africa range from forcible exile to a set of decisions rooted in risk aversion and economic rationality at the household level. Given these diverse origins it is unwise to generalise about the forms of group activity that diasporic communities enter into. However, we have highlighted the various ways in which diasporic communities form institutions and organisations that facilitate various forms of economic, political and social activity, such as the ‘Abakua’ analysed by Ishemo. Some analysts label this a form of ‘social capital’ (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000), which has certain analytical value but tends implicitly to reduce all forms of social interaction to optimising criteria. Institutions form as responses to ethnic and racial hostility or as
coping mechanisms, which permit scale economies to be built up which both protect individuals and allow resources to be mobilised. Other institutions may precede the creation of diaspora yet serve to bind them. We are thinking of religious institutions like the Pentecostal church or secret societies such as the 'Abakua' discussed by Ishemo. The interview with Adotey Bing of the Africa Centre in London shows how an organisation which was launched during the optimism and relative affluence of the post-independence period, has adjusted to changes not only in Africa’s political economy but the needs of the diaspora in Britain. The Africa Centre has had to tread the careful path of raising awareness about Africa without getting bogged down in partisan politics or catering to a British audience by serving up exotica. While all institutions are political in that they involve power relations and the creation of 'insiders' some diaspora institutions are more overtly political.

Politics
An important discussion relating to the politics of the diaspora is the ways in which diasporic African communities link up with political struggles on the continent. It is interesting that while Pan-Africanism and Afrocentrism have become rallying points for diasporic political activism, the term diaspora itself has not been deployed in political discourses (Hayes Edwards, 2000). This is strange given that diaspora has become increasingly popular in Euro-American discourses on race, culture and identity. Both Pan-Africanism and Afrocentrism have been criticised for their tendency to simplify and homogenise the realities of African societies, but they must also be contextualised as uniquely diasporic discourses, which simultaneously, if not primarily, sought to address racial exploitation in the supposed land/s of the free. So, while these ‘one Africa’ discourses can justifiably be criticised, they have nonetheless been important mechanisms for attacking racism, engendering racial pride, and criticising racist capitalism the world over. Additionally, Pan-Africanists were, during the anti-colonial struggles and in the immediate post-colonial period, significant in lobbying for structural changes in the relationships between Africa and the imperial heartland.

These struggles have also thrown up some of the most important intellectuals of African political economy. While we are not going to get into a beauty parade of the ‘best’ intellectuals, we cannot deny that diasporic Africans have been at the forefront of political and cultural analysis for at least the past 150 years. For example, Edward Wilmot Blyden was among the first to argue that Africans were capable of shaping their own destinies, even if his work shaded into paternalism. Similarly, W. E. B. Du Bois analysed deftly the double consciousness of being black and oppressed in a white society; themes that Frantz Fanon picked up so brilliantly in his Algerian work.

Omissions
The articles that appear in this special issue cover a wide range of concerns drawn primarily from analysis of literature and/or qualitative research. While they advance our understanding of the political and economic linkages in the diaspora and between it and the African continent there are a number of important issues that have been omitted. First, there was little on geopolitics and the diaspora. Some mention was made of the linkages between nationalist struggles and the diaspora in the contexts of Irish Americans and republican struggles and Tamil separatists in Europe. However, the linkages between contemporary politics and the diaspora is nowhere more obvious than in the case of Somalia. Following the US’s declaration of a war on
terrorism, the al-Barakaat network of informal financial transfers was outlawed and closed down. The Bush administration argue that al-Barakaat is an easy means of transferring funds (The White House, 2001) to Al Qaida while ignoring the fact that 80 per cent of the country relied upon these funds for basic survival and that with 1,300 employees al-Barakaat was by far the biggest employer in the country (De Sio, 2001). Such moves can only breed further resentment against the United States and perpetuate conflict. Blanket sanctions are also at odds with the punitive ‘smart’ sanctions being imposed on Zimbabwe, which seek to target key offenders, despite the distasteful nature of the Mugabe regime. The treatment of the African diaspora by America is also very different from either the Irish-American or Jewish lobbies, elements of which have been very active supporters of republican and Zionist struggles respectively but which are also important electoral resources in the US. As a consequence, their support of kin and homeland conflicts have been ignored by US administrations keen to secure voting blocs.

Something which we also omitted is more ‘localised’ diasporas, though Uduku makes useful references to this situation in the case of the Igbos. As we said, the tendency has been to examine the Black Atlantic given its traumatic roots in the slave trade. However, we have seen a series of regional conflicts, such as the Great Lakes and Sierra Leone/Liberia, which have also generated huge displacements. While the refugee regime seeks to control such flows and ultimately repatriate the displaced populations many remain outside of their home areas for long periods, which may become permanent. These more regionally focused diasporas are rarely discussed in wider analyses of diasporas and instead remain the stuff of refugee studies. We also did not discuss other diasporas, which influence Africa. Cohen (1997) analyses colonial and labour diasporas, which tend to cover European administrators and indentured labourers respectively. In the West African context, the Lebanese diaspora, which first emerged at the turn of the last century, has clearly been highly influential in the political economy of colonial and post-colonial Africa.

We feel that the analysis of Africa, the African diaspora and development has only just begun. The articles gathered here are a valuable first step, but we hope that readers of ROAPE will continue this endeavour and add to the depth and sophistication of our understanding.

References


Globalisation From Below: Conceptualising the Role of the African Diasporas in Africa's Development

Giles Mohan & A B Zack-Williams

In the past both African Studies and Development Studies have ignored questions of the African Diaspora. This point was made by Zack-Williams back in 1995 but since then there has not been much work attempting to rectify this matter. In this article we put forward a framework for examining the role of diaspora in development. This centres on recognising that the formation of the African Diaspora has been intimately linked to the evolution of a globalised and racialised capitalism. While the linkages between capitalism, imperialism and displacement are dynamic we should avoid a simplistic determinism that sees the movements of African people as some inevitable response to the mechanisms of broader structures. The complexity of displacement is such that human agency plays an essential role and avoids the unhelpful conclusion of seeing Africans as victims. It is this interplay of structural forces and human agency that gives diasporas their shifting, convoluted and overlapping geometry. Having established that we examine the implications of a diasporic perspective for understanding the development potential of both Africans in diaspora and those who remain on the continent. We argue that both politically and economically the diaspora has an important part to play in contemporary social processes operating at an increasingly global scale. The key issues we address are embedded social networks in the diaspora, remittances and return, development organisations, religious networks, cultural dynamics, and political institutions. We conclude by suggesting where diasporic concerns will take us in the next few years.

... he quickly decided that his contributions to the nation’s development, ironically enough, might best be made from elsewhere (Wamba, 1999:8).

... what is new is that making use of kin overseas is becoming an essential strategy for survival and improving life for some populations (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000:134).

Introduction

The formation of the African Diaspora has been intimately linked to the evolution of a globalised and racialised capitalism. Slavery, colonial labour policies, post-colonial
Conflict and economic hardship have all propelled Africans into the diaspora that grows ever more diffuse. Indeed one estimate from 1990 was that there were 300 million 'Africans' worldwide compared with 540 million residents in Africa (van der Veer, 1995). This compares with 11 million Jews worldwide and only 3.5 million in Israel. However, while the linkages between capitalism, imperialism and displacement are dynamic we should avoid a simplistic determinism that sees the movements of African people as some inevitable response to the mechanisms of broader structures. The complexity of displacement is such that human agency plays an essential role and avoids the unhelpful conclusion of seeing Africans as victims (Papastergiadis, 2000). It is this interplay of structural forces and human agency that gives diasporas their shifting, convoluted and overlapping geometry.

In this article we seek to sketch the contours of an analysis of the African Diaspora and development. While there has been much work on migration and labour markets (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Durand, Parado, and Massey, 1996) there is very little on the complex linkages between diaspora and development. Much of the work on the diaspora has been of a cultural nature, examining such things as the 'survival' of African cultural practices in the New World or the representation of 'home' in the processes of diasporic identity formation. Such issues are undoubtedly important and we will be touching upon them in what follows. However, very few studies examine the role that diasporic networks play in the well being of both the Diaspora itself and Africans on the continent. Such a lacuna is worrying given, as the opening quotes suggest, that migration and displacement have become central elements in recent survival strategies.

We begin by examining the intellectual trajectories that have led to the eclipsing of diasporic concerns in both development studies and African studies. This relates to the ways in which 'Africa' is imagined and apprehended in western intellectual traditions, the us/them dichotomy that followed colonial withdrawal and the cultural bias of academic approaches to race and identity in western societies. The next section looks at concepts of diaspora and particularly the way in which they are defined and delimited. This is highly problematic given that some sense of common identity defines a diaspora yet much of what some groups deem to be diasporic actually lacks such commonality. Hence, we look at the elision between diasporas and networks in which the latter may lack a shared identity, but be useful for developmental purposes. The major section examines the implications of a diasporic perspective for understanding the development potential of both Africans in diaspora and those remaining on the continent. We argue that both politically and economically the diaspora has an important part to play in contemporary social processes operating at an increasingly global scale. The key issues we address are embedded social networks in the diaspora, remittances and return, development organisations, religious networks, cultural dynamics, and political institutions. We conclude by suggesting where diasporic concerns will take us in the next few years.

**Intellectual Schisms**

This section examines the reasons why the concerns of diasporic Africans have rarely figured highly in either development studies or African studies. As such it picks up on some of the issues raised elsewhere by the present authors (Zack-Williams, 1995; Mohan, 2002). The basic question we address is why has the diaspora not featured in discussions of Africa or of African development? This brief and schematic archaeology of knowledge traces the evolution of knowledge about Africa and development in which there are two, mutually reinforcing schisms. First, between African Studies and
studies of the African Diaspora and, second, between Development Studies and studies of the African Diaspora (see West and Martin, 1999 for an excellent analysis of some of these issues). From there we examine debates about globalisation and post-colonialism which are making more culturally-focused and less state-centred analyses possible and which are, in part, opening the intellectual space for critical studies of the diaspora. However, given that all knowledge generation is political we must also ask the question of why diaspora becoming a key issue now and what ideological agenda might this visibility serve?

Development Studies, African Studies & the Diaspora

... members of the white Africanist establishment have long sought to separate sub-Saharan Africa, the object of their study and research agenda, from the African Diaspora and issues of race (West and Martin, 1999:8).

During the slave trade Africans entered the diaspora forcibly (Segal, 1998) despite the presence of a few ‘free’ Africans in Europe (Fryer, 1984). As we discuss in more detail below we must remember that slavery also occurred in East Africa and was in a number of ways quite different from that which occurred out of West Africa and, as a result, affected subsequent developments (Segal, 1998). In the colonial period, colonial administration was about control and basic welfare (Phillips, 1976; Cooke, 2001). The ‘natives’ were seen as needing development and the spatial dynamics was such that a colonial diaspora was spread across the globe to administer the colonies in situ. It was then that African Studies emerged as a generalised area study in which academic pursuits aimed to study the diversity of cultures in order to govern them more effectively (Fyfe, 1999). The handmaidens in this endeavour were cultural anthropology, history and geography with their empirical focus of documenting and mapping people and resources (Godlewska and Smith, 1994). Similarly, colonial administration departments in the UK sought to train the generalist administrator for coping with conditions ‘on the ground’. The only serious challenge to this intellectual and political state of affairs came from Diasporic and ‘Pan-African’ activists like Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois. These intellectuals sought to bring together an anti-racist agenda with a programme for the salvation of Africa under the yolk of colonialism. While their impact was significant, they were perhaps more successful in championing anti-racism and black pride in North America than they were in significantly challenging the colonial project (Magubane, 1987).

Around the Second World War Africans began travelling voluntarily to the metropoles, primarily for education. These flows were added to at the end of the colonial era by the labour migrations from the Caribbean that added even greater complexity to what Gilroy (1993b) popularised as the ‘Black Atlantic’. This period coincided with the ‘invention’ of development studies as an extension of colonial administration (Escobar, 1995; Cooke, 2001). As the colonies ‘came home’, sociology (and later cultural studies) handled questions of the diaspora (Hall, 1990; Gilroy, 1987) while development studies handled issues of Africa and the developing world ‘over there’. This created an intellectual and spatial schism between studies of African development and the African Diaspora. Overlying this is the political economy of Development Studies and the cultural emphasis of studies of diaspora, which we return to below.

Similarly, African Studies has retained many of its generalist colonial (and neo-imperial) features and resolutely sees Africa as a self-contained continent. However, there has been a steady stream of attempts to rectify this; none of which we would
argue have been as useful as critical political economy perspectives. First, recent attempts to re-theorise and mainstream African history, namely various forms of Afrocentrism, are extremely problematic in terms of their validity and the political programmes attached to this form of ethno-nationalism (Howe, 1998; Gilroy, 1993a). They fall back on crude essentialisms that fail to capture the richness of African cultures as well as the multifarious experiences of the African Diaspora. Second, the post-structural critique of African Studies, inspired by Said’s Orientalist thesis, sees all forms of ‘Western’ knowledge as complicit in an imperialist mission and by revealing this fact they seek to ‘decolonise’ intellectual practice. While this is a complex and salutary debate it is problematic in that these scholars are good at ‘deconstructing’ the problem, but are less able to suggest ways in which concerned intellectuals can actually engage productively in attacking underdevelopment. A third response to some ‘messy’ political interventions has been the argument that Africans should be responsible for their own development. While this discourse is often undermined by the realities of aid conditionality and imperialism, it suggests that African Studies is less relevant to contemporary developmental problems. For example, Tony Blair’s recent West African foray stressed the need for African solutions in partnership with donors. However, beyond these bland pronouncements of partnership and scare-mongering about the threat of terrorism from third world countries (reminiscent of Robert Kaplan’s infamous diatribe on the coming anarchy) the British government failed to consult the leading West African Studies institution (Guardian, February 2002).

These three phenomena largely relate to the intellectual and political agendas operating in the USA and Europe, but what of African Studies in Africa? At one level the general economic malaise and the suspicion of many governments towards intellectuals has seen the undermining of support for study in general. Many scholars have either been victimised or are forced into taking relatively lucrative consultancy contracts, which compromises their ability to voice critical judgements about the state of Africa’s development. Increasingly the abstract post-structural debates that took place in Europe and America that challenge ‘truth’ are seen as indulgent and irrelevant for scholars facing the daily grind of survival. As such the input of African-based scholars into ‘global’ debates has been curtailed. However, with the economic and political crises of the past 20 years which saw large numbers of academics re-locating to departments outside their home country the lived experience of diaspora may begin to effect more critical transnational theorising.

Globalisation, Transnationalism & Post-colonialism

We believe that we can no longer afford to treat diaspora as either a primarily cultural phenomena or one that is not relevant to (a journal of) African development. We will look at both the intellectual conditions that make this possible and the realities occurring around the globe. Intellectually we have globalisation studies and post-colonialism. Both challenge state-centred views of the world and make us re-think boundaries, communities and flows (Paolini, 1997). On the one hand globalisation studies have encouraged a broader ‘world view’ which looks to interconnections with ‘others’, although these tend to be limited to those others who present either a threat to capitalist hegemony or constitute new sources for accumulation. Paradoxically, on the other hand, the expanded remit of globalisation studies has for some seen the erosion of the relevance and need for area studies given that everywhere is connected to everywhere else, which renders (studies of) regional specificity meaningless. Such a problem afflicts all area studies programmes although the thesis that capitalism is expansionary and uneven comes as no surprise to intellectuals who have been
working within a critical political economy framework for three decades or more (Amin, 1976; Wallerstein, 1979).

To date much post-colonial theory has focused on the cultural-textual and looked at the ways in which Western canons appropriate, (mis)represent or silence the third world subject (Goss, 1996). Post-colonial theory is not without its problems although we have not got space to elaborate on this (for useful critiques see Dirlik, 1994; Loomba, 1998; Ahmad, 1992). In general, there has been a tendency to underplay the role of capitalism in shaping global power relations, to imbue the Third World subject with too much agency, and to ignore the state either as an agent of imperialism or as a potential defender of rights. Increasingly post-colonial studies is addressing the combined questions of human agency and political economy with things like the Gramscian-inspired subaltern studies group in India (Guha, 1982; Dirlik (1997) and Ong’s (1993) work on transnational business networks, and Mbembe’s (1991) work on the state in Africa. These studies place greater emphasis upon the structural constraints facing third world people without reducing them to helpless victims.

On the other hand, events of the post-colonial period are making these theoretical interventions more relevant (Papastergiadis, 2000). Large-scale migration, often semi-legally or illegally, means that the ‘neo-diaspora’, as opposed to the slave and colonial diasporas, has increased dramatically. Such movement is largely a rational response to economic hardship and political turmoil or is forced in the case of refugees fleeing from persecution and conflict. Second, information and transport technologies make interactions much easier and cheaper which can enhance a diaspora’s sense of community. Diasporas, possibly more than any other grouping, are very much an ‘imagined community’ in Anderson’s (1991) terms, but unlike nation-states they lack territorial integrity and political sovereignty. Finally, with persistent (and growing) racial polarisation in USA and Western Europe, the symbolic significance of ‘Africa’ for the diaspora has increased as witnessed by the popularity of Farrakhan’s Nation of Islam and Afrocentric discourses. Indeed, this last point raises an interesting, and persistent, question of whether diasporic concern over Africa is largely a response to the needs of the diaspora, particularly the North American branch, as opposed to pressing needs of the continent itself? The answer is not easy and depends upon the group in focus with, for example, recent African immigrants having a different relationship to the diaspora and Africa than African-Americans whose ancestors left Africa two hundred years earlier.

Conceptualising the African Diaspora

This last point alerts us to the fact that we must be wary about generalising about the ‘diasporic condition’ yet at the same time we must be reasonably precise about how we use it otherwise it can mean all things to all people. In this section we look at debates about defining diasporas in general and those specific to the African Diaspora.

Defining the (African) Diaspora

At the level of general theories of the diaspora the most commonly cited work is that of Safran (1991), Clifford (1994) and Cohen (1997). The term itself is contested and dynamic and its usage varies between groups and over time depending upon the ideological needs of these groups. One of the key problems is that the ‘paradigmatic’ diasporic experience, namely that of the Jewish exile from Babylon, has come to dominate the discussion (Akyeampong, 2000). Additionally, for the sake of our
discussion, and with certain parallels, the African Diaspora has been seen largely in
terms of the horrific experiences of Atlantic slavery. These ‘victim’ diasporas (Cohen,
1997) were clearly terrible events and their effects are still felt today. However, not all
diasporic experiences are as traumatic so we need to be simultaneously more flexible
and precise in our theorisation.

The roots of the word diaspora lies in Ancient Greek where it is comprised of two
elements – speiro (to sow) and the preposition dia (over) (Cohen, 1997). For the Greeks,
diaspora signified productive colonisation, a positive movement for all concerned. In
the subsequent millennia diaspora gained more negative connotations following the
enslavement and exile of the Jews from Babylon. Diaspora became linked to
oppression, forced displacement and the ceaseless search for an authentic homeland.
From here a number of other ‘victim’ diasporas followed - the most notable being the
West Africans through slavery, Palestinians through Zionist expansionism and
Armenians through persecution by the Ottomans. All these experiences involve
forcible displacement by another group. From these beginnings the term has
broadened to include more voluntary and proactive movements of people and the
connections between them. This broadened agenda calls

for re-imagining the ‘areas’ of area studies and developing units of analysis that enable us to
understand the dynamics of transnational cultural and economic processes, as well as to
challenge the conceptual limits imposed by national and ethnic/racial boundaries (Lavie

This has seen cultural and racial difference as relational and, in some cases, positive as
opposed to the victim discourse, which sees such differences inevitably leading to
tension and conflict. Robin Cohen (1997) has developed a classification of diasporas
(see Figure 1) which moves beyond the rather narrow use of diaspora as being an
essentially victim experience. However, as with any classificatory typology, discrete
categories can never really capture the complex realities of lived experience.

Cohen’s classification avoids the limitations of narrower definitions of diaspora in
three basic ways. First, Cohen has added that not all diasporas are involuntary which
affects their composition, outlook and developmental potential. He observes that:

Being dragged off ... being expelled, or being coerced to leave by force of arms appear
qualitatively different phenomena from the general pressures of overpopulation, land
hunger, poverty or an unsympathetic political regime (Cohen, 1997:27).

So, people move and diasporas develop for more positive reasons than forced
expulsion. Having said that, we must analyse all experiences contextually and
empirically so that we do not abstract these concepts ‘away from the situated practices
of everyday life’ (Mitchell, 1997:535). For some, diaspora may be liberating while for
others their displacement is an ever-present trauma.

Second, Cohen includes characteristics that see both the imagining of home and its
physical well-being and rejuvenation as crucial to defining diasporas. This borrows
from William Safran’s (1991) six-point ‘ideal type’ of diaspora. Safran argues that a
diaspora exists once a peoples

have been dispersed from a specific original ‘centre’ to two or more ‘peripheral’, or foreign,
regions ... [and] ... they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the
place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return (Safran’s,
James Clifford (1994) argued that Safran builds his model too exclusively upon the Jewish experience, which not only mis-represents the Jewish Diaspora, but also cannot be readily applied to other diasporas. For example, the Jewish Diaspora is less homogenous than Safran believes with different sub-groups travelling to different destinations and through interacting with local factors they evolved different relationships with the ‘homeland’. As Cohen (1997) observes, it is only certain factions of this heterogeneous Jewish Diaspora that call for a restoration of an exclusive homeland, with many others reasonably content to put expulsion behind them and live in permanent ‘exile’ (Elazar, no date). Hence, those with strong affinities with a homeland are more likely to support, either financially or politically, development efforts that seek to re-create or strengthen it.

Third, in terms of the geographies of diaspora, Cohen adds a degree of complexity not found in Safran’s typology and helps us see how diffuse connections around the globe can be a developmental benefit for some diasporic communities. Safran stresses a binary pattern where all connections ultimately (aspire to) return ‘home’. For Clifford, and for our analysis of diasporic development, ‘lateral connections may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin/return’ (1994:306). This means that rather that viewing diasporas as comprising two points – home and exile – where exiles simply want to return home, we need to think about multiple sites of exile and, crucially, the connections between them. As diasporas evolve over time, the members (or their subsequent generations) may move again yet retain links to their home, their original site of exile and those places where other diasporic members have also relocated to. This greatly complicates the spatiality of diasporas and produces, instead, a geography of diaspora, which is built around multiple localities connected by ever-changing networked relationships (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000)

**Figure 1: Cohen’s Framework for Classifying Diaspora**

1) dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2) alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3) a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;
4) an idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety, prosperity, even to its creation;
5) the development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;
6) a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
7) a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least of the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;
8) a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and
9) the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.

**Source:** Cohen, 1997:26

**The Role of Identity**

One of the key questions in understanding diasporas is that of identity. As Byfield (2000:2) argues ‘the creation of diaspora is in large measure contingent on a diasporic identity that links the constituent parts of the diaspora to a homeland’. However, the debate about identity is fierce and ongoing with a broad split between those who see a relatively coherent and largely racialised identity and those ‘anti-essentialists’ who
see identities as so multiple, provisional and dynamic that it is impossible to talk about them as fixed or coherent. This latter group (Gilroy, 1993a; Hall, 1990) prefer, instead, the metaphor of hybridity to capture the ever-changing amalgams of cultural characteristics.

Early studies of diaspora were largely anthropological and focused on the 'survival' of cultural traits from Africa in the New World (Patterson and Kelley, 2000). To a large extent this issue of authenticity and displacement set the terms for much of what followed. Some argued that there was an annihilation of cultural characteristics during the middle passage and saw no need to refer back to Africa as a reference point. Others saw African culture surviving in tact and took this as evidence of a desire to return. Such absolutes are rarely, if ever, seen in the real world. As Patterson and Kelley (2000:19) observe 'we must always keep in mind that diasporic identities are socially and historically constituted, reconstituted, and reproduced' and that these processes are linked by a racialised and gendered hierarchy. The contexts in which this occurs is structured along cultural, legal, economic, social and imperial lines, but one thing, which is immutable, is that 'the arrangements that this hierarchy assumes may vary from place to place but it remains a gendered racial hierarchy' (Patterson and Kelley, 2000:20).

A similar point is made by Eceheruo (1999) in response to the work of Paul Gilroy. As we alluded to above, Gilroy is firmly in the anti-essentialist camp and rejects ethnicity and kinship as a basis of identity yet still refers to a 'black' Atlantic, which requires some common inheritance. As a result Gilroy evokes a 'travelling culture' in the African Diaspora, which is seen as liberating, but in doing so he is in danger of denying the trauma of slavery and other displacements. According to Eceheruo, Gilroy underplays the very essence of diaspora - the notion of exile. One thing we can learn from the Jewish Diaspora in order to problematise the question of identity is that no matter how complex and mixed a diaspora is 'you cannot not belong' (Eceheruo, 1999:9). Additionally, and playing into this, is the question of race. Whereas black people may have, as Gilroy expounds, some room to manoeuvre this space is not, in contrast to Gilroy's model, limitless.

... the predicament for those who have a problem choosing where to belong is that they cannot quite get themselves to realize that their options in the matter are very limited indeed. Put bluntly, they have none. Paul Gilroy does not have a choice of identities. It is a spurious sermon therefore to speak (as Gilroy does) in this context of the 'instability and mutability of identities which are always unfinished, always being remade' (Gilroy, 1993:xi; Eceheruo, 1999:9).

So, the dynamics of identity within diaspora are highly complex and, to an extent, contingent on other factors. This process of 'articulation'

*is thus the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time* (Grossberg, 1995:141 cited in Patterson and Kelley, 2000:19).

The key is to see that this articulation is constrained by racial, gender and economic forces so that individuals within diaspora are not infinitely free to determine their own identities.

This brings us onto one final element in diasporic consciousness; the question of return. Much has been made in the diaspora about the issue of return. The philanthropic movements, which saw the establishment of Sierra Leone and Liberia,
were aimed at returning Africans to their 'true' homes. Similarly, a pillar of Marcus Garvey's vision was a return to Africa movement for which he started the Black Star shipping line while scholars and artists such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Steve Wonder set up homes in Ghana. However, again we must avoid generalising about the place of return in shaping the diasporic consciousness. For example, Whoopi Goldberg stated

I've gotten a lot of trouble for saying I'm American instead of African American. But I've been to Africa ... and believe me, I'm American (cited in Wamba, 2000:xv).

Different individuals and groups have different relations to 'home' and return. Again, some see Africa in idealistic terms as a pristine haven or, according to the Afrocentrists, it was until white people came and despoiled it.

Others see home in pluralistic ways as a dynamic historical entity which continues to change so that it is meaningless to think of an authentic home to return to. What we have are multiple imaginings of home depending upon circumstances and level of consciousness. For example, in talking about the relationship between Caribbean identity and the African home, Stuart Hall comments '(T)he original "Africa" is no longer there. It too has been transformed. History is, in that sense, irreversible' (1990:233). Such an understanding leads Kwame Appiah to argue quite emphatically that 'whatever Africans share, we do not have a common traditional culture, common language, common religious or conceptual vocabulary' (Appiah, 1993:26). In both these comments we can see home and exile as two dynamic ends of a complex process of spiritual and physical linkage. The power of return and home is captured in Brah's (1996) idea of 'homing', which is a lingering desire that may or may not be realised in reality. As Echeruwo argues 'The power of the idea lies in the principle of it; that a return is possible forever, whenever, if ever' (1999:4). This 'prophetic expectation' of return marks the diasporic identity out as different from other groups' identities.

The Spatial & Temporal Dynamics of the African Diaspora

Given the foregoing discussion it becomes apparent that we need to have a flexible framework for analysing the African Diaspora, but not one so flexible that it loses any conceptual value. The insistence on the dynamism of identity formation in the context of overarching racial and gendered hierarchies forces us to rethink both the geography and history of the African Diaspora. In this sub-section we look at both the periodisation and spatialisation of the African Diaspora before arguing that diasporas overlap which has a number of practical implications for politics. We also discuss the ways in which diasporas shade into other transnational social formations, namely networks, whose organising principle may be more pragmatic and less identity-based.

In terms of periodising the African Diaspora we have two slightly different, but complementary analyses (Okpewho, 1999; Akyeampong, 2000). Okpewho (1999) sees three phases or 'paradigms' of experience which link America and Africa and are part of a wider capitalist imperative. The first era was the labour imperative involving the slave trade, the second era was the territorial imperative involving colonialism, while the third era was the extractive imperative involving minerals and other raw materials. Each of these eras created new forces, which propelled Africans, either forcibly or voluntarily, into diaspora. Akyeampong (2000) follows Harris (1982) in his temporal schema, which is less tied to logic of capitalism and more to a form of step-wise movement. He argues,
The primary stage is the original dispersion out of Africa (especially through the slave trade); the secondary stage occurs with migrations from the initial settlement abroad to a second area abroad; the tertiary stage is movement to a third area abroad; and the circulatory stage involves movements among the several areas abroad and may include Africa (Harris, 1982:8-9).

Like any historical schema these divisions are ideal-typical and can never capture all the variety of experiences. It also raises questions about the 'Arab slave trade' which was less a form of proto-capitalism and, therefore, not amenable to the same analysis. What both schemas show is that the forces generating the African Diaspora have varied over time which does affect the forms of consciousness that we find. So, we must always be aware that while diaspora has certain heuristic and political value it has always been employed (invoked) in such a way as to hide the differences and discontinuities (Patterson and Kelley, 2000:20). Some of these are resolutely spatial.

The spatialisation of the African Diaspora is perhaps even more debatable than its historiography and tells us a great deal about politics and ideology within the diaspora. As noted earlier much of the debate about the African Diaspora has been dominated by discussion of the West African, slavery-induced victim experience. Indeed, the forcible nature of this displacement does indeed make it more truly diasporic if we follow the Jewish model. However, if we include the idea of common identity as defining diaspora then the importance of expulsion is lessened. Spatially, we need to move away from simply privileging the 'Black Atlantic' experience and look at more complex geographies of the African Diaspora. Patterson and Kelley (2000) usefully conjecture about the 'Black Mediterranean' or the 'Black Indian Ocean' while West (2000) adds the 'black Pacific'. West goes on to argue that this singular focus on the Atlantic slave trade as the foundational moment in the African Diaspora is the result of a largely American led effort to make visible three centuries of exploitation. While clearly understandable, this historical project has tended to render invisible a wide range of alternative diasporic experiences. This can be seen if we look briefly at the East African slave trade.

Segal (1998) has argued that the Islamic slave trade of East Africa may well have involved equal numbers of people and lasted for a much longer time. An interesting question is why should scholars and activists be so much more aware of one slavery experience than another? The answer is not simple and lies in the nature of the slavery itself and the forms of political action it generated. The first thing is that slavery in Islam was less exploitative. This is not to say it was easy on the slaves or morally defensible, but it was less tied to a proto-capitalist logic. In the Atlantic trade slaves were treated as commodities, which denied their humanity. By contrast Islamic slavery was directed to services because in Islamic societies agriculture was not plantation-based and labour was not in short supply. Here African slaves became concubines, maids, porters, guards, builders or cooks. Crucially, slavery constituted a form of consumption rather than a factor of production with many more women becoming slaves compared with the Atlantic trade. Another factor in the different treatment of these two forms of slavery related to the nature of the state. In Islam the state and religion were coterminous whereas in Christian states there were strong moves towards secularism and the 'national' interest. For Islamic states divine power was more important than the national economic and political interest so that slaves were treated as people rather than chattels. Without romanticising the conditions of slaves, the economic system of Islam was not geared so much to private accumulation and capitalism so that its objectification of labour did not develop. A further important element was that the Koran denounces racism, which was the underpin-
ning logic of the Atlantic trade. Given that slavery went against the basic principles of Christianity it could only be legitimated through a racist logic, which deemed Africans to be sub-human and therefore only fit for menial labour and, to some extent, beyond the purview of Christian morality.

Spatially, socially and politically it is useful to think not of homogenous and discrete diasporas, but of overlapping and complementary ones. Like identity, people do not belong solely to one group, but occupy multiple subject or group positions. Diasporas form in relation to other diasporas so that:

*Africa was not the only diaspora to which African descendants belonged ... African descendants were contributors to and participants in the construction of other diasporas (Byfield, 2000:5).*

For example, Rastafarians took on the spiritual use of marijuana from Hindus in the Caribbean (West, 1996), Pan-Africanists learned from the Irish republican movement, Mahatma Gandhi developed many of his strategies following his experience of black oppression in South Africa (Patterson and Kelley, 2000) while the Dalits in India learned from the tactics of the Black Power Movement (Prashad, 2000). Indeed, much of Paul Gilroy's (1987) *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* focuses upon the 'cultural politics of race and nation' and the interaction between a deterritorialised, diasporic consciousness and the concrete local, urban, and territorialized experiences which generate a multitude of 'hybrid' cultural practices and political responses. He asserts:

*Black Britain defines itself crucially as part of a Diaspora. Its unique cultures draw inspiration from those developed by black populations elsewhere. In particular, the culture and politics of black America and the Caribbean have become raw materials for creative processes, which redefine what it means to be black, adapting it to distinctively British experiences and meanings. Black culture is actively made and re-made (Gilroy, 1987:154).*

**Diasporas & Networks**

These questions of identity and of diffuse and overlapping diasporas brings us onto the issue of diasporas and networks. Diaspora, as we have argued, implies some kind of shared consciousness and of deterritorialised ‘belonging’, which in turn generates and enables common political, cultural or economic endeavours. However, there is evidence that suggests that such cultural constructs do not always prevail. The ties that bind may be much weaker and more ephemeral than the notion of diaspora allows for. That is not to say that some form of identification operates, but it may not be as solid or long-term as that found in a well-established diaspora. In these cases we see networks of, for example, country folk, ethnic grouping or race which effect tangible economic and political gains, but which are not of a diaspora.

Consider the case of Congolese traders in Europe. MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga’s study suggests that the traders

*were not part of any structured trade Diaspora but operated as individuals ... personal networks ... are not structured and permanent but are activated when they are needed by individuals trading on their own behalf, and not as part of ethnic trading communities (2000:12).*

They felt the traders were too individualistic and opportunistic to be considered a true diaspora. However, their trade is organised through various co-operative cultural ties while their shared ‘pariah’ status forces new bonds to develop. This
cultural identity was formed around ‘la débrouillardise’ (meaning to fend for yourself in order to survive) and ‘la Sape’ (a stylistic movement which values European designer labels and conspicuous consumption, members of which are called sapeurs).

Similarly, other studies show that for ethnic business networks ‘embeddedness’ and ‘social capital’ are central to their success. For newly arrive immigrants, ‘participation in a pre-existing ethnic economy can have positive economic consequences, including a greater opportunity for self-employment’ (Portes and Jensen, 1987:768). Eventually, the ‘solitary ethnic community represents simultaneously, a market for culturally defined goods, a pool of reliable low-wage labor, and a potential source of start-up capital’ (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993:1329). However, while intra-ethnic business can be a source of advantage in the face of hostile political, economic and social forces in a host country it can also be a disadvantage, because ethnic loyalty may prevent actors from maximising their economic opportunities. In reality, economic actors, especially the more astute and powerful, ‘switch’ ethnic affiliation and diasporic identity on and off depending upon the relative advantages to be gained by either strategy.

Ong (1993) has demonstrated this in her study of Hong Kong Chinese business networks. As global capitalism has entered the era of ‘flexible accumulation’, multinational capital has decentralised and uses greater numbers of sub-contractors. This shift produces complex business networks, which exploit dynamic market opportunities and increasingly fluid ‘comparative advantages’ of multiple sites. As Dirlik (1997:309) argues ‘diasporic populations may also be strategically well-placed to deal with some of the demands of transnational production and other transactions that are transnational in scope’. So, previous Chinese diasporic networks are perfectly suited to exploit the new terrain of global capitalism. These networks may be based around certain cultural affinities, but these are by no means static and are differentially exploited depending on market and political opportunities. As Ong (1993:770) observes:

> Their flexible strategies have been devised not to collaborate in the biopolitical agenda of any nation-state, but to convert political constraints in one field into economic opportunities in another, to turn displacement into advantageous positioning in a range of local contexts, and to elude national corporate interests in order to reproduce the bio-power of the family anywhere that capitalist opportunities are present.

Crucially, the class dimension is important, because those best able to exploit these opportunities are from the upper classes, while working classes only feature as the ‘nimble fingers’ exploited in New York sweatshops or Economic Processing Zones in China and clearly benefit less profitably from the supposedly humanistic Confucian capitalism.

What is also interesting is that ethnic identity tends to be re-fashioned, if not fully created, in diaspora. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993:1328) discuss the fortunes of Italian immigrants to America

> whose original loyalties did not extend much beyond their local villages. These immigrants learned to think of themselves as Italian and to band together on that basis after the native population began to treat them in the same manner and to apply the same derogatory labels.

This is a case where social capital and group identity were formed in response to the hostile treatment by the host. Hence, the very existence and density of ethnic networks is affected by the hostility of the host society, which creates ‘uncertainty’. Portes (1997:7-8) argues that immigrant business networks:
tend to generate solidarity by virtue of generalized uncertainty. Exchange under conditions of uncertainty creates stronger bonds among participants than that which takes place with full information and impartially enforced rules.

These observations suggest that different diasporic configurations operate in different ways and with different implications for development. We propose a three-fold classification (from Mohan, 2002) for examining the positive linkages between diaspora and development. First, development in the diaspora where people within diasporic communities use their localised diasporic connections within the 'host' country to secure economic and social well being and, as a by-product, contribute to the development of their locality. Second, development through the diaspora whereby diasporic communities utilise their diffuse global connections beyond the locality to facilitate economic and social well-being. Third, development by the diaspora in which diasporic flows and connections back 'home' facilitate the development – and, sometimes, creation – of these 'homelands'. These categories, and the relationships between them, are fluid and blurred, reflecting the inherent tensions between deterritorialisation and fixity that characterise diasporas. For example, a Congolese trader in Paris, living with diasporic contacts, selling T-shirts sourced from a family member in Hong Kong, and sending part of the profits back to his/her extended family straddles all three categories.

**Issues in Diasporic Development**

We have argued that diasporas are fragile deterritorialised communities whose identities is shifting, multiple and overlapping. However, in contrast to those who see this cultural dynamism as limitless and empowering we feel that the realities of gendered and racial hierarchies means that there are enough similarities to allow co-identification, even where this is largely in response to hostile treatment by others on the basis of skin colour. We have also argued that this identity is not always strong so that networked relationships, which are more pragmatic and functional, may be invoked in order to deal with pressing material concerns. Finally, we have argued that the 'geography' of diasporas and networks enables us to analyse different configurations of actors with diverse agendas. In this section we examine these in more detail.

**Embeddedness, Networks & Institutions**

In terms of diasporic development in place the shared identity of displaced communities can be both a problem and a disguised blessing. Some communities experience hostility from their 'hosts', based on absolute beliefs in difference, which can be demoralising and dangerous. On the other hand, this hostility may force group members to draw on each other and take advantage of shared meanings, which then becomes a source of spiritual strength and competitive advantage. Fellow members of diasporic communities can be trusted more readily and may work more flexibly and cheaply for someone who is facing similar problems. In turn this can strengthen the sense of group identity as networks of ethnically-based businesses develop.

Spatially, such close connections between ethnic group members may generate and strengthen the tendency to cluster in 'enclaves', such as ghettos and China Towns, although there is no necessary link between an ethnic business network and its spatial concentration (Portes and Jensen, 1987). However, such processes of agglomeration are not solely the result of cultural affinity, but are usually influenced by other factors such as racist real estate markets, the cost of property, the wealth of the ethnic
community and the legal status of individuals. For small firms serving local markets, which constitute the majority of diaspora business, the importance of proximity for information exchange is vital to establishing reputation and respect. Word gets around about who can be relied upon, so it is in this context that one of Waldinger's (1995:565) respondents claims 'New York is a small town (where) good and bad news travel fast'.

In two studies of the African Diaspora (Arthur, 2000; MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000:58) new diasporic members, either in order to migrate or on arrival, make use of existing diasporic contacts. Again, this varies between the cases depending upon the legality or illegality of the migrant. In the American study (Arthur, 2000), new immigrants need to have letters of sponsorship, which may be an educational institution or a family member already in residence. On arrival they use contacts from within their diasporic communities to settle in. However, it is here that we need to be specific about how we define and delimit a community. Obviously, in cases where a migrant is joining a relation, it is they who help socialise the new arrival. In addition, there are formal organisations set up around particular ethnic, national or interest groupings. For example, in Atlanta there are Ashanti and Ewe mutual aid associations, both of which relate to ethnic groups in contemporary Ghana. However, there are also Ghanaian associations, alumni organisations of those educated in Ghana, as well as more general immigrant support organisations. These formal organisations have become a vital part of the network of associative relationships. Immigrants have always established such associations in host countries to forge closer ties among themselves, with the members of the host society, and with their places of birth. The African immigrant associations are the building blocks for the creation of African cultural communities in the United States (Arthur, 2000:71, emphasis added).

This forging of ties is both in place and across space and clearly links the developmental fortunes of Africans living at home and abroad. For the Congolese traders in Paris such organisations are impossible given their illegal status and they are forced to rely on more informal contacts. MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga also use the concept of 'social capital', which for them relates to individual and family connections, kinship relations, ethnic affiliation, religious grouping or political contacts. All these may be drawn upon to enable the trader to pursue his or her commercial activities. In both cases, the Africans tend to stay relatively separate from their white 'hosts'. In America, the African middle classes tend to 'form much closer relationships with black immigrants of the African Diaspora ... than they do with the native-born black American population' (Arthur, 2000:80).

Remittances & Return

Much of the work on migration and development has focused on the question of remittances (Durand, Parado, and Massey, 1996). While notoriously difficult to calculate there is an assumption that by fuelling consumption and benefiting relatively well off households, remittances are of limited developmental use in tackling poverty although the assumption is rarely backed up by sustained empirical analysis.

In order to understand the dynamics of remittances and return it is essential to understand both the motivations for migrating and the concrete developmental obligations that this entails. In many African economies the question of risk is an ever-
present consideration in any livelihood decisions. Where economic uncertainty and hyperinflation exist, migration can be a major adjustment mechanism. Indeed, migration has become a pre-eminent survival strategy for many African households (Akyeampong, 2000; MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000).

The classic study by Harris and Todaro (1970) argued that migrants act as individuals based on optimising criteria. However, evidence suggests that the decision to migrate is located at the household level whereby family members see migration as a form of portfolio diversification, which spreads risks between various income-generating activities. As a decision based within the family it places strong obligations on the migrants to succeed and to send money and capital goods back to those left behind. For example, MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) discuss lusolo, which is a Congolese belief that ‘success in commerce is a gift that is inherited in the family and that the wealth it brings belongs to the family and should be shared among them’ (2000:126). These ‘pressures for redistribution’ are strong and clearly link the diaspora to development. Similarly, Arthur reports of one migrant whose failure to send remittances resulted in virtual ostracisation with his father exclaiming, ‘When you die make sure you are buried in America’ (2000:134).

The problem of calculating the size of remittance flows, as AFFORD (2000) note, is that only about 50 per cent of them go through official channels. However, for example, it has been estimated that for Cape Verde, remittances accounted for around 17 per cent of GDP. Similarly, Akyeampong (2000) asserts that Ghanaians in the USA remitted between $250 and $350 million per year throughout the 1990s with remittances outstripping FDI for every year between 1983 and 1990. A proxy of the growing importance of remittances to African economies is given by the growth of money transfer agencies. As Chikezie-Fergusson observes

Little wonder that money transfer companies such as Western Union and Money Gram have raised their profile among African communities: they are competing for business with the hundreds of African-owned money transfer ventures that are the lifeline for increasingly impoverished families in Africa with relatives (2000:12-13).

Such transnational communities are characterised

by an increasing number of people who lead dual lives. Members are at least bilingual, move easily between different cultures, frequently maintain homes in two countries, and pursue economic, political, and cultural interests that require a simultaneous presence in both (Portes, 1997:16).

Among the Chinese diaspora such a duality earns these people the title ‘astronaut’ because they float in orbit between and above fixed locales (Ong, 1993).

More recent work on migration and development is beginning to explore the role of returnees (Ammassari and Black, 2001; The Courier ACP-EU, 2001) who bring with them financial, human and social capital and return to their home countries on a more-or-less permanent basis. While return does occur, it is often too risky so that living multiple lives and juggling locales is a form of risk spreading, both physically (in terms of personal safety) and financially (in terms of diversifying assets). For example, Portes (1997) discusses the efforts made by Mexicans in New York and the regular contacts they maintain with their home pueblo. Such contact has been made increasingly easy and relatively cheap due to advances in information and communication technologies. Full-scale return is the exception rather than the rule, which helps explain the limited success of schemes such as the International
Organisation of Migration's, which aims to encourage professionals in the diaspora to return. Given the relatively high wages the migrants receive abroad such schemes are prohibitively expensive if realistic incentives for return are to be offered. If we accept that circulation rather than return is more normal then we must focus on both the individual and collective mechanisms by which developmental linkages are achieved and the impacts of these activities on the homelands.

More commonplace, then, is a multi-locale strategy (Trager, 2001). The case of Beatrice in MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga's (2000) study demonstrates how she ultimately wants to establish production units in Congo, but has experienced embezzlement of her money and so is looking at more diverse opportunities across the globe until the situation is more predictable.

She bought equipment for a medical office with the profits of her trade. It went into operation, but was managed by a Congolese who embezzled the funds so that she had to close it down. She plans to sell the equipment to the General Hospital and has the necessary contacts there to do so ... She plans to develop trade with Nigeria because it is a huge country and she has family connections there. She already knows wholesalers eager to buy T-shirts she has seen in the United States. She also plans new lines of business in Switzerland, where she has other connections (2000:162/3).

The respondents in Arthur's (2000) study recognise the extreme difficulty and riskiness of doing business in Africa, but seem more optimistic than those in Paris. Arthur's survey showed that 80 per cent of his respondents intended to return to Africa once they were wealthy enough and the political and economic climate had stabilised. Hence, 'most African immigrants structure their economic decision-making by focussing on the long-term economic potential of their homelands. Participation in the economic development of their countries of origin are paramount' (Arthur, 2000:129). As one Ghanaian stated:

Why should I spend over $100,000 for a house in the United States paying an interest of about 8 percent for thirty years when with only $20,000 I could build a nice two-storey building or purchase one in (one) of the exclusive communities in the Accra-Tema area ... We have banks in Ghana now that will allow you to draw your money in dollars once you have a foreign account. Life doesn't get better than this (2000:128).

However, the attractiveness of such ventures clearly depends upon the political and economic stability of the African country in question and the well-being of the diasporic individual.

Development Organisations

However, not all support for 'home' is through individual or family transfers. Organisations are playing an increasingly important role in linking the diaspora to African development. As Cohen's (1997) typology outlined earlier states, a key element in diasporas is their support for a homeland. In a subsequent sub-section we examine the nationalist implications of this aspect of diaspora, whereas in this sub-section we look at the ways in which organisations support development. In studying refugee communities in Britain Al-Ali, Black and Koser (1999:7) argue

activities which sustain or support the society and culture of the home country within the exile community are considered by both communities to be equally important in shaping the future of the home country.
Hence, the well-being of diasporic Africans and Africa are not distinct activities, but mutually implicated. One of the key dimensions in determining the capacity to support home country activities is the degree of integration within the host society. If the migrant lacks the right to work and/or faces routine hostility from the host state or individuals, they are less likely to express opinions or be able to afford to send financial support home. The legal status of the migrant or refugee is also crucial, because if they are illegal or awaiting residency status, they are in a weak position to organise support for others. A further influence on the ability of individuals and groups to support activities back home is the existence, or their awareness of, organisations dedicated to such activities.

AFFORD (Ndofor-Tah, 2000) have identified a range of developmental organisation engaged in a variety of activities. They are hometown associations, ethnic associations, alumni associations, religious associations, professional associations, development NGOs, investment groups, political groups, national development groups, welfare/refugee groups, supplementary schools, and virtual organisations. The types of activities include community-to-community transfers, identity-building/awareness raising, lobbying in current home on issues relating to ancestral home, trade with and investment in ancestral home, transfers of intangible resources, support for development on a more ‘professional’ basis and payment of taxes in the ancestral home.

The assumption, quite rightly, is that Diasporic connections contribute to a more relevant and sustainable form of development, because people from those areas should know best what is needed (Honey and Okafor, 1998). Certainly, the potential exists for a ‘different’ approach to development aid. However, a number of key issues remain. First, do diaspora NGOs simply repeat the earlier mistakes of some development organisations by funding discrete welfare projects whose sustainability and accountability is not guaranteed? Additionally, are these flows strongly partisan and, therefore, divisive and exclusionary? Trager’s (2001) study showed that those who were active in the local community organisations, whether in situ or via support from afar, tended to be elites with men dominating the decision-making. Hence, it can be argued that such initiatives are participatory in that the initial impetus was not imposed by external development agencies, but such participation is not community-wide. Trager also shows that much of this philanthropic activity relates to improving ones status in the local community and proving what a big success you have become in the city. Again, such self-aggrandisement, sometimes linked to party politicking, could be argued to undermine the developmental benefits of such activity.

Related to these issues is the (potential) role of diaspora NGOs and other organisations in shaping political debate and influencing broader developmental processes in Africa. For example, could the diaspora use its relative political freedom to make claims on their ‘home’ governments, the actions of whom may have precipitated the need to emigrate in the first place? Evidence from work on refugees (Al-Ali, Black, and Koser, 1999) suggests that they can play an active role in lobbying and advocacy free from the restrictive human rights abuses of their home countries. In such direct and indirect ways the diaspora could contribute to international developmental efforts which impact positively on the national and local levels. We return to these issues in more detail below.
Religious Networks

A further element of this associational life is that of religious belonging and organisation. Crucially, religious life is not separated off from other parts of peoples’ lives (Fuglerud, 1999) and influences economic and political behaviour. However, we do not concur with Chabal and Daloz (1999) that this is re-traditionalisation involving a return to the ‘irrational’. Indeed, contemporary religious belief is anything but traditional in that it relates to societies’ relationship with globalisation and modernity. For example, Beatrice the Congolese trader in Paris we mentioned earlier utilises her religious contacts around the world to facilitate her business. That is, ‘To deal with the problems of doing business and finding her way in strange countries, cities, languages and cultures, she takes advantage of her membership in the Association for the Reunification of the Christian World’ (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000:101). So, not only is the line between the religious group and the individual blurred but so too is the line between religion and commerce.

Other studies have highlighted the linkages between economic hardship and political turmoil in Africa and the rise of fundamentalist churches (Haynes, 1995; Gifford, 1991; Marshall, 1991; Chabal and Daloz, 1999). What is interesting is that many of these churches are internationally networked and link the diaspora both spiritually and materially. The rise of Pentecostalism in Ghana is emblematic of this. As Akyeampong (2000: 208) writes:

*The Pentecostal experience has become crucial to the Ghanaian encounter with globalization and modernity ... the Pentecostal agenda is a modern one that celebrates the trans-national and the trans-cultural embodied in international mobility and the expression of emotion.*

Such networks permit the exchange of ideas, commodities and people. Whilst Pentecostalism continues as a major challenge to the orthodox churches in the diaspora, in Africa itself Pentecostalism has outpaced orthodoxy for the heart and minds of Christian believers. A church such as Canaanland in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria, claim some 50,000 worshippers each week, and has a forty year plan to for expansion, including setting up of universities (Covenant University) throughout the continent, whilst crisis-ridden African states can hardly produce a ten-year development plan. Both fundamentalist creeds (Christianity and Islam) continue to occupy the vacuum created by the informalisation and atomisation of the African state. In the diaspora, the significance of the church continues to grow. Indeed, as the case of Beatrice demonstrates, the first port of call for many new migrants is the local branch of the church. From there new social and economic connections can flourish. In addition to ideas and contacts, the churches may provide security in countries where racial prejudice can make the lives of Africans uncomfortable or even dangerous. The church in the diaspora continues to act both as a *rites de passage* in socialising the new migrant to his/ her new environment, as well as maintaining contact with home.

Hybridity & the Commodification of ‘African Culture’

The rise in African consciousness among some minorities in North America and Western Europe has been accompanied by an increase commodification of African cultural artifacts, in particular, the woven Kente cloth from Ghana. Kente with its bright colours are not simply symbols of Afrocentricity, but also it is used to adorn church altars and the waistline of priests. Other textiles appropriated by cultural nationalists include: *Adinkira* from Ghana, *country cloth ronko* and *garra* (tied dye) from Sierra Leone. These are used not just in making attires, but also used as bedspreads
and pillowcases, curtains and tablecloths. These materials have generated tremendous demand particularly in North America to the point that merchant capitalists who organise their evacuation from artisan producers are now beginning to subjugate a small number of artisans, by insisting that they produce to specific patterns, styles and quantities (Zack-Williams, 2002).

As we argued earlier the culturalist leanings of many studies of diaspora produced detailed studies of the survival of African 'traditions' within the diaspora and the degree to which they have been transformed, syncretised and hybridised. Paul Gilroy (1987, 1993a, 2000) has written extensively upon the cultural politics of the African Diaspora and, as we mentioned earlier, sees culture as fluid and always in the process of becoming. While he has been criticised for his overly optimistic view of the freedom of human agency and identity formation his work has engaged productively with questions of hybridity, which produces cultural forms, which are 'stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal' (1993b). For example, in discussing musical forms he argues

Bob Marley’s reggae was, like all reggae, a hybrid marked as much by its ties to American rhythm and blues as by its roots in Mento and calypso... the hip-hop scene formed as the jamaican sound system culture was adapted to the experiences of urban New York. This expressive sub-culture has in turn been imported into Britain as a style in its own right. Hip-hop revels in the reduction of music to its essential African components of rhythm and voice (Gilroy, 1987:172 & 211).

In later work he examined traces of certain musical traditions from Africa and their transformation in diaspora. He sees 'antiphony', that is call-and-response, as being a central element in which 'Lines between self and other are blurred and special forms of pleasure are created as a result' (1993a:138). Such traditions are more open to dramaturgy and innovation, which is evident in contemporary styles such as jazz and hip-hop. Hence,

If there us a lesson in the broad shape of this circulation of cultures, it is surely that we are already contaminated by each other, that there is no longer a fully autochthonous echt-African culture awaiting salvage by our artists (just as there is, of course, no American culture without African roots) (Appiah, 1991:354).

Appiah has also written on the commodification of African culture. In one article he explores the idea of 'neo-traditionalism' in African art. He argues that

Simply put, what is distinctive about this genre is that it is produced for the West... Most of this art -- traditional because it uses actual or supposed pre-colonial techniques, but neo--... because it has elements that are recognizably colonial or postcolonial in reference -- has been made for Western tourists and other collectors (1991:346).

Campbell (1997) analyses the reasons why such art is increasingly popular and sees it as a response to the failure of modernity. He labels the current fixation with ethnicity as a form of 'modern primitivism' which 'has acquired cult status in the rudderless West of the 1990s. Only the ethnic is held to be genuinely human nowadays. The argument is that if Western society is to recapture its lost humanity, it must immerse itself in the authentic values of primitive society and dispense with any expectations of modernization and progress' (1997:14). Such primitivism is not only to be found in art but other cultural 'sciences' packaged under various new age banners. These include shamanism, body piercing, and folk rituals. Campbell adds to this various developmental discourses harking back to 'traditions' such as grassroots sustainability and participatory appraisal. He states:
interpreting African dire necessity as a product of 'indigenous knowledge' rather than a product of grinding poverty, the concept of indigenism can then be served up to gullible Westerners as a 'sustainable' system that they should be proud to live by (1997:50/1).

Hence the consumption of African art and culture reflects deep-seated anxieties about the Western capitalist trajectory, but simultaneously commodifies this anxiety and, therefore, can do nothing to break the cycle. Hence, such consumption is unable to break from its own limitations.

Politics in the Diaspora & the Diaspora in Politics

The discussion of development organisations above made the obvious point that development is not, nor ever has been, a technical matter of getting things right, but is a highly political and politicised process. The implications of this for diasporic activities are made more complex by the deterritorialised nature of their organisation. Indeed, the process of displacement, movement and re-placement to a new locality generates its own peculiar forms of political consciousness (Papastergiadis, 2000). In this sub-section we discuss the politics of and in the diaspora. This involves, first, discussions of nationalism, the (re)creation of homelands and democratisation and, second, the ideology of Pan-Africanism.

The idea of homeland is loaded with gendered metaphors with motherlands suggesting nurturing and fatherlands evoking the patriarchal protector. On top of these metaphors are those which tie populations to their territories, as if by nature, so that biological metaphors such as Lebensraum (literally 'living space' in German) underpin racial and ethnic exclusivity. A product of and reaction to this purification of space and exclusivity is the longing amongst the displaced for a haven of their own. As Cohen (1997:106) notes 'Just as the evocation of “homeland” is used as a means of exclusion, so the excluded may see having a land of their own as a deliverance from their travails in foreign lands'. So, this political vision is inseparable from a cultural imagination of home and a desire to belong.

One important observation is that 'The marginal position of the migrant, and the special qualities of group formation among exiles, seem in general to play a significant role in the formulation of nationalist discourse' (van der Veer, 1995:5). Evidence from Irish American supporters of Irish republicanism (Cullen, 1998), Jewish supporters of Zionism (Elazar, no date), and diasporic Hindu fundamentalists (Khapre, 2000) suggests that those in exile often have a more idealised and purified notion of what their nation should be. In such cases nationalist organisations in the home country rely, to a large extent, on the financial support of the diaspora. The paradox of many of these extremist and violent nationalist organisations is that the diasporic members support their activities at arm's length, but do not have to live with the realities of paramilitaries and a police state. It is ironic that the US are freezing diasporic Somali bank accounts which they believe may support terrorists while ignoring, for example, the large amounts of funding that the IRA received from Irish Americans or which flows from sections of the powerful Jewish lobby to support undemocratic activities in Palestine. This points to the politics of defining and supporting 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' nationalist aspirations.

An interesting example of the coming together of diaspora, development and national aspirations is the University of Hargeisa in Somaliland (www.somalilandforum.com/UOH.htm). As AFFORD (2000) note:
Initiated in mid-1997, this effort united Somalis in Somaliland itself with Somalis in the Diaspora as far-flung as Australia, Sweden, Kuwait, the United States, and Britain. The project enjoyed support by the government of Somaliland, a territory still without international recognition. A steering committee in London that combined Somali expertise and leadership with British know-how and experience worked in close collaboration with an interim council in Somaliland. Local businesses in Somaliland took full responsibility for rehabilitating the government-donated dilapidated old-school building that was in fact home to over 500 returned Somali refugees. Somalis in Sweden provided 750 chairs and tables; Kuwait-based Somalis sent computers. In the project’s second year, the Somaliland Forum, a cyberspace-based global network of Somalis formed taskforces to tackle specific elements, raised money, maintained email groups and hosted real-time e-conferences (AFFORD, 2000:10).

For a ‘nation’ like Somaliland that lacks international recognition, the setting up of a national university is clearly of great practical and symbolic importance. Where political institutions lack international legitimacy a university stands for much more than a seat of learning. It embodies the nascent will of the nation and adds to the weight of claims for national recognition. More practically, a university provides training and education that will hopefully produce skilled people willing to work for the good of the nation. Ultimately it may provide employment opportunities for those educated Somalis who have migrated and were the force behind the university’s establishment. The Hargeisa example also demonstrates the power of common identity within a diaspora. Somaliland is very much an ‘imagined community’ and it is the diaspora that is leading the consolidation of this vision. Such collaboration and activism is made possible by the technologies of globalisation, which most commentators analyse with respect to large-scale financial interactions or interpersonal communications. The Hargeisa example shows how sophisticated networking between organisations across the globe can bring about tangible developmental benefits in a form of ‘globalisation from below’.

A related element of political activity in diaspora is around democratisation and human rights. As some states have entered progressive legitimacy crises they have tended to clamp down on political dissent, which can escalate into violence and murder. In turn this sets up waves of out-migration either as people flee the potential risk of persecution or leave as formal political refugees. While far from perfect, their diasporic location may permit them the political space to lobby against repressive regimes; a space which is flatly denied to them at home. For example, current media activity against the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe is being orchestrated from South London and has, allegedly, been supported by the US and British governments. Similarly, during the early years of Jerry Rawlings’ rule in Ghana a number of left activists were exiled to London from where they launched anti-PNDC campaigns. In neither case are we arguing for the inherent veracity and purity of these political campaigns, but to make the point that given domestic repression they are only possible from a diasporic location. Indeed, one could argue further that given the geographical and political closeness of the diaspora to the centres of global decision-making in London, Paris, New York and Washington it should be better placed to lobby for changes in development policy towards the continent. So, in addition to supporting African-based civil society movements and political parties, the diaspora could bring a more informed political voice to policy-makers in Europe and North America.

The idealisation and romanticisation of home in part underpins the series of Pan-Africanist discourses of the last century. However, a striking difference is that in Pan-
Africanist discourses the 'homeland' is not a discrete nation or nation-state, but an entire continent. In some cases this has been attacked as an essentialist understanding of Africa as home, because it implied that there was some unique essence that united all the people of this vast continent – whether there or in exile. Trying to capture these various understandings of Africa amongst the diaspora is a massive task (Fryer, 1984; Magubane, 1987; Gilroy, 1993a/b; Howe, 1998; Ackah, 1999) and well beyond the purview of this article. The key point we wish to make is that as an ideological discourse and political movement, Pan-Africanism was largely a product of diaspora.

As Magubane notes, Pan-Africanism was a challenge to white supremacy and linked struggles in the UK and America with de-colonisation movements in Africa. Magubane argues that the experience of racism in diaspora generated this form of consciousness because there was a lower sense of rootedness and less social support structures compared with Africa. That is, 'Pan-Africanism was one way in which these experiences (of racial exploitation) were translated into terms understandable to people who, because of their experience in diaspora, had been deprived of common traditions, value systems and institutional forms' (1987:128). The key players of early Pan-Africanist movements were elite educated and activist intellectuals as opposed to academics. Even these early movements were infused with problems of strategy, vision and constituency with, for example, Garvey appealing aggressively to working class blacks and Du Bois attempting more phased reform of key institutions.

It is difficult to assess the concrete effects of Pan-Africanist ideas and activities, but they clearly influenced the thinking of a generation of African leaders who were preparing their nations for independence around the time of the Second World War. As Magubane (1987:135) states, by the time Du Bois died ‘the movement for Pan-Africanism had returned to Africa and had become a profound ideology for continental unity’. When African countries gained independence they soon established the Organisation of African Unity, which, for better or worse, has worked towards continental integration and a shared response to Africa’s marginalisation (Ackah, 1999).

While the formal support for Pan-Africanism has waned, there is still a strong, if implicit, belief among many working for development in Africa that certain responses to underdevelopment must be dealt with on a continental, or at least regional, basis. Some of these remain true to the spirit of radical Pan-Africanism such as the numerous campaigns for reparations aimed at compensating Africa for the damage caused primarily by the slave trade, but more generally due to exploitation by the west. Other efforts are less confrontational and work through existing organisational structures. For example, the African Commission on Human Rights argues for the recognition of Africa’s unique history in any formulation of rights legislation. This involves acknowledgement of the damaging effects of colonialism and the ways in which African societies are divided along multiple ethnic lines. A final example is an initiative called the National Summit on Africa which is a US-based organisation which aims to educate Americans about Africa and to ‘further strengthen, energize and mobilize a broad and diverse support for Africa in the United States’ (one key part of this involves lobbying the US government for an enhanced aid budget, but the list of corporate sponsors and high profile supporters, such as Oprah Winfrey, points to an agenda of investment-led development and the privatisation of aid (Martin, 1998).
Conclusion

In this article we have seen that the activities of the African Diaspora contributes to development in both formal and informal ways. A diasporic analysis brings new actors to the fore and challenges our accepted notions about political territory and cultural belonging. As such, diasporas represent a form of ‘globalisation from below’ in which ‘small’ players, as opposed to mega-corporations, make use of the opportunities offered by globalisation. In many senses this is a form of resistance in that the subaltern groups creatively explore and exploit the interstices of a global economy. However, we should avoid over-celebrating and romanticising this condition as Johnson-Odim (2000:51) warns us:

People become a part of a diaspora either because they voluntarily migrate or because they are forcibly relocated. Voluntary migration, however, is not as ‘clean’ as it may first appear – that is, people may often leave ‘voluntarily’ because of violent forces.

Some, mainly those privileged by gender and class, can flourish in the diaspora and make use of the multiple connections in place and around the globe. However, not all migrants are so fortunate and not everybody, indeed only a small minority, have been able to leave Africa to secure a better standard of living. For the vast majority the migration of others is their best chance of securing a precarious livelihood.

All the signs are there that such a diffuse form of political economy will become increasingly important as neo-liberalism, with or without a human face, generates greater exclusion and higher barriers to entry. It is highly likely that with deepening globalisation there will be a series of contradictory forces at work. On one hand, the mobility of people and their ability to communicate and transact has increased so that the developmental potential of diaspora is likely to expand. On the other hand, social polarisation and economic and political exclusion means that there will be increased pressure on the third world’s poor to seek their well-being elsewhere. However, the movement of ‘illegitimate’ people is likely to be curtailed through restrictive immigration and citizenship procedures. Hence, the activities and lifestyles of diasporic communities may become an ever more important role model for the future.

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The African Diaspora, ‘Development’ & Modern African Political Theory

Hakim Adi

Those concerned with the study of African political economy and ‘development’ in Africa have often neglected those ideas that emerged from the African diaspora, while those who study the African diaspora have often been more concerned with issues of ‘identity’ than with the political future of Africa. This article argues that for those who are concerned to study anti-colonialism, it is difficult to separate the history of Africa and the African diaspora during the colonial period in the early 20th century. Many key anti-colonial ideas were developed as much in the diaspora and in the capital cities of Europe, as they were within the African continent. Ideologies such as Pan-Africanism, which developed within the diaspora in general, and Britain in particular, drew from the same 19th century sources that imposed eurocentric notions on the ideology of African nationalism. However, such ideologies, as developed by activists from the diaspora, created the basis for alternative strategies not only for the anti-colonial struggle but also for a modern African political theory, a necessary requirement for people-centred development in post-colonial African states.

The ‘African diaspora’ has received much scholarly attention in the last decade, especially in the United States, where there has been a renewed interest in diasporas and ‘transnational studies’ in general, a reflection, in part, of growing academic concerns regarding the adverse consequences of globalisation. Several important texts on the subject of the African diaspora have now appeared, there have been numerous conferences, as well as the development of some academic programmes. In Britain, on the other hand, although a few conferences have been held, apart from the well-known work of Gilroy (1993) and some more recent texts, (Ackah, 1999; Bush, 1999; Walvin, 2000) there appears to be little academic interest in the concept in general and the history and characteristics of the African diaspora in Britain in particular. There are no academic programmes focusing on the African diaspora and it appears to have been largely omitted from those academic centres specialising in African studies. Such an absence of academic interest is perhaps a little strange, bearing in mind the leading role that Britain played in creating the modern African diaspora and the role that the African diaspora has played in the making of modern Britain.

In Britain this problem of omission may also have been compounded, as Zack-Williams (1995) has argued, by differences in focus between disciplines, with the result that some of those studying the diaspora, very often but not solely cultural theorists, have little concern with issues relating to Africa, for example economic and political ‘development’ within the African continent. While those concerned with
‘development studies’ and African politics, pay little attention to the African diaspora. Whilst it seems likely that separate disciplines will each retain a focus that reflects their differing origins and concerns, it is of course always true that they might have something to learn from each other. Looking at the modern history of both Africa and the African diaspora, it is difficult to see how the two can be entirely separated, particularly during the colonial period. This article will be attempting to show why that is the case and arguing that in the realm of political ideas there are important links between the diaspora and the continent.

At the start of the 21st century the need for a body of African political ideas, or modern African political theory, should perhaps be higher on the agenda than ever for all those who have any concern with the Africa and its future. This is so because in the present circumstances it is perhaps not an over-simplification to say that many of the advances that Africa and Africans made in the 20th century are being reversed. Today Africa suffers from many of the same problems that confronted it at the end of the 19th century. The big powers are once again engaged in a scramble for spheres of influence, resources and markets. The continent is being divided or, to be more precise, re-divided under the banner of ‘humanitarianism’, the defence of ‘civilised’ values and concern for ‘failed’ and ‘weak’ states, the modern equivalents of the ‘civilising mission’ and ‘white man’s burden’, that were presented by the imperialists as justifications for colonial conquest over a century ago. But instead of colonial armies, proxy states are being financed and developed to police the continent and intervene in the affairs of nominally independent and sovereign countries on the basis of ‘African peer review’ of ‘parameters of good governance’. Waiting in the wings, the most predatory interests are preparing even more blatant intervention under the guise of the so-called ‘war against terrorism’ or the G8/IMF plan to annex bankrupt ‘country-corporations’. In addition, the continent faces the modern forms of enslavement – ‘aid’ and debt – as well as the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Once again Africa and Africans are under severe attack from outside as well as inside the continent. For many governments around the world racism is a preferred policy and Africa is presented as a continent where ‘development’ and change can only be brought about from outside. Africans, it is still asserted, cannot be makers of their own history.

The term ‘development’, when applied to Africa, is itself now seen as a problematic one. African development can be thought of in a purely economic sense, but as has been pointed out by many, and perhaps most notably by the historian and activist Walter Rodney (1972), that economic development cannot be understood separately from the total development of society and the factors which advance and retard such development. For the African continent the modern historical relationship with Europe established through the trans-Atlantic trade in slaves, the incorporation into a capitalist world economy, the development of imperialism and the ‘scramble’ and partition of Africa leading to the imposition of colonial rule were obviously all factors which handicapped and retarded the independent development of African societies and their human and material resources. But post-colonial, or rather neo-colonial, models of ‘development’, imposed by the IMF/World Bank and at the dictate of the big powers and their ideologues, have also retarded the development of African societies and peoples, exacerbated the difficulties left by the legacy of colonial rule, and added to the problems facing the continent and the world as whole (Barratt Brown, 1995). In addition, the legacy of colonial rule has bequeathed to Africa a whole body of eurocentric notions not just relating to ‘development’ but also to political institutions, the nation-state, ‘good governance’, the free market economy and so-called ‘representative democracy’.
The search is certainly on for so-called ‘African’ models of development. But if something called ‘development’ is to take place in Africa it must, of necessity, be people-centred, part of the total development of African societies in which the majority of people take centre stage, their rights are guaranteed and they are truly empowered to determine their own destinies. The twentieth century has shown that any other form of ‘development’ means a continuation of the exploitation of Africa and Africans, their impoverishment and marginalisation. But how is this ‘popular participation in development’ to take place? Can it only be the result of the experience gained through armed national liberation struggles such as those waged against Portuguese colonial rule in its former colonies in Africa or those waged in Eritrea and Ethiopia against an oppressive military regime? (Davidson, 1992). It may well be that it is from struggles of this kind that the need to establish participatory rather than representative democracy has emerged and demonstrated that alternatives to the eurocentric models of ‘democracy’ and ‘development’ do exist. At the same time it is clear that the search for such alternative models of development and for a modern African political theory had begun many years before.

In Basil Davidson’s well-known work (1992:290) examining the failure of the nation-state, he concludes that it has become ‘a shackle on progress’ in modern Africa. Davidson traces the source of the development of modern political ideas in Africa, and argues that it is to be found in the thinking and writing of 19th century educated Africans, and their successors. Many of these Africans, he argues, were in various ways alienated from their own societies and handicapped by their inability to see beyond the enslaving confines of the nation-state or to look into their own history to find solutions to society’s problems. Africa’s anti-colonial activists and politicians have also been much criticised for adopting these eurocentric economic and political models, for being blinded by having their eyes too firmly fixed on the prize of the ‘political kingdom, even though this fixation was shared by many others at the time. In fact alternatives to the nation-state and eurocentric models as well as African solutions and models were widely discussed even during the colonial period. In Britain, amongst sections of the African diaspora, such alternative ideas were discussed and developed, even though the origin of some of these ideas can also be traced back to those same educated Africans of the 19th century through whom, as Davidson notes, the ‘political ideas of 19th century Britain took root on African soil’ (1992:26).

Those from the diaspora had access to a wide range of ideas from which to fashion ideologies that they felt were best suited to Africa’s liberation. It is perhaps not a coincidence that many of the main activists and thinkers who discussed and fought for such alternatives for Africa and for Africans were representatives of the diaspora, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, George Padmore and Frantz Fanon. While many of the most significant figures in the continental struggle for Africans to determine their own destiny in the 20th century, such as Nkrumah and Cabral, spent many of their formative years temporarily within and as a part of the diaspora. The ideologies of anti-colonialism were often initially developed in London, Paris and within the political networks of the diaspora, as much as they were on the continent itself. In many ways then, the politics of the diaspora can be seen as an integral part of modern Africa politics, a contributory factor that is impossible to ignore.

This paper aims to outline how ideas from the same 19th century educated African sources took on a different character amongst the African diaspora in Britain and, in some ways, established the basis for an alternative path for the anti-colonial struggles and for people-centred development in post-colonial African states. This was so
despite attempts by the colonial authorities to limit anti-colonial activities by Africans abroad and to attempt to produce mainly ‘responsible’ post-colonial leaders from their ranks. Indeed the sojourn of young Africans from the continent in the heartlands of the imperial powers often served to radicalise them and their ideas.

The African Diaspora

According to George Shepperson (1993:41), the expression ‘African diaspora’ referring to all those of African descent outside the African continent, seems to have emerged during the period from the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, coinciding with the beginning of the end of formal colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa and much of the Caribbean and of the struggle against racism and for ‘civil rights’ in the United States. The concept of the African diaspora as a ‘mode of study’ is often dated from 1965, when the International Congress of Africanist Historians, meeting in Tanzania, included two addresses employing the phrase: Joseph E. Harris’s ‘Introduction to the African Diaspora’ and Shepperson’s ‘The African Abroad or the African Diaspora’.

But the concept of a diaspora clearly existed long before that time. In 1880 the famous 19th century writer and diplomat of Caribbean birth and African descent, Edward Wilmot Blyden, delivered an address entitled ‘Ethiopia Stretching out Her Hands unto God: or, Africa’s Service to the World’. His address provided what George Shepperson (1993:43) has called ‘a manifesto of the African diaspora’. For Shepperson, the origin of the concept of an African diaspora can be traced back to the 19th century and to the struggle to defend Africa and Africans from the emerging racist view that Africa had played no significant part in world history. This view was most infamously summed up in the words of the German philosopher G.W. Hegel who, in the early 1830s, not only asserted that Africa was ‘no historical part of the world’, but also that it had ‘no movement or development to exhibit’. Blyden and other 19th century representatives of Africa and the diaspora, such as Martin Delany, Alexander Crummell, James Africanus Horton and others took a contrary view, and were thus the champions of the idea of an African-centred development, of Africans as makers of their own history. But paradoxically, as Davidson points out (1992: 37), many of these eloquent defenders of African traditions like Horton actually saw very little in the Africa of their times to defend or on which to build for the future. They might be seen more as modernisers than as traditionalists and, even if they considered that it should be educated representatives of the African diaspora who would play the leading role in Africa’s future, they looked to European or American models and institutions as the means to establish the ‘regeneration’ of Africa.

Nevertheless, the 19th century champions of Africa and the diaspora and their struggle against the most blatant aspects of eurocentrism and racism cannot just be dismissed. They threw down the gauntlet and called on all those of African descent to concern themselves with Africa’s future. Blyden and Horton in particular were to continue to exert their influence throughout the diaspora even in the 20th century. Horton, for example, declared that his aims were to develop amongst West Africans a ‘true political science’ and to ‘prove the capacity of the African for possessing a real political government and national independence’. He strongly identified himself with the attempts being made by Africans to develop new polities in West Africa such as the Fanti and Accra Confederations. Both Horton and Blyden envisaged the possibility of the creation of a ‘West African’ state, a concept that later played an important part in the thinking of Kwame Nkrumah.
It maybe, as some historians have argued, that this concept of an African diaspora can be dated even further back in history, and aspects of it are certainly to be found in some of the writing of Equiano and Cugoano, the leaders of the London-based ‘Sons of Africa’, in the 18th century. Whatever the case, between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries the African diaspora has continued to develop its own political consciousness, ideas, and political organisations, influenced by but not always entirely along the lines mapped out by Blyden and other forerunners. The main cultural and political orientation taken was to fashion Pan-Africanism, as both a movement and an idea, corresponding to the needs and requirements of all those whose exile from the African continent was a consequence of the impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, modern colonialism and imperialism. Pan-Africanism, as a call for united struggle within Africa, has also developed as a reflection of the struggles for liberation of those Africans who remained on the continent, and in its varying forms has played a significant role in the 20th century attempts to find a path of liberation for Africa. This gift from the diaspora has found its latest form in the plans for the new African Union that is to be fully inaugurated in 2002. The African Union is designed to create economic and political union on the continent and to combat the consequences of globalisation, but it has already been seen by some African leaders as bringing a ‘United States of Africa’, the dream of some earlier Pan-Africanists, one step closer.

The African Diaspora in Britain

It is important to emphasise here that the African diaspora, if we define it simply as Africans abroad, is a far from homogenous entity. If we take Britain as an example, there are communities of ‘Africans abroad’ who can trace their direct line of descent back to ancestors who first arrived from Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas in the nineteenth century and perhaps even earlier; communities of those that arrived from various parts of Africa and other parts of the diaspora in the post-1945 period, as well as recent asylum seekers and economic migrants. There are large communities who originate from the Caribbean and central America; and from all the different regions of Africa, including former British colonies, as well as countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Angola and Morocco. One important role of this African diaspora in Britain is that it functions as a conduit between Africa and Europe. This is most clearly the case in the very basic economic sense that those abroad send remittances ‘home’ to Africa, but it also true in the sense that those from the continent who are abroad form a link between political life in Africa and that in Britain and Europe. Africans from the continent form organisations to lobby governments and agencies abroad, they organise oppositional groups of varying kinds and they can also join in the discussions, debates and activities of the wider Pan-African and anti-imperialist communities. Such activities are still very much part of the lives of ‘exiles’ today, but were perhaps even more important when communications were much slower and the enemy more apparent during the colonial era.

In many Americocentric discussions concerning the African diaspora, it is not uncommon to find that Europe, and therefore Britain, are omitted altogether. Yet it was Europe that was largely responsible for the creation of the diaspora and in Europe, especially in the first part of the 20th century, where many matters of key concern to the future of Africa were discussed. What is also very often overlooked is the role of those Africans from the continent, temporarily part of the diaspora in Europe, who have made their own contributions to Africa’s progress, who inspired others in the diaspora towards a new appreciation of their identity and place in the
world and, on occasions even asserted that the African continent must play the leading role in the future progress of the African diaspora itself. Many of these ‘Africans abroad’, such as Cabral, Senghor and Nkrumah, were those who were to become the new political leaders of post-colonial African states. It was also during their sojourn abroad as part of the diaspora, that those political ideas were formed and developed which were to guide the anti-colonial struggle as well as the direction of the new African states in the post-colonial period. Thus Africans from the continent were influenced by their experiences abroad, not least by their contact with those from the diaspora, at the same time they had the opportunity to bring those from the diaspora into closer contact with Africa.

The important influence Africans from the continent exerted on those from the diaspora can be perhaps be gauged from the testimony of the famous African-American Paul Robeson (1998:33), who wrote concerning the time he spent in Britain that:

London was the centre of the British empire and it was there that I ‘discovered’ Africa. That discovery, which has influenced my life ever since, made it clear that I would not live out my life as an adopted Englishman, and I came to consider that I was an African.

Robeson, one of the foremost cultural artists and political activists of the 20th century, spent many of his politically formative years in Britain during the late 1920s and 1930s. Much of his time was spent with the African population in Britain, with students and intellectuals such as Nkrumah, Azikiwe, Kenyatta and their organisations, such as the West African Students’ Union, as well as with African workers, especially seamen and their organisations, in some of Britain’s main ports. In his writing, Robeson explains not only how he adopted an ‘African’ identity and embraced the study of African languages and cultures, but how his pride in Africa led him to speak out in defence of Africa and its cultures, and the culture of his own African-American people, as well as against racism and eurocentrism. This approach led him to take an increasingly political stand too. As he says, it was through his interest in Africa and discussion with Africans that he first visited the Soviet Union, and he explains that as he grew more ‘African’, the more he felt ‘a sense of oneness’ with the working people of all lands. Robeson may be an exceptional individual, certainly his approach to the question of identity may provide much food for thought for cultural theorists, but what his experience also shows is the importance of the inter-relationship between Africa and the diaspora in Britain. Robeson, of course, continued to champion the cause of Africa and Africans, as well as the cause of all those struggling for a new world. In 1937 he helped found the organisation that became the US-based Council on African Affairs, one of the most effective organisations supporting the anti-colonial struggle in Africa, until the repressive actions of the US government led to its demise in the early 1950s. Robeson’s own persecution by the US government, and the revoking of his passport in 1950, were justified on the basis that he had been ‘extremely active politically on behalf of the independence for the colonial peoples of Africa’ (Von Eschen, 1997:1).

Robeson’s personal and political development and his subsequent political activities highlight the important role Britain played as a centre for political discussion, networking and organisation during the colonial period. It was often in Britain that many significant anti-colonial actions took place, where important anti-colonial networks linking individuals and organisations in Britain with those in Africa, America and elsewhere were established, where direct contact could be made with representatives of the imperial government and where, at times, young men and
sometimes women first underwent political training for future anti-colonial activities in Africa. It was clearly an important centre for the transfer and exchange of ideas from a variety of sources, again as the example of Robeson illustrates.

Sojourners from Africa had first arrived in Britain centuries before the trans-Atlantic trade in enslaved Africans, but significant numbers arrived during the late 17th and 18th centuries. By the 18th century Africans had established the first African political organisation in Britain – the Sons of Africa – led by the famous West African political activists and abolitionists Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoano. The Africans of the 18th century and their supporters played a vital role in combating racism, raising public awareness about Africa, Africans and the horrors of slavery and the slave trade at a key political moment and the abolitionist movement became one of the largest and most effective movements in Britain’s history and one of the first to involve the masses of ordinary people. Even in this period Africans in Britain developed their own perspectives on the problems confronting the African continent, and organised and acted on them, although often influenced by radical political ideas in Britain. Equiano, for example, was a member of the revolutionary London Corresponding Society and had connections with the revolutionary nationalist movement in Ireland. A recognition of the unity of all those striving for emancipation was one of the most important principles established at this time, as was the view that the struggle for the rights of all was indivisible. It was a sentiment that remained at the forefront of the politics of the African diaspora in Britain in the 20th century.

In the 20th century, during the era of colonial rule, the tasks facing Africans had changed dramatically from those facing their predecessors. Racism had assumed modern forms and a ubiquitous ‘colour bar’ operated throughout Britain. Africans were to be treated as second-class citizens as befitted their colonial status, while colonial rule itself was presented as a benevolent trusteeship, a ‘dual mandate’ preparing colonial subjects and their resources for self-government in the distant future. The African diaspora in Britain organised itself to combat colonial rule and its consequences. Africans established their own political organisations that lobbied for and subsequently demanded and organised for an end to colonial rule. By the 1940s African organisations were setting out more detailed plans for Africa’s future economic and political development and openly rejecting those paths that seemed only to offer further exploitation and dependence. In this endeavour, Africans in Britain worked together not only with other members of the diaspora in Britain, but also with individuals and organisations in Africa, in the US, in Europe, South America and the Caribbean, as well as with the anti-colonial movement in Britain that included individuals and organisations linked to many of the countries within the British empire. During the 1930s and 1940s in particular, an important exchange of ideas and experiences took place that established many of the conditions for the creation in Britain of a united movement against colonialism and imperialism.

This situation is perhaps best illustrated by the work of the West African Students’ Union (WASU), much more than just a student organisation, as its name suggests (Adi, 1998). This organisation, which was founded in London in 1925, organised and campaigned throughout the colonial period and beyond and was still in existence in the 1970s. The changing membership of WASU, drawn mainly from Britain’s four colonies of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Gambia and Sierra Leone, was forced to confront racism, the colour bar and eurocentrism and was initially established in part to ‘act as a bureau of information on African history, customs, law and institutions’, as well as ‘a centre for research on all subjects pertaining to Africa and its developments’. The WASU soon established its own journal, which amongst other things featured articles
on the traditional cultures of West Africa, including articles on traditional political
institutions. All this was of course part of West Africans' concern with nation-
building, but rather than focusing their concern on future nation-states, the members
of WASU in the 1930s looked forward to the time when the whole of West Africa
would constitute one united polity and they attempted to establish the conditions for
this West African 'nationhood' in Africa, and the means to assert 'West African
individuality' in Britain.

The concept of West African 'nationhood' may seem rather strange today. It certainly
was not a completely new idea and owed much to the writings and ideas of 19th
'nation-builders', such as Blyden and the Sierra Leonian, James Africanus Horton. It
was also very much connected with the political and economic strivings of the
embryonic bourgeoisie of anglophone West Africa. These merchants and profession-
als, the 'western educated elite,' who were inter-connected and often inter-married,
recognised the possibility of a polity based around a united West Africa rather
than the 'nation-states' of the future. For the purpose of agitating for such a polity 20th
century activists such as J.E.Casely Hayford established the short-lived National
Congress of British West Africa, an organisation closely connected with and initially
inspiring the activities of WASU in Britain. Casely Hayford and others sought ways to
modernise African society and drew on a variety of models, one of the most important
being that of modern Japan. Despite the many weakness of their political ideas they
too sought alternatives to eurocentism.

The strivings of these young West Africans did not remain just at the level of a concern
for traditional social and political institutions, with identity or the struggle against
racism and eurocentrism, although these were important in themselves. They were
chiefly concerned with the future of colonial rule itself, and with how this oppressive
system might be reformed and eventually ended. In the search for answers to these
questions they took part in creating anti-colonial networks that stretched around the
world. The organisation and its campaigns became a training ground for those who
later returned home to join the anti-colonial movement in West Africa, indeed WASU
established its own branches throughout West Africa which created the basis for the
anti-colonial 'youth movements' of the 1930s and the mass anti-colonial movements
of the post-1945 period.

WASU was in contact with all the principal activists and organisations in West Africa
and began to act as a conduit forwarding information to sympathetic organisation in
Britain and directing anti-colonial complaints and demands straight to the imperial
government, often with the assistance of sympathetic MPs. In the course of this
activity it established alliances and links with a range of organisations in Britain,
including the Liberal Party, the Fabian Colonial Bureau, the National Council for
Civil Liberties and the Communist Party. Through such means not only were West
African issues discussed in parliament, but more importantly amongst many
ordinary people in Britain too. Establishing a common platform with the anti-colonial
movement in Britain was one of the most important tasks taken up by the African
diaspora in Britain in this period. At the same time, organisations and individuals in
West Africa, as well as Africans in Britain, became exposed to whole range of political
ideologies and approaches that they might use in their thinking about the future of
Africa. Added to this were the connections established with individuals throughout
the African diaspora, students from the French colonies residing in Paris, representa-
tives of African-American organisations such as Robeson and Du Bois, links to anti-
colonial and anti-imperialist organisations in the Caribbean and South America, in
India and other parts of Asia. While as they were in the heart of the empire they were also in constant contact with other organisations from with the African diaspora in Britain, where a new marxist influenced Pan-Africanism was fast developing and a whole assortment of plans for the future liberation of Africa were being made.

The proposals made by representatives of WASU for future economic and political development in West Africa during the 1940s did not, on the whole, greatly trouble the colonial authorities. WASU was one of the first organisations to demand independence for some of the West African colonies in 1942, but many of its other proposals were not out of keeping with ideas already being developed in the British Colonial Office for post-war reforms. But even during this period West Africans and their supporters in Britain were demanding an end to mono-culture and debt repayments and presenting the view that African economies should be run in the interests of the producers and not those of foreign monopolies.

However, in the mid-1940s the notion of West African 'nationhood' re-emerged in the thinking of the West African National Secretariat (WANS), an organisation led by Kwame Nkrumah and the veteran Sierra Leonean labour leader Isaac Wallace-Johnson. This relatively short-lived but important organisation continued the tradition of some of its predecessors. It aimed to work both amongst organisations within West Africa, 'with a view to realising a West African Front for a United West Africa National Independence', and 'amongst the peoples and working class in particular in the imperialist counties', to educate them about West Africa's problems. The aims of the WANS make it clear that it saw itself very much in the vanguard of the struggle for 'absolute independence for all West Africa,' but also in the struggle to unite West Africa as 'one country.' What was new about the conception of the WANS was that West African nationhood was seen in terms of a West African 'Soviet Union' that would stretch as far as Kenya and the Sudan in the east and include not only the territories of British colonies but French and Belgian colonies as well (Adi, 1998:37). Thus the significant features of the WANS's West African nationalism was not just that it believed it should have a socialist character, a reflection of the prestige that the Soviet Union enjoyed at the time, but also that it believed in a united West Africa 'irrespective of artificial territorial divisions' as the basis for the wider unity and independence of the whole continent. The plans made by the WANS, including attempts to establish 'the nucleus of the Government of the State of West Africa', were never fully implemented. Although discussions were held with representatives of Africans in the French colonies, Nkrumah's sudden return to the Gold Coast in 1947 to seek the 'political kingdom' led to the rapid demise of the WANS and its plans for a West African Soviet Union.

As well as being an advocate of West African 'nationalism', Nkrumah had also played a key role in the Pan-African movement. Pan-Africanism both in its diasporic and continental manifestations has also provided an important alternative approach to that developed around eurocentric political and economic models and the nation-state. It is sometimes forgotten that Britain was very much a centre for the development of this movement and its ideology too and so it may be useful at this point to briefly review the contribution made during the colonial period by Pan-Africanism, to the question of the future development of Africa.
**Pan-Africanism**

In 1945 at the Pan-African Congress held in Manchester in Britain the delegates declared:

*We demand for Black Africa autonomy and independence, so far and no further than it is possible in this ‘One World’ for groups and peoples to rule themselves subject to inevitable world unity and federation ... We are unwilling to starve any longer while doing the world’s drudgery in order to support by our poverty and ignorance a false aristocracy and a discredited imperialism. We condemn the monopoly of capital and the rule of private wealth and industry private profit alone. We want economic democracy as the only real democracy* (Adi & Sherwood, 1995:55).

This manifesto contains words that still ring true for the vast majority of people in Africa. It also contains, albeit in embryonic form, a plan for a future Africa in which the peoples are empowered to determine their own economic, social and political futures. It is interesting that in drawing up this blueprint for a future Africa the delegates were also clear about how it might be achieved. They saw that only through the organisation of the masses of the people, by the workers and peasant farmers themselves playing a forefront role could African ‘development’ as well as independence actually be achieved. By 1945, organised Pan-Africanism in Britain had established that future African development required a complete break with colonial rule and many of the eurocentric models and institutions imposed by it, but how had this new vision for Africa’s future developed?

It is now over a century since the first conferences of a recognisably Pan-African character were held in Chicago and Atlanta in the United States and since the first international meeting to be formally titled a Pan-African conference was organised by the British-based African Association in London in 1900. Historians still debate the question as to exactly where and when the term Pan-African was first used, but there is general agreement that this term, and the political ideas and activities associated with it, originated outside the African continent amongst those diasporic populations residing mainly in the Americas and Europe. Thus Pan-Africanism, in its origin and early development, was very much a political and cultural creation of the African diaspora, a means whereby those Africans who were permanently or temporarily in exile could reaffirm their identities in societies where racism was endemic and could unite for common economic, social and political goals. But what exactly were these goals, how did they relate to the problems of African development and are they of any relevance today?

As many have observed, defining ‘Pan-Africanism’ is no easy task. The character of the organised Pan-African movement clearly changed considerably between the time of the first Pan-African Conference, held in London in 1900, and the seventh Pan-African Congress, held in Kampala in 1994. Africa rather than the diaspora has now asserted itself as the centre of Pan-Africanism. Africa has not just provided the venue for the two most recent Pan-African congresses but, it might be argued, it has taken up and developed the notion itself, most recently by establishing the conditions for the creation of the new African Union. So do older 20th century notions of Pan-Africanism have any relevance today or are they completely connected with now outdated concerns originating amongst diasporic populations? Can earlier perspectives developed by such populations provide any useful lessons today and help the political and economic advancement of Africa?
During the 20th century Britain was the main colonial power throughout Africa and the Caribbean. Many Africans as well as those of African descent had been forced to make their home in Britain and, by the beginning of the twentieth century, a significant African population, often with strong links and ties to the continent resided in Britain. In addition, temporary and permanent migrants from Britain’s colonies in the Caribbean and from elsewhere in the diaspora lived, studied and worked in Britain at the very heart of the empire. Students and intellectuals formed a small but important part of this population from which the first organised form of Pan-Africanism emerged – a gift from those from the diaspora that might set those on the continent on the road to liberation at the dawn of the 20th century.

The Pan-Africanists of 1900 took up the two key problems facing Africa and all those of African descent worldwide, namely colonialism and racism. But the solutions they found were designed mainly to ameliorate ‘the condition of the oppressed Negro in Africa, America, the British Empire, and other parts of the world’ (Esedebe, 1982:53), even though the final declaration in 1900, ‘To the Nations of the World’, spoke of the need to provide as soon as possible ‘the rights of responsible government’ for colonies in Africa (Abdul-Raheem, 1996:2). The first Pan-African conference mainly highlighted the need for all those of African descent to join together to campaign for their rights and stressed the necessity of enlightening public opinion, especially in Britain, about the plight of Africa and Africans. The series of Pan-African Congresses convened by W.E.B. Du Bois between 1919 and 1927 maintained the momentum of this movement but little more. The delegates from the African continent were hardly representative and the appeals of the congresses to the big powers to safeguard the rights of all those of African descent and especially the rights of those in the colonies went unheeded. As yet no clear strategy that might enable Africans to fight for their rights had been established.

Such a strategy was presented at the ‘Pan-African’ gathering held in Hamburg, Germany in 1930, the first International Conference of Negro Workers, convened under the auspices of the Profintern and the Provisional International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers. Perhaps not surprisingly this communist-led conference clearly identified the enemy – ‘capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression’ – but it was also the first Pan-African gathering to fully concern itself with the majority of the population both in Africa and the diaspora, and to view the workers and farmers as their own liberators alongside the working people of all countries. It was the first Pan-African event to raise the demand for ‘the immediate evacuation of the imperialists from all colonies’, and for ‘complete national independence and right of self-determination.’ It was also the first such gathering to include delegates from workers and farmers organisations in Africa, particularly West Africa.

The Hamburg conference was a Pan-African gathering of a very different type to those organised by Du Bois and was very firmly in opposition to the perspectives offered both by the existing Pan-African movement and by the Garveyism, the ideology that was influential throughout the diaspora and in some parts of Africa in the early 20th century. The Hamburg conference pointed to a new way to address Africa’s problems, based on the ideology of marxism, and opened a path of struggle that could not be fully adopted at the time, owing both to the undeveloped nature of the anti-colonial movement in most colonies as well as the oppressive measures taken by the colonial authorities. However, the ideas expressed at Hamburg were widely disseminated through the pages of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Worker’s publication Negro Worker, by a host of sympathetic organisations and, in Britain and
the African colonies, by influential individuals, such as Wallace-Johnson and Padmore. Padmore not only attended the Congress but who was also for a time the editor of *Negro Worker*.

Between 1930 and 1945, the ideology of Pan-Africanism was largely developed by activists residing in Britain, or linked to those in Britain by the important networks that were developed throughout the Pan-African world. These drew together individuals like George Padmore and Isaac Wallace-Johnson, who had both participated at the Hamburg conference, as well as Jomo Kenyatta and others. The networks linked together anti-colonial and anti-imperialist organisations in Britain and the British empire with those in the US and elsewhere. An increasingly marxist-influenced Pan-Africanism developed – informed and influenced by individuals such as Padmore, by what were generally agreed to be major advances in economic, political and social development in the Soviet Union. It was also brought about by such events as the fascist invasion of Ethiopia, an event which had a major impact throughout Africa and the diaspora, the agricultural boycotts in West Africa, and the labour rebellions in parts of the Caribbean. Pan-Africanism developed into a movement and ideology concerned with the masses of people in the colonies and with a particular emphasis on the future liberation of Africa from colonial rule. It was this form of Pan-Africanism that came to the fore in the events of 1945.

The 1945 Pan-African Congress, held in Manchester and viewed by many as a key moment in the anti-colonial struggle, was largely organised by Padmore and the Pan-African Federation in Britain to take advantage of the presence of representatives of African and Caribbean workers organisations, who would be present at the two founding conferences of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in London and Paris. At those conferences the representatives of ‘Pan-African labour’ from the colonial countries were able to participate in a major international forum for the first time. They joined together to demand an end to colonial rule but also to provide their own vision of Africa’s future. This was most cogently presented in the Manifesto on Africa in the Post-War World signed by all the African labour leaders attending the WFTU conference and by representatives of African and Pan-African organisations in Britain. Amongst other things it demanded that:

> the present system of exploitation by which the bulk of the wealth of Africa goes to enrich foreign monopoly firms and individuals must be replaced by systematic planning and development whereby in the first place the Africans themselves shall be the principal beneficiaries of the wealth produced (Adi & Sherwood, 1998:17).

But the views expressed by the African delegates at the WFTU conference show that they also saw that Africa’s future could only be guaranteed in a world in which the rights of all nations big and small and the rights of the vast majority of the world’s population were affirmed and recognised. It was through the united actions of the working people of all countries that they thought such a world might be brought into being.

Many of those present for the WFTU conferences in London and Paris then went on to play a leading role in the Pan-African Congress in Manchester, the first such congress in which the majority of delegates represented workers and farmers organisations from Africa and the Caribbean. The resolutions agreed at the close of the Manchester Pan-African Congress suggest that the delegates were fully aware of some of the problems for solution in an Africa that was at that time still firmly under colonial rule. The resolutions for West Africa for example included the view that:
the democratic nature of the indigenous institutions of the peoples of West Africa has been
crippled by obnoxious and oppressive laws and regulations, and replaced by autocratic
systems of government which are inimical to the wishes of the peoples of West Africa.

and,

that the artificial divisions and territorial boundaries created by the imperialist powers are
deliberate steps to obstruct the political unity of entire West African peoples.

While on economic matters the delegates declared:

that when a country is compelled to rely on one crop (e.g. cocoa) for a single monopolistic
market, and is obliged to cultivate only for export while at the same time its farmers and
workers find themselves in the grip of finance capital, then it is evident that the government
of that country is incompetent to assume economic responsibility for it (Adi & Sherwood,

Thus even in 1945, the delegates who at the Pan-African Congress in Manchester
centered themselves with the future of Africa were fully aware of some of the key
problems that needed to be solved in order to bring about liberation from all forms of
foreign rule, and the most farsighted of them were already looking to the means to
bring colonial rule to an end and in order to begin to address such problems. It is
interesting to note that it was shortly after this historic congress that Nkrumah and
others formed the WANS, apparently wishing to further apply some of the
perspectives developed in Britain and discussed at the Congress to the situation in
West Africa. Nkrumah’s return to the Gold Coast in 1947 was one of the key reasons
why WANS failed to take up this task. It might be argued that Nkrumah and
the Convention Peoples’ Party did subsequently apply some of the lessons of the
Manchester Congress to the anti-colonial struggle in the Gold Coast and then to the
struggle for the total liberation of the African continent. Pan-Africanism was declared
to have ‘returned home’ to the African continent with the convening of the first All
African Peoples’ Conference in the newly independent Ghana in 1958 and the
subsequent struggles to establish some form of continental union. These struggles led
to the formation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963, have since continued,
and led to the recent founding of the African Union.

A form of Pan-Africanism has continued to exist within Africa and manifested itself in
various regional as well as continental bodies. The founding of the African Union was
an important step forward for the continent in its attempts to combat the
consequences of globalisation and Africa’s marginalisation in world affairs. However
there are already signs that the attempts of African countries to find solutions to their
common economic problems will once again be sabotaged by the big powers. The
Pan-African Congress movement has also continued with a sixth congress held in
Tanzania in 1974 and a seventh in Uganda in 1994. In Britain too the Pan-African
movement continued to develop after 1945, perhaps most significantly with the
formation of the Committee of African Organisations in 1958. But although the
diasporic Pan-African movement has attempted to elaborate many of the ideas that
existed in embryonic form in 1945, it cannot be said that has had a major impact on
events within the African continent.

One of the major impediments to such an elaboration has been the impact of the cold
war. Even before 1945 any radical critique of colonial rule or anti-colonial activity
could be labelled as subversive or communist inspired. There is no doubt that the idea
of a West African Soviet Union or the condemnation of imperialism and concern with
people-centred economic and political systems was often inspired by developments in the Soviet Union and later by those in the People's Republic of China and elsewhere. From the late 1940s any attempt to introduce such perspectives into the anti-colonial struggle or economic and political development in post-colonial states might be labelled 'communist' or inspired by Moscow or Beijing. The cold war was itself fought out in Africa and has made it more difficult for modern African political theory to develop. Indeed the elements of such a theory have mainly emerged from those struggles against Portuguese colonial rule in Africa, which was backed by the big capitalist powers or in the struggles against the neo-colonial governments of Ethiopia, at times backed by the Soviet Union, where it has become a necessity to develop a new theory and practice which could ensure that the masses of the people, especially peasant farmers, were mobilised and empowered in order to wage the national liberation struggle.

The anti-colonial militants in the Portuguese colonies in Africa and the Eritrean and Ethiopian militants in the war against the Derg have clearly been the most successful in developing this theory and practice of empowerment, the basis for a new African political theory. Peoples’ empowerment created the conditions not just for incredible military victories against overwhelming odds, but also for a new type of state in Africa and new models of development. In Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, post-colonial development was hampered by the consequences of the cold war and external interference, orchestrated by the big powers (Davidson, 1992: 304-5). In Eritrea too, post-independence political development has been slow. In Ethiopia, on the other hand, the principles of democratic participation and empowerment first practiced in those areas liberated by the Tigray Peoples’ Liberation Front seem to have begun to be further developed by the governments led by the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front since the fall of the Derg in 1991 (Hammond, 1999:435-6). The peoples of Ethiopia have since made some important steps forward in terms of empowerment and mass participation. By means of locally elected peoples’ councils, sometimes based on traditional forums, they have had a direct say in the country’s constitution in determining such questions as the nature of land ownership and in affirming the rights of women and the rights of nations to self-determination. Ethiopia too, still has many problems to overcome but the new forms of democracy it has developed have established a sound basis for social, economic and political development in the future.

But it should not be forgotten that the African diaspora in Britain, originally drawn from a wide range of countries in Africa and the Caribbean, played an important role in developing a body of ideas that needed to be further developed, applied and drawn from in the struggles to bring an end to colonial rule and to establish new post-colonial African societies. Through the links it had established with workers and farmers organisations in Africa there was the possibility for wide-scale discussion and further elaboration of this body of ideas. At the same time it must be remembered that the main concern of the anti-colonial movement at that time was to bring an end to formal colonial rule and the key ideas about how this might be achieved were far from fully formed within the African diaspora nor in the anti-colonial movements in Africa. There was, however, a recognition that those in Africa and the diaspora needed to forge a wider unity, than that which might exist in individual colonies or future independent states, in order to achieve what at the time they referred to as ‘national and social emancipation’. There was some understanding of the importance of the future role of the masses of the people both in determining the outcome of the anti-colonial struggle and as being central to the development of future post-colonial
societies. There was also some awareness of the significance of traditional political institutions, the harmful consequences of arbitrarily drawn and externally imposed borders and the need to reject the economic and political systems that had been imposed under colonial rule. There was also a recognition of the need to develop international networks of support and common struggle outside of Africa and the diaspora, a realisation that the struggles for a liberated Africa, were part of wider international struggles for a new world. Like the militants in more recent struggles in Africa, activists in Britain attempted to apply marxism and a summation of the lessons learned in the struggle to build socialist societies outside Africa, to their own experience and ideas. The ideas first developed by those in Africa and the diaspora in the 19th century provided both the basis for the continuation of Africa’s continual enslavement and for its eventual liberation and future development. The path of nationalism did lead some to the fetters of the nation state and eurocentrism, while an affirmation of Africa’s right to its own development led some to maintain a belief in the importance of African institutions and solutions and wider Pan-African perspectives. The African diaspora based in Britain during the colonial period developed a body of ideas that, although never fully elaborated suggested the basis for the future development of the anti-colonial struggle and for post-colonial states in which the concerns of the majority had priority. It maybe the case that it is by further developing such ideas from the past, as well as from more recent experience on the African continent, that a modern African political theory will emerge.

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Bibliography


From Africa to Cuba: an Historical Analysis of the *Sociedad Secreta Abakuá* (Ñañiguismo)

Shubi L Ishemo

The historical relations between Africa and Cuba run deep. Cuba significantly contributed to the African national liberation struggle and Africa contributed towards the development of Cuban identity and culture. This article is concerned with the latter aspect. African elements in the development of Cuban culture have historically been manifested in the development of Cuban religions, in particular the Congolese and Bantu derived *Regla Conga* (*Palo Monté*), the Yoruba derived *Regla Ocha* (*Santeria*), the Benin derived *Regla Arara* and *Vodoo*, and the *Sociedad Secreta Abakuá* whose origins are Old Calabar and southwestern Cameroon. These religions were syncretised with Christian symbols to produce Cuban national identity. I will dwell on the *Sociedad Secreta Abakuá* which has historically consisted of male only mutual associations. The society is the only one of its kind in the Americas and is located in the cities of Havana, Matanzas, and Cárdenas.

I will examine the historiography on the origins of the society and offer a political economy approach which dwells on the development of the social formation of the societies of Old Calabar and the emergence of the male only *Ekpe* and *Ngbe* or Leopard Societies whose functions were those of a state apparatus which provided religious and ideological legitimacy for an emerging merchant class in the eighteenth and the second half of the nineteenth centuries. Membership of the *Ekpe* and *Ngbe* was not only restricted to the dominant lineages but also included freemen and slaves. Most of the historiography consider the two secret societies as the origin of the *Sociedad Secreta Abakua*. It will be suggested that its origins may also lie in the *Nka Iyip* (Association of Blood Men) whose membership was mainly slaves in Old Calabar. The origins of the Blood Men may have been much earlier, possibly in the eighteenth century. The Abakuá Secret Society may also have emerged much earlier than 1836 and possibly in the late eighteenth century.

The next level will dwell on its development as a contested Cuban institution based in the port cities of Havana, Matanzas and Cárdenas. Based in poor neighbourhoods, its members became a source of labour on the wharves, in warehouses for over 100 years. Its membership underwent transformation from black only to mixed white and black and later Chinese ex-indentured labour. It became *transculturised*, drawing its religious pantheons and rituals...
from Old Calabar, Yoruba and Bantu elements, as well as Roman Catholic symbols. In the colonial and neo-colonial periods the Abakuá were demonised and persecuted. Through the contract system of labour, its members were manipulated and exploited by unscrupulous intermediaries. Some of these intermediaries held leadership positions or plazas in its ranks. But its secret character was politically positive as its fearless, valiant male members actively participated in the struggles against slavery, against Spanish colonialism, labour unions, and the defeat of United States aggression against the young Cuban revolution in 1961.

Introduction

The Abakuá or nanigos hold that ‘to be a man you do not have to be an abakuá, but to be an abakuá you must be a man’ or ‘yesterday someone was a man and today he is a man because he has sworn to be an abakuá’. He must swear, under oath, to be a man, a good father, a good son, a good brother and a good friend. In other words, he must respect his family, wife, children, parents and women friends. As a nanigo elder put it, ‘in my house, my wife, my children are sacred’ (Fernández Robaina, 1994:23). Although it is a strictly male only secret society, women are not marginalised. Mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, wives, women friends and female relatives of fellow ‘brothers in religion’ are held in reverence. For the nanigos, solidarity between ‘brothers in religion’ (moninos or ekobios) is unconditional. Honour is a non-negotiable condition of manhood. Mutual assistance between nanigos is an important social function.

To be admitted to a nanigo group (called potencia, tierra, juegd), there must be a unanimous approval and the aspirant’s character, history is scrutinised. Initiation involves elaborate ceremony in which an Indisime (aspirant) undergoes symbolic ‘death’ and is reborn as an obonékue (initiated). The initiation or aprofd bakesongo is a tough test and involves taking an oath by which the initiate promises, under pain of serious retribution if he reveals to anyone, the secret of secrets, including the sale of sacred objects. He must respect parents. He must not use the name of the potencia without authorisation. He must assist ‘brothers in religion’ whether ill or dead. He must not kill, rob within a potencia. He must not dishonour mothers, daughters, and sisters of fellow ‘brothers in religion’. He must not push, beat, or step on the feet of an ireme (representation of the spirits and natural forces). He must help a brother under attack. He must not be effeminate or homosexual. He must be valiant and never show cowardice (Fernando Ortiz, 1981:515-519; Enrique Sosa, 1982:175; James Figarola, 1988:59-62).

The potencias have a hierarchical structure in which there are seven high positions. The first four highest plazas (obones or indiobones) are the Mocongo, Iyamba, Isue, and Isunekwe. The last three consist of the Mpegó, Nkrikamo, and Ekwenion. Six more plazas make the total thirteen. But there are also twelve more complementary plazas (Sosa, 1982:167-173). Each of these has specific ritual, ceremonial, and spiritual functions. There are sacred drums of which the sacred of sacred and most secret is the Eküe which resides in the innermost and sacred chamber, the famba, of the temple. When activated, it gives the roar of the leopard. This is significant as the leopard has been held in reverence in many African societies, including those of Old Calabar.
Characteristics of Secret Societies
The *Ekpe, Ngbe, Nka Iyip*, and the Abakuá secret societies show characteristics that are common to social movements at particular epochs in history. It is necessary to identify those characteristics as a way of providing some comparative approach that will assist us in our analysis. The pioneering work of the French historian, Jean Chesneaux (1971) on Chinese secret societies and that of the British historian, Eric Hobsbawm (1978) on what he terms ‘primitive rebels’ provide a very useful starting point. Chesneaux notes that secret societies in China emerged as a result of socio-economic crises which adversely impacted on the poor both in the pre-capitalist period and during the period characterised by the emergence of capitalism (industrialisation and urbanisation). Transition from one form of socio-economic organisation does not disintegrate the secret societies. Rather, they readapt with a ‘regained new vigour’. In both cases, secret societies provided the poor and marginal sectors of society a framework for social struggles. He suggests that they provided the peasants with ‘ritual and magic formulae [for] ideological mobilisation’ (Chesneaux, 1971:4, 8-11). They were mutual associations and were obliged to assist members in the event of illness, accident, unemployment, etc. (Ibid, p. 59). Hobsbawm (1978:152) emphasises the significance of binding forms of initiation which

*may by the terms of its ritual, serve to bind the member closely to the organisation, e.g. by causing him or her to break normal taboos [...] Again, more commonly, it may establish a particularly solemn and magic atmosphere designed to impress the candidate with the seriousness of the step he is about to take [...] by impressing on him the sanctions to which a breach of loyalty will expose him.*

The candidate underwent close examination as to details of his life, including family background. The taking of an oath involving drinking blood taken from fingers of members underlined the seriousness of divulging secrets; divulging the secrets was punished by death (Chesneaux, 1971:13-14, 16-17). Codes of conduct among the initiates in the Chinese secret societies were very detailed and corresponded to those of the Abakuá secret societies (Ibid, pp. 23-27). All had religious characteristics involving the worship of ancestors. They all had periodic ceremonies to reaffirm unity and practical rituals involving modes of communication between members by the use of ‘recognition signs’, ‘passwords’ and ‘secret language’ (Hobsbawm, 1978:152; Chesneaux, 1971:27). That is what Hobsbawm (1978:165) calls ‘classical secret brotherhoods’ and ‘hierarchical elite groups’ in which a candidate

*advanced through a succession of degrees, each bringing higher responsibility and a more esoteric knowledge until, with luck, he joined (or rather, was co-opted into) the innermost of whatever inner circles.*

These ‘inner circles’ correspond to the grades and lodges of the Chinese secret societies and the *plazas* of the abakuá that we have detailed above. Indeed there was correspondence between the Abakuá secret societies and those that Chinese indentured labour founded in Cuba during the second half of the nineteenth century and that may go to explain continuities in the Chinese initiation into *naniguismo*. Chesneaux cites the work of Chinese marxist historian Wang Tian-chiang and Mao Zedong who identify weaknesses and strengths of secret societies. ‘Such associations’, writes Wang, ‘are easily manoeuvred by exploiters and men of ambitions’. This was the case with the manipulation of the Chinese secret societies by wealthy merchants. The Abakuá associations exhibited such a tendency with the contract labour regime in the ports of Havana, Matanzas and Cárdenas (López Valdés, 1998) as well as being
exploited by the unscrupulous underworld as evidenced by the infamous *chulo*, Yarini, during the early years of the neo-colonial republic (Dulcila Cañizares, 2002; Matibag, 1996:124) and conservative political forces in the pre-revolutionary period. But the secret societies also had revolutionary potential. ‘These people’, Mao wrote, ‘are capable of fighting very bravely, and if properly led can become a revolutionary force’ (Chesneaux, 1971:71). José Marti similarly observed these qualities in the Cuban Abakuá association in the Key West cigar industry in the late nineteenth century which he described as ‘a tremendous African secret order ... a mysterious, dangerous, terrible secret order’, but which was imbued with virtues of ‘love, disinterest, and heroism’ (Muzio, 2001:71-72; Sosa Rodríguez, 2001).

The case of the *Ekpe* and *Ngbe* is different because these were secret societies of the dominant class and did not operate in illegality. K Onwuka Dike (1956:33) described the *Ekpe* as:

*a sort of freemasonry, a secret cult, uniting the ruling classes in all four towns [of Old Calabar] ... This ‘confraternity’ came into being because the nobility felt the need for a bond of union, a supreme authority for enforcing peace and order among equals and rivals, and for safeguarding the interests and privileges of the nobility. It seemed designed to keep women, slaves, and the mass of the population in subjection.*

The *Ekpe* and *Ngbe* sought to co-opt slaves and lower sectors of the population into its lower ranks. This was especially important in securing elements from these social sectors to enforce its class power. The rise of the *Nka Iyip*, on the other hand corresponds to the secret societies of the poor but combining disaffected and ambitious elements from the dominant classes. Let us elaborate on this through an examination of the origins of the Abakuá secret society.

**Origins of the *Ekpe* & *Ngbe* Secret Societies**

The origin of the *Ekpe* is, like those of the history of the societies of the Old Calabar region, very controversial. This controversy revolves around the historical relationship between the societies from which the *Abakuá Secret Societies* in Cuba originated: the Efik, Efut, Eko, Ejagham, Ibibio, etc. Many scholars (Forde, 1956:vii; Latham, 1973:12; Sosa, 1982:53) maintain that the Efik were a subgroup of the Ibibio people. Eyo Okon Akak (1981) strongly disputes this and argues that unlike the Ibibio who he characterises as having had no common culture, origin and ancestor, the Efik had a common origin from the Orient and that they were aggressive and powerful adventurers and empire builders who founded Kalabari (Ibid, pp. 24, 37, 43).

The debate on the origins of Calabar’s different ethnic groups compounds the debate on the origins of the region’s secret societies. Many of these shared similar symbols, including the supreme deities and the association with the leopard as a symbol of agility, of manhood, and strength. Indeed the words *ekpe, ekpo, ngbe,* and *ngo,* all mean leopard. Many argue that the origins of these, especially the *Ekpe* and the *Ngbe* originate from the Efut and that the Efik bought the secret from them (Enrique Sosa Rodríguez, 1982:109; Forde, 1956:xii; Amaury Talbot, 1926:779). Akak (1981:68) on the other hand, argues that the *Ekpe* was Efik by origin and that it should neither be confused with that of the Eko *Ngbe* nor with the Ibibio *Ekpe-Ikpaukot, Idiong* and *Inam* secret societies. The Ibibio, he suggests, bought the *Ekpe* secret from the Efik. While he maintains the Efik origins of the *Ekpe*, he does recognise some linkages with the Efut. ‘The secrecy of the cult’, he notes,
was merely elaborated upon when the Efik left Uruan to Creek Town where an Efut man ... from Usak Edet by the name of Asibong Ekondo and his wife Mutaka sold a set of five small Ekpe grades and another set of four grand ones similar to the original Efik ‘Nyana Yaku’ to the Efik during the reign of Eyo Ema Atai Iboku (Ibid, p. 69).

In other words, the Ekpe was not entirely new to the Efik. It constituted a further elaboration of the Nyana Yaku secret society that was associated with the Ndem water goddess who Akak attributes to the Efik rather than the Efut or any other ethnic group in the region. He therefore argues that the ‘Ekpe is Efik by origin and started first as Nyana-Yaku secret cult, which later became known as the Mkpé or Ekpe’ (Ibid, p. 69). Latham (1973:13, 35-36) on the other hand, does not establish a link between the two secret societies. He sees the two secret societies as distinct and belonging to two distinct epochs in Efik history. Disputes revolving around the question of origins provide us with a rich contestation about historical knowledge. Each group sought to adapt and utilise it in cementing ethnic loyalty and identities as well as legitimating political structures. In that context, such contestation signified social and cultural development. Indeed the different versions signified a process of ‘inventing traditions’, of cultural borrowing and adaptation among the different societies of Old Calabar. It is safe to suggest that the process of what Fernando Ortiz (1991:86-90; 1993:144-160) termed transculturation began prior and during the period of the trans Atlantic slave trade.

The Sikán Legend & the Ekué Secret

Notwithstanding the debate among Nigerian historians, Cuban historiography identifies three different versions of the legends relating to the origins of the Ekpe and Ngbe secret societies and hence of the Abakuá Secret Society. The three versions correspond to the three branches of the Abakuá Secret Societies: the Efó, Efik, and the Oru. Indeed all the three also correspond to what the Abakuá adepts consider as the origins of their faith in Africa. It is not intended to replicate these as they have been dealt with in detail by Sosa Rodríguez (1982:192-215) and Lydia Cabrera (1958). In all versions, a beautiful and captivating account emerged to account for the subsequent development of the Ekpe and Ngbe as well as the Abakuá secret societies as male only fraternities.

In a definitive study of the Abakuá secret society, Cuban scholar, Tato Quiñones (1994:25-31; see also María del Carmen Muzio, 2001:48-49) provides us with an elegant account of the legend. The Abakuá or ñángigos adepts believe that the Efut, also known in Cuba as the Efó, were chosen by Abasi, the Supreme God, to receive the secret. In the sacred river Oddán, was a sacred fish Tanze in whose body Abasi was incarnated. The Efik lived on the right bank and the Efut on the left bank of the river. Both claimed possession of the sacred fish. One day, an Efut princess, Sikán, daughter of king Iyamba, went to the river to fetch water at the foot of a palm tree. In her gourd, she felt something wriggling and a roar. It was Tanze and the voice was that of Abasi. She told her father who recognised it as the Almighty who had been prophesied by Nasakó, the Efut priest. He presented the gourd and its contents to Nasakó who asked Iyamba to tell Sikán not to divulge the secret. But Sikán revealed the secret to her lover, Prince Mokongo, son of King Chabiaka of the Efik. Tanze, the sacred fish, died out of water. Sikán was condemned to death by a tribunal comprising her father, Iyamba, her lover, Mokongo, Mosongo, Ekuehón, Empiégó, Nasakó and Enkríkamo and sacrificed at the foot of the ceiba or the cotton tree (which is sacred to the Abakuá and other Afrocuban religions). Nasako used her skin to make a sacred drum, the Ekué into which he
guarded the spirit of Abasi. When activated with a magical wand, the ekôn, the drum roars like a leopard. Her blood was used to consecrate the spiritual material symbols; her flesh was used to make protective symbols and her bones were powdered to make spells against traitors to the religion.

The sacrifice of Sikán established peace among the different Old Calabar peoples. Sikán’s spirit remained sacred and serves to receive the souls of the dead Abakua initiates. Her role among the deities of the Abakuá secret society is central to the salvation and reincarnation of the initiates. Significantly too, the four highest plazas or the highest leaders of the Abakua secret society, potencias or groups, are invariably called Iyamba, Mokongo, Isunekue and Isu. Accordingly, these were the four Obones or kings who signed the armistice that constituted the first Abakuá ceremony which was celebrated in Africa. Sikán was, in the words of Frenando Valdés Diviñó, one of the leaders of the Abakuá group – Ekue Muñanga Efó – ‘the only woman that has been sworn in as an Abakuá in the history of our institution’ (Quifiones, 1994:28-29). Now let us interrogate the female origins of the Ekpe/Ngbe and the Abakua secret society.

**Female Origins**

Interestingly, the gender of the Ndem water deity has two versions. Latham (1973:35) refers to it as male while Onyile (2000) characterises the deity as female. It is most probable that Onyile’s version is correct and that the Sikán connection to the Tanze secret and the pre-Ekpe Ndem water goddess may have a bearing on the legend of the Ekpe/Ngbe having started as a female secret society. Enrique Sosa (1982:109) provides a neat periodisation of the development of the Secret Society and suggests that the first phase was characterised by what he calls a ‘primitive community’. Under this socio-economic formation, matriarchy was dominant among the Efut (Efor) and controlled the Ngbe. In the second stage, he notes that matriarchal power was usurped by men. Amaury Talbot (1967:162) reinforces this point. All the principal secret societies in Old Calabar, he writes, were female cults. But,

> in the course of time, men, glorying in their strength, wrested its secrets from those to whom they were first entrusted, and learned to play the rites for themselves. Gradually the usurping male drove out the women so completely that a death penalty was proclaimed for any such who should dare to [penetrate] its mysteries or even become unwitting intruders upon its rites.

The subsequent development of the Ekpe and Ngbe secret societies points to their exclusive male membership and their functions as ideological and religious superstructures that served to reproduce patriarchal and, as we shall see later, class power in all societies of pre-colonial Old Calabar. Akak (1981:67), on the other hand, disputes the view that emphasises the male usurpation of spiritual power; to him, the Ekpe was never a female secret society. What men appropriated from women was the Obon or kingship. This implies that men already monopolised spiritual power and achieved complete supremacy when they seized the political institution of the Obon. ‘After this transfer’, Akak writes,

> the men injected certain charms which can harm any woman, or non-member who happens to see members in action. In most cases it is usually played during the night. The usual slogan when so played in the night is ‘okut akpa’, meaning that whosoever sees it dies.

Whilst men in the secret society assumed dominance, women too retained their own secret society, the Ekpa (Akak, 1981:67). In a fascinating study by Onyile Bassey Onyile
(2000), Efik women, like men, retained their own ceremonies and symbols through the *Abang* dance which had spiritual association with the river. Although she does not establish a link with the *Sikán* legend, she identifies a strong relationship between the *Abang* dance and the *Ndem* water goddess. The word *Abang* means a pot in the Efik language. The pot and the river are central symbols in the *Sikán* legend of the Abakuás.

The *Abang* dance, according to Onyile, symbolised allegiance to the Efik earth goddess, *Abasi Isong* who bears life: all animals, human beings, and plants. She is the one who waters all living creatures and ensures a good harvest. The feminine qualities of the earth therefore, symbolised fertility. Significantly this may have impacted on the ideological and religious superstructure which accorded the women only secret society spiritual functions relating to social reproduction. Indeed the central spiritual function of *Sikán* and the profound reverence which the Abakuás accord to their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters suggests, with some modifications, the *Ekpe* continuities in Cuban *añiguismo*.

The *Ekpe & Ngbe* Secret Societies as Instruments of Class Power

We have examined above the relationship between the *Ekpe* and the *Nyana Yaku* secret societies. According to Latham (1973:13, 35-36), the latter and its tutelary deity *Ndem Efik* were dominant before the first decade of the eighteenth century when the Efik were predominantly fishermen. He suggests that the *Ekpe* replaced the fishing cult and that, by 1805, the *Ndem* priest lost his influence as he was barred from trading (Ibid, pp. 35, 40). His work provides one of the most interesting studies of the economic history of the Old Calabar region. But it does not adequately integrate the relationship between the economic sphere and the ideological and religious spheres.

It is safe to suggest that the *Nyana Yaku* secret society may have been adapted to the economic and social changes emerging out of the slave trade and transformed into the *Ekpe* secret society. It may be suggested that that transformation may have emerged as a result of social struggles. Whether the legend of *Sikán* was constructed before or during the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries is not known. However, it is without doubt that the *Ekpe* and *Ngbe* secret societies developed as powerful social institutions during the period of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade corresponds very well with Enrique Sosa Rodríguez’s (1982:109-110) third and fourth stages in his periodisation of the development of the Ekpe. He suggests that at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, the *Ekpe* secret was transferred to the Efik in Old Calabar and that this corresponded with the rise of the slave trade. The fourth phase corresponded to the development of the slave trade, domestic slavery, the disintegration of the ‘primitive community’, the rise of a society divided into antagonistic classes with the Ekpe, under Efik control, transformed into an instrument in the service of the chief proprietors of ‘canoe-houses’, the great suppliers of African labour to the American market.

Thus the *Ekpe* became what Latham (1973:36-41) sees as a dynamic religious, judicial, commercial and social institution. The Nigerian historian, K. Onwuka Dike (1956:33) considers it as having supreme political power. It exercised executive and legislative power and was the highest court of appeal. It had power to impose severe sanctions on offenders, freeze property, impose fines, detain and impose the death penalty, and boycott other Efik towns. It was responsible for foreign affairs as exemplified by its imposition of trade sanctions on European merchants (Jones, 1956:142-143; Simmons,
1956:16; Davidson, 1961:194; Latham, 1973:37; Okon, 1988:51). In other words, all the organs of class power were incorporated in it.

While the Efik developed four major but relatively autonomous trading cities (Creek Town, Duke Town, Henshaw Town, Old Town, and Cobham Town), the *Ekpe* secret society functioned as their integrating institution. It was hierarchical and access to its highest echelons depended on wealth. The dominant lineages exercised power through its structures and membership to its high offices facilitated greater access to wealth. The *Ekpe* became a regulatory institution to manage bad debts arising out of commercial credit advanced to what may be called an emerging merchant class. Some European merchants joined the secret society and even participated in its ceremonies and rituals in order to protect the credit they advanced to Efik rulers (Dike, 1956:161). Latham (1973:28) characterises the *Ekpe* as 'a genuinely African capitalist institution of an elementary kind'. It protected members' properties and became what Dike (1956:33) likened to 'a secret cult, uniting the ruling classes', which kept the masses of the population in subjection.

But the *Ekpe* was not an entirely exclusive aristocratic institution. Rather, its membership was open to the rich freeborn and poor men who could buy their way into it. Slaves who were initiated into it, however, were confined to its lower grades. Men from humble origins could, through bravery in war and acquisition of wealth, buy their way into its highest structures (Latham, 1973:46-47). Thus 'its essential function was', as Basil Davidson (1961:193) puts it:

> to defend the interests of the rich and to safeguard their powers of government over the lesser men and slaves ... [It] was another instance of development towards a 'political society' under the stimulus of new economic conditions and opportunities.

The *Ekpe* developed into 'an all embracing system of laws and sanctions grafted skilfully to Efik beliefs in magic and the supernatural' (Ibid, p. 195) and came to represent the Efik society's ancestors and culture. Under the dominance of the rich, it succeeded in harmonizing the ancestral religion with the economic and political structures which were essential for the reproduction of the social order and the conduct of the slave trade. Thus it increasingly utilised extra-economic mechanisms to maintain its hegemony. The religious apparatus of the *Ekpe* came to constitute a powerful instrument for social control. On the *Ekpe* holy day, the eighth day, an *Idem Ikwo*, went about town instilling some dread among the non-members of the secret society. The *Idem Ikwo* is not only specific to the Efik. Many African secret societies have historically had similar religious representations (see Butt-Thompson, 1929). The *Idem Ikwo* represented ancestral spirits residing in the forests. He wore a conical facial mask, a bell to announce his presence and a whip (Talbot, 1926:785; Latham, 1973:37). Although the *Idem Ikwo* performed different functions within the Old Calabar context, his religious and ceremonial functions bear some similarities to those of the Cuban Abakuá *Tremes* or *diablitos*. We shall come to this later.

**Slaves & the *Nka Iyip* Secret Society (Association of Blood Men)**

The position of slaves in the Efik social formation poses some analytical problems. These revolve around the inclusion of some of them in the *Ekpe*. Latham (1973: 39) has argued that far from marginalising them, the *Ekpe* integrated them

> into Efik society by giving them a share, however small, in the central organ of government. That they had an inferior status in the society was due to the fact that they belonged to freemen.
That the slaves 'belonged to freemen' and were therefore property, is significant. It means that they constituted a marginalised and exploited section of the Efik social formation; they had very limited rights and privileges that the freeborn enjoyed. With the increase in the slave trade, they became the principal producers of food for Old Calabar towns. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the leading slave trading families opened up the virgin territory of Akpabuyo and opened plantations for agricultural production (Dike, 1956:156). They settled slaves captured from non-Efik societies of the Upper Cross River region, the Cameroon Highlands, and the Qua region. It must be stressed that these had no agnatic ties in Efik society and were therefore socially marginal. Okon notes that unlike Old Calabar towns, there were no Ekpe lodges in Akpabuyo (1988:51). This suggests that the slaves in Akpabuyo were excluded from the Efik political structures and that they were the first ... to suffer from any deprivations arising from [the] political activities of their Efik masters. They were considered sacrificial lambs for important Efik funeral and political ceremonies. They were immolated anytime an important Efik went into transition (Ibid, p. 52).

It is doubtful, however that the Ekpe did not have a presence in Akpabuyo since there was a need to police the slave population. Some members of the leading trading families who Okon calls the gentry lived in Akpabuyo (Ibid, p.51). It is probable therefore that there were lodges and that some slaves may have been initiated into the Ekpe. Significantly too, slaves included Efiks who were sentenced for offences like theft, adultery, etc. (Simmons, 1956:7). Slaves constituted the majority of the population in Akpabuyo. But there is a dearth of historical data to show how power was exercised. Simmons (1956:14) notes that certain age-sets of men performed police functions to prevent slave rebellions and military functions to defend the region against invasion. A combination of the function of the Idem Ikwo that we have examined above and the age-sets may have constituted instruments for maintaining social control.

Human sacrifice which had hitherto been part of the religious rituals associated with funerals of leading men, became transformed into rituals for displaying wealth. What slaves had produced and the goods derived from the sale of slaves to European slave traders came to form part of ostentatious consumption of wealth. Slaves and even some of the poor freeborn were sacrificed. It was the common lived experience of exploitation and insecurity that gave rise to the formation of the Nka Iyip secret society or the Association of Blood Men. Like the Ekpe, its members were initiated by an oath called the Nka. This involved drinking blood taken from the wrists or thumbs of fellow members and mixed with maize (Okon, 1988:54-55; Jones, 1956:145; Enrique Sosa, 1982:109). The significance of this ritual was to construct a blood brotherhood which would then compensate for a lack of agnatic ties among the initiates. Like that of the Ekpe, it formed a binding fraternity.

From the late 1840s, the Nka Iyip successfully defended the slave population and the poor freeborn form being sacrificed upon the death of Old Calabar's wealthy men. The Nka Iyip is generally thought to have been formed during the late 1840s or 1850. But it was a secret society and it is safe to suggest that it may have been formed much earlier, possibly in the eighteenth century when domestic slavery was becoming an important feature of the Efik social formation, and certainly long before 1820 when human sacrifices took on an alarming dimension. It may therefore have existed in clandestinity.
Although the initiates into the *Ekpe* were bound by its secrets, it is probable that its symbols and rituals may have been adapted by non-member male slaves and ex-members enslaved as punishment for committing crimes. Okon (1988:54; see also Dike, 1956:157) provides some insights into its membership. He notes that apart from slaves, it included not only ‘a band of desperate servile elements trying to stop the practice of human sacrifice which affected them mainly’, but also many people with ‘diverse grievances and aims ... [who] included economically dispossessed Calabar gentry, ... thieves and rogues’. It is also significant that male slaves from other ethnic groups had synonymous secret societies and that these may also have provided synonymous religious and organisational contexts for the rise of the *Nka Iyip*. We do not have data to develop this further but Old Calabar society may have had two parallel secret societies much earlier than the available published historical sources indicate. This may have had bearing on the development of the Abakuá secret society in Cuba.

**Export of Slaves to Cuba**

The transportation of slaves from Old Calabar to the Americas lasted from 1650 to 1841. Estimates of the number of slaves transported from Old Calabar throughout the period of the trans-Atlantic slave trade range from 133,000 to more than 250,000 (Latham, 1973:22-23). There is no breakdown of how many of these were transported to Cuba. For the period 1790 to 1880, however, the quantitative analysis in the work of Bergad, Iglesias García and Barcia Zequeira (1995:72; Barcia Zequeira, 1985:50) provide a breakdown of slaves by classification as follows: Out of a sample of 6,871 African slaves, 27 per cent were Calabari, 28 per cent were ‘Congo’, 16 per cent were Gangá, 9 per cent were Mandinga and 10 per cent others; these classifications were broad and included many ethnic groups. The Calabari classification embraced the Efik, Ibibio, Ibo, Efut, Qua, and all other ethnic groups who were transported through Old Calabar and the Bight of Biafra.

**The Cabildos de Nación & the Formation of the Abakuá Secret Society**

The *cabildos de nación* were mutual aid associations of different African ethnic groups formed from 1568, and after, under the supervision and control of the Spanish colonial state. According to Fernando Ortiz (1992:4-5), the origins of the African *cabildos de nación* were Andalucian cofradías (brotherhoods or guilds). Both performed similar religious and social functions which included dances, fiestas, as well as assistance to the sick, arranging funerals, buying land and freedom for their fellow members. They were linked to the Catholic Church and adapted Christian saints to African deities (Natalia Bolivar, 1997:156; Howard, 1998:28). Membership of these *cabildos* was restricted to those born in Africa to the exclusion of Cuban born blacks; the latter, too, maintained African belief systems, music, and language forms.

There were five major groups of *cabildos* serving broader ethnicities: Lucumi, Congo, Carabalí, Mandinga and Arara, all situated in urban areas. Although the *cabildos* were meant for social control, they provided a framework for the construction of African derived communities, a basis for facilitiating African cultural continuities in Cuban cultural development, and the transculturation of African and Spanish cultures. They provided a cultural framework for the political and social struggles. By the 1850s these *cabildos* had developed into what has been correctly called called ‘pan-Afrocuban associations’ that were no longer based on specific ethnic origins or language (Howard, 1998). They had an organisational structure headed by *capataces* or foremen, *reyes, reinas* or kings and queens. This leadership was drawn from elders
who guarded ancestral African spiritual secrets (Howard, 1998:36; Ortiz, 1992:1). They therefore significantly contributed to the development of Cuban culture and identity.

The historical relationship between the Abakuá secret society and the cabildos de nación is difficult to establish. It is however safe to note that there was a relationship between the Calabari Cabildos and the secret society. Not all the Carabali cabildos were connected with the Abakuá. Furthermore, there were well known Carabalí cabildos like the Isuama in Santiago de Cuba, the port city in eastern Cuba which never formed the basis for the rise of the Abakuá secret society. The emergence of the secret society was only in the port cities of western Cuba. Now let us examine the conditions that may have given rise to its formation.

Many historical studies on the Abakuá secret society date its formation in 1836 in the fishing village of Regla, near Havana. There are two levels of investigation that need to be followed. The first is the relationship between the Old Calabar Ekpe, Ngbe, Ekpo, Nka Iyip (etc.) secret societies, the Cuban Calabari cabildos de nación, and the Abakuá secret society. The second areas are the specific concrete factors that gave rise to it during the period that it did so.

It is probable that the transportation of the secret or mystery of the Old Calabar secret societies to Cuba occurred during the eighteenth century and most likely after 1750. The reason behind this is that it was the period that was characterised by the rapid expansion of the slave trade from Old Calabar and the Bight of Biafra (Latham, 1973:18-21; Curtin, 1969:116-125). The slave trade from this region increased rapidly during the late eighteen and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. This corresponded with the growing importance of the Ekpe in the conduct of the trade. We have already established the relationship between the slave trade, domestic slavery for food production based in the Akpabuyo region and the rising importance of the Ekpe as an instrument of class power. Furthermore, we have established the relationship between the Ekpe power, human sacrifices and the rise of the mainly slave based Nka Iyip secret society or the Association of Blood Men. It may be suggested that the Ekpe and Nka Iyip was carried to Cuba by a combination of enslaved former freeborn and slave members of the Ekpe, Ngbe as well as the Nka Iyip. These were drawn from many ethnic groups in the Oil Rivers region. They may have joined existing or formed new Calabari cabildos de nación. They may have formed a nucleus that activated the Old Calabari secret societies in Cuba. This was possible because of specific factors that I continue to examine below.

The Haitian revolution of the late 1790s and the beginning of the nineteenth century stimulated the development of sugar production in Cuba. By the end of the 1790s, Havana was transformed into a major port and commercial centre to service increased sugar exports and imports of commodities for the rich. Cuba went into what Manuel Moreno Fraginals characterised as, in his seminal work El Ingenio, ‘a long sugar orgy’, ‘the first dance of the millions’, that give birth to a sugar society (1974:68). Other agricultural commodity production like tobacco and some food gave way to sugar. Many economic activities that had no links to sugar production were abandoned (Ibid, p. 96). More slaves were imported. The slave regime and its cruelty hardened with increased use of extra-economic coercion to facilitate the process of accumulation (Leyda Oquendo, 1988:55-67). There developed commodity speculation, especially in the wheat flour trade. But in the midst of plenty there was misery. Hunger and disease struck at the poor especially the black population: slave or free.
The 1790s and the first years of the nineteenth century were an insecure period for the black population. There is evidence to support the view that the *cabildos de nación* were merging in order to activate support mechanisms to maximum effect. In 1793, for instance, the *Cabildos Carabali Izique* and *Isuna* jointly bought a house and formed the *Cabildo La Purisima Concepción* in Havana. During the first years of the nineteenth century, the *Cabildos Carabali Umiguisi* and *Osozo Ozu* merged into one (Howard, 1998:34-35). In an organisational structure that may suggest similarity to the hierarchical *plazas* of the Abakua brotherhood, the *Cabildo Carabali Oguella* elected, in 1804, three high officers known as the first, second and third captains (Ibid, p. 37).

Tato Quiñones notes that the first time the leopard roar of the *Ekue* sacred drum of the Abakua was heard in Cuba, was during the late 1790s in Havana (Conversation with Tato Quiñones, August 2001). If this is correct, then the Abakua secret society in Cuba emerged much earlier than 1836 and out of the reinvigorated *cabildos de nación* to confront the consequences of an economic and social transformation of Havana and its vicinity. That transformation unleashed an acute material crisis that hit the poor and especially the black population hardest. The first Abakú* potencia*, therefore, must have maintained strict secrecy until the 1830s.

That strict secrecy may go some way to accounting for three different versions relating to the Abakúa secret society. First, Enrique Sosa makes a very significant observation that in 1834 a secret society of the *Ekpe* type whose members were initially African born slaves was known to exist in the fishing village of Regla. Its members were referred to as *ñañígos* or the *arrastrados*, meaning the ‘wretched’. Their ‘mysterious beliefs and liturgical practices of *ñañíguismo* or *ñañooitua* bore similarities to those of the Abakúa. Indeed he identifies the possibility of Abakúa presence by 1812 in the work of the late José Luciano Franco (1963:30). In 1812, an anti-slavery and indeed one of the first Cuban patriotic rebellions was organised by a free black man by the name José Antonio Aponte. This rebellion came to be known as the *Conspiración de Aponte*. They had Abakúa type passwords and joined under secret oath. That meant, ‘not only the existence of the abakúa many years before 1836, but also of a vast organisation’ which extended beyond those of Calabari origin and enlisted the support of a leader of the Haitian revolution, Brigadier Narciso (Sosa, 1982:117-118).

Second, there are differing but maybe mutually supporting accounts as to the identity of the Abakúa *potencia* that emerged in Regla in 1836. The first is that the *Efik Butón* emerged out of the *Cabildo Appapa Efor* whose members were of Eko origin. The second was that it emerged out of the *Cabildo Bricamo Carabali Appapa Efik* substituting *Efor* (Eko) for *Efik* (Sosa. 1982:118). Another version was that the *Apapí Eft* was formed out of the *Cabildo Nangaíto* and that in 1836 another *potencia* called *Akud Butón* also known as *Los Belenistas* was formed in the Havana neighbourhood of Belén and that the majority of its members were slaves belonging to Josefa Aguiar y Diaz (Maria del Carmen Muzio, 2001:47).

Third, there are two versions relating to the membership of the first *potencia*. Sosa (1982:123) notes that they were first created by African born or the *negro de nación*. Tato Quiñones, on the other hand argues that although there were formative links between the *cabildos de nación* and the Abakúa, there were never *cabildos de nñañígos*. The Abakúa or *ñañígo* associations were therefore created by the *criollos* or Cuban born blacks, slaves or free because these were restricted from associating themselves with the *cabildos de nación*. They were the ‘first Cuban institutions, founded by Cubans for solidarity and defence of their interests’ (1994:14-15).
The different accounts about the formation of the first Abakúa potencia are not that contradictory. Rather, they are probably a consequence of different historical source material and should therefore be treated as complementary. That they were formed at a time when there was an increase in the slave trade, increased sugar production and a repressive slave regime is very significant. It should not be forgotten that during the same period in Old Calabar, the Ekpe, Nghe secret societies had become exclusive religious institutions and instruments of class power that facilitated the sale of slaves for the Americas. We must not forget, too, that the Nka Iyip or the Association of Blood Men may have emerged during that period to oppose the excesses of an emerging ruling class in Old Calabar. The Ekpe, Nghe, and even the Nka Iyip secret may have been brought to Cuba during and after the 1790s. A combination of historical conjunctures may have played a decisive role in the process that led to the formation of the Abakúa potencias.

The Abakúa associations later emerged in the port cities of Matanzas and Cárdenas. Like Havana, these two areas became important sugar producers from about 1830 and by 1857 they were producing over 55 per cent of Cuban sugar (Moreno Fraginals, 1974:141). The region around the two ports became the largest sugar producing areas in Cuba and had the largest concentration of slaves. The ports of Matanzas and Cárdenas expanded rapidly. The first Abakúa potencia in Matanzas Province was the Biekanga formed by the Carabali Bricamo in 1869 (Israel Moliner, 1990:399). That the Abakúa secret societies emerged and have continued to operate only in Havana, Matanzas and Cárdenas and not in other major port cities like Santiago de Cuba where there existed Carabali cabildos de nación still remains a difficult question for historians (Cabrera, 1996:192). In 1914 there existed an Abakúa brotherhood, the Fi-Etete-Efi among Chinese workers in Matanzas and another in the central Cuban port city of Cienfuegos (Sosa, 1982:131). It is possible that these may have constituted a transculturised version of the earlier Chinese secret societies which were formed at the time when the Abakúa potencias were increasing in number and when there was increased colonial social and racial oppression after 1860. These Chinese secret societies were the Kit Yi-tong (The Union), and Hon Ti-tong (The Brothers) formed in 1867, the Jen Yi-tong (The Fraternal Union), the Yi Seng-tong and the Chung Whah formed in 1890 (Pérez de la Riva, 2000:85-86; Fernández Núñez, 2001:61-62). The Chinese warrior deity, Xan-Fan-Kon which in Cuba is referred to as Sanfançon, was syncretised with Chango, the Yoruba deity of war (Fernández Núñez, 1985:63).

'Reformation' or 'Schism' in Ñañiguismo

Until 1857, the membership of the Abakúa associations was black and mulatto. The Abakúa emphasis on valiant manhood and brotherhood may have attracted white males from the Creole aristocracy. The door for white entry into Ñañiguismo was opened by Andrés Facundo Cristo de los Dolores Petit (hereafter referred to as Petit). Petit was a mulatto and member of the Catholic Order of San Francisco based in Guanabacoa, near Havana. He was also the Isué (a high dignitary) of the Abakúa potencia Bacocó Efí. He was also known as Andrés Kimbisa as he was also the Padre Nkisi and founder of the Regla Kimbisa del Santo Cristo del Buena Viaje, a synthesis Regla de Palo with the mayombe from Congo, Ocha, Spiritism and Catholicism (Bolivar,1997:161). In 1857, he sold the secret of the Abakúa for 30 ounces of gold to white aspirants. In 1863, the first white Abakúa potencia, the Akanarán Efí Muñón Ekobio Mukaraná was founded. The first white Ñañigos were tobacco workers, stevedores, abattoir workers, as well as officials and sons of aristocrats (Quiñones, 1994:35-42; Muzio, 2001:53-5; Cabrera, 1958:25-26).
 Petit's action has been described as a 'reformation' or a great 'schism' in ṇańiguismo. His work changed the composition of the Abakuá associations. But it unleashed a period of bitter rivalry and violence within ṣeṣeṣeṣe. He was accused of betrayal. In 1872 peace was established between black and white Abakuá associations pledging mutual respect. Petit's role in the changing character of ṣeṣeṣe has been described by Tato Quiñones (1994:42) as instrumental in contributing to the making of the Cuban nation in terms of beliefs, interest and rituals. ṣeṣeṣe was transformed from 'something black' to 'something Cuban'. Petit's work was an expression of virtually all aspects of Cuban spirituality. He was a combination of all African derived religions, Spiritism, and Catholicism. As in Reglas Ocha and Conxa, Catholic saints came to be syncretised with ṣeṣe gods: Virgen de Regla with Nyegeye; Virgen del Purisima with Betongo, Cardidad del Cobre with Oddán, Christ on the Cross with Abasi, and San Lazaro was embraced as a ṣeṣe deity (Enrique Sosa, 1982:175). He introduced the Catholic crucifix to the Abakuá rituals. He was, Tato Quiñones (1982:35) writes,

>a curious expression of Creole syncretism whose distinctiveness is a crucifix with a 'magical load', a 'secret' in the centre of the cross.

There is a popular legend about Petit having visited Rome where he was received by the Pope. Petit is said to have asked him to recognise the Abakuá. The Pope is said to have replied:

> The only thing that you have to do when you arrive in your country, is to place a Crucified Christ at the altar of your religion, and with us there is no problem (Quiñones, 1994:34; Cabreras, 1958:35; Muzio, 2001:63).

According to Cabrera (1958:36), without Petit the 'Abakuá society would have disappeared. There would have been no ṣeṣes. They would not have been able to resist the prolonged persecution by Spanish authorities, and (in the twentieth century) by Cubans'. This, however, is a highly debatable point.

The Abakuá as a Brotherhood & Nascent Labour Movement: Havana, Matanzas & Cárdenas

From their inception, the Abakuá potencias were, like the cabildos de nación, mutual aid associations; but they were more than that. They were brotherhoods defending the interests of their initiates, the abonekues. Their organisational structure, code, and strict secrecy bore resemblance to those of freemasonry. Above all, they had a religious base which provided them a fraternal bonding that transcended other social loyalties, including the family. They constituted a nascent labour movement with a class base that grouped together workers in the urban areas as firemen, tobacco workers, abattoir workers, etc., and in the ports as balers, day labourers, barrel makers, loaders, stevedores, etc. (Sosa, 1982:309-310).

In the nineteenth century, almost 90 per cent of Cuba's sugar production was concentrated in the western and central regions (Moreno Fraginals, 1974:144). This stimulated the construction of a transport and communication infrastructure. The ports of Havana, Matanzas and Cárdenas expanded. Many warehouses for sugar and tobacco exports and for handling increased imports of food, textiles, hardware, etc., were built and commercial houses proliferated in the three cities (García Álvarez, 1990:35-55). The development of the warehouses also determined the emergence and
subsequent urban expansion of the commercial belts linked to the ports’ (Ibid, p. 55). It may also be added that this expansion determined the composition and class base of the residents in the neighbourhoods near the port areas.

In 1763, labour gangs (cuadrillas) consisting of ex-batallions of black soldiers, African and Cuban born black freemen and slaves were established in the port of Havana. Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux (1970:89-94) characterises them as ‘racial-militarised’ labour. Most of the labour and its foremen were initially of Calabari origin. Its organisation was hierarchical and first its leadership was initially drawn from those of the cabildos. After the formation of the Abakúa secret society, the labour gangs were almost exclusively ŋañigos. This set a tradition for well over one hundred years. A prerequisite for certainty in gaining employment was to be a ŋañigo. As Rafael López Valdés has noted, this signified a ‘high expression of a reality that had profound implications on the development of the Abakúa as an institution’ (1998:105). Up to 1942, workers protected their work in the ports by being members of the Abakúa brotherhoods.

The work of Rafael López Valdés (1988:90-127) details the mechanisms of the organisation of labour in the port of Havana. He notes its territoriality and the contradictions that beset it until 1959. The labour gangs never held secure jobs and were untenured and vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation. They were controlled by foremen (capataces) and later the contractors (contratistas). Since the founding of the Abakúa brotherhoods, the capataces doubled as leaders of cabildos and the brotherhoods. Later in the second half of the nineteenth century, some contractors also held high office or plazas in the Abakúa brotherhoods. He notes that the capataces and contratistas negotiated contracts with employers and it was they who recruited and paid the work force. Renting and sale of slave and free labour was also conducted through advertisements in the press (Núñez Jimenes, 1985:26-27). Each Abakúa potencia was an organic unit with a determined territorial base of operation. Each developed in a neighbourhood and was closely linked to that neighbourhood. In Havana, many Abakúa brotherhoods proliferated in the barrios of Jesus Maria, Pueblo Nuevo, Belen, Colon, San Lazaro, parts of Vedado, and Marianao. The entire barrio of Jesus Maria was ŋañigo controlled (Sosa, 1982:146). Each potencia held a monopoly of work for particular shipping lines, agents and wharves. There was rivalry between the potencias for the control of sources of work. From 1882, some were even involved in strike breaking. After the beginning of the twentieth century, the contratistas declined to give work to those they considered linked to labour unions and strikes. As a result of the revolutionary struggles against the Machado dictatorship in the 1930s and the introduction of new technologies in the ports after 1942, the influence of the contratistas declined and the Abakúa brotherhoods increasingly participated in labour unions.

Persecution & Struggle

The history of the Abakúa is one of persecution and struggle. Central to this was the official association of criminality, murder, and all types of social deviance to the secret societies. But it was also centred around the pathologisation of African forms in Cuban culture. Throughout the period of slavery and neo-colonial domination, there were two parallel cultural processes identified by Fernando Ortiz (1991:86-90; 1993:144-148) and further elaborated upon by Manuel Moreno Fraginals (1985:6-7). These were deculturation and transculturation. Moreno formulates a framework and defines deculturation as:
the conscious process by which, for the purposes of economic exploitation, the culture of a
group of human beings is uprooted to expedite the expropriation of the natural riches of the
territory... and/or to utilize the group as a source of cheap, unskilled labour. The process of
deculturation is inherent in every form of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation.

He notes that deculturation is never total because the exploiters are not

interested in converting the cultural values of the exploited class into a tabula rasa. They
only wish to eradicate those elements which create an obstacle to the establishment of the
system of exploitation.

A complex process (that is similar to that elaborated upon by Amilcar Cabral (1973)
on the role of culture in national liberation) characterised by transculturation and
deculturation unfolds in which

the dominant class applies to a maximum its mechanism of deculturation as hegemonic
tools, and the dominated class takes refuge in its culture as a means of identity and survival.

The dominant class therefore develops mechanisms to check social solidarity among
the exploited. Deculturation, therefore, becomes

a technological device applied to the exploitation of slave labour, since common culture
gives a group dignity, cohesion, and a sense of identity.

The Spanish colonial state used this device in the formation of the cabildos de nación
which we have already examined above. The objective was to keep the different ethnic
groups among the slave and free black population apart. This would counter the
possibilities of social solidarity among the exploited. We have seen also that far from
maintaining ethnic separation, the cabildos increasingly forged unity during the
nineteenth century. They have been described by Philip Howard (1998) as Pan-Afro-
Cuban associations. From the Aponte Conspiracy of 1812, the various rebellions and
especially the La Escalera of 1844, and the first War of Independence of 1868-1878,
members of these cabildos took an active part.

The Abakuá participated actively in all these struggles. In the ‘Little War’ of 1879,
many Abakuá were persecuted as the police thought its leaders were ūñiįgos. Their
role in the War of Independence of the 1890s is well known. We have already noted
how José Martí appreciated the patriotism and the financial contribution to the war
effort made by the Abakuá cigar workers in Key West, Florida. He relates his visit to a
ūñiįgo fanba (a sacred room in the temple) and described it as ‘a room which is
decorated with the flag of the revolution’ (Sosa, 2001; Muzio, 2001:71; Helg, 1995:87).
Many ūñiįgos were deported to jails in Fernando Po and Spain. In the racist war of
1912 against the Partido Independiente de Color in which many blacks were
massacred by the neo-colonial state, there were many arrests in districts where ūñiįgos were strong (Helg, 1995:107); Castro Fernández, 2002). Muzio (2001:73) notes
that the Abakuá played an important role in the defeat of United States aggression at
Playa Giron in 1961. She crisply emphasises the force behind the Abakuá role in those
struggles. For

the Abakuá par excellence, belief or religious ideology, is rebellious with a high grade of the
concept of manhood, for which it never permits whatever type of subjugation (Ibid, p. 69).

The African derived popular religious structures, including the Abakuá brother-
hoods, were, according to Quiñones (1994:39),
not only effective instruments for the conservation and transmission of their cultures, but also exercised organisational political functions for fighting against slavery. Their clandestine character concealed a truly political role.

In the nineteenth century and during the neo-colonial period, fears of alleged black conspiracies haunted the dominant classes. After the La Escalera uprising of 1844, the Abakuá and the cabildos were increasingly persecuted. African cultural forms were ridiculed as barbaric. This was more so on the Day of Kings which was celebrated on the sixth day of January. It was carnival time with spectacular dance, costumes and masquerades especially those of the diablitos or little devils. These were the tótems of the Abakuá associations. The participation of the Abakuá produced hysteria among the middle classes and there were calls to abolish them. Contemporary reports painted very negative impressions on the comparsas or dance groups. There were calls to abolish them. The colourful event feared by the dominant classes was a positive manifestation of what Rine Leal (1975:82) calls

*purification rituals of collective memory, of total expression, of tribal teaching, magical creations of fertilisation, imagination of the vital force of each nation. In one word, the fiesta of the Día de Reyes with its diablitos was the stage representation of the distinct African ideologies in Cuba.*

Most of the participants in the celebrations were drawn from poor and very marginal neighbourhoods. They were poorly paid and many were tobacco workers, barrel makers, bakers, coachmen, laundry pressers, porters, blacksmiths, stevedores, stallholders, itinerant workers, firemen, day labourers, bricklayers, etc. Harsh economic and social conditions produced delinquency and violence. These areas with a proletariat and lumpen proletariat social base were strongholds of the ñaño associations. The ñaño associations became refuge for some of these exploited sectors of the population. These included blacks, mulattos, Creole whites, Spaniards, Chinese, and Mexicans. From the 1860s, the police targeted the ñaños and cabildos. They placed informers and kept the plazas under surveillance and sought to seize and expose sacred material objects of the potencias (Neira Betancourt, 1991:3; Hevia Lanier, 1997:9). In 1876 the Abakuá secret societies were banned and thereafter up to 1902, many were imprisoned (Sosa, 1982:307-309, 310-313). By 1889, the police claimed to have identified and neutralised all the potencias in Havana and Matanzas. No one arrested revealed the secret. The police never captured the Ekue's sacred drums. The potencia Muñanga made false drums and hid the real ones (Muzio, 2001:67-68). Many of the sacred objects were kept secret until after the proclamation of the Republic in 1902 (Hevia Lanier, 1997:10-15) and even much later in the 1930s.

**Conclusion**

African continuities in Cuban culture were profoundly contested during the colonial and neo-colonial periods. This contestation revolved around Cuban national identity, and ultimately of Cuban national independence and sovereignty. Integral to that were linked struggles against class and racial exploitation. The dominant classes project of deculturation was an expression of that exploitation. Resistance against racial and class oppression was in itself an act of culture. It was integral to the development of Cuban national culture and identity.

The Abakuá contribution, like that of other African derived cultural forms, to Cuban popular culture has been greatly acknowledged in the areas of religious beliefs, music, musical instruments, dance, and popular language (Cabrera, 1958; Ortiz, 1981;
Quiñones, 1994:47-50; Almeida Bosque, 2001; Miller, 2000). It is argued that it was persecution and struggle that provided the motor for this contribution. The secret nature of the Abakúa associations, their secret language, etc., preserved, adapted and readapted African cultural forms. By syncretising them to other cultural forms, they significantly contributed to what is Cuban national identity and culture. The Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque (2002) underlined this recently in his address at a mass rally:

*Today we proclaim our right to be an independent people, to choose our own path, and what we do in this Plaza de África, evokes our pride in our African roots, evokes the millions of slaves who formed our nationality [and] who contributed to our culture, to our religions.*

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Upon completion of this essay, I have learnt with profound sadness, of the death of Professor Dr Enrique Sosa Rodríguez whose seminal and definitive book Los Nañigos opened new horizons on the deep historical links between Africa and Cuba. His work will always remain a great source of inspiration for future historians. This modest piece is dedicated to him.

I am grateful to David Gonzalez López, Walterio Lord and Tato Quiñones for their friendship and invaluable help.

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An African Brain Drain: Igbo Decisions to Immigrate to the US

Rachel R Reynolds

This article outlines the conditions under which a particular group of professional Nigerians has made the decision to immigrate to the United States and how, once abroad, they have established a continuum for immigration from the home area. The paper has been generated from fieldwork and interviews among Igbo people in the Chicago area, conducted between 1997 and 2000. The article explains the educational, cultural and economic conditions under which Igbo immigration to the US in the late 1970s and early 1980s were undertaken – the time during which members of the immigrant network came to the US. My work here constitutes an effort to define the way that a particular group of immigrants to Chicago came to develop and how they now utilise an immigrant social network. My preliminary question here: how did the Nigerians in my social network make the decision to immigrate to the States? Although there are several factors that affect this decision, for my study, I focus most closely on two interrelated factors: education and cultural specific institutions like household economic decision making patterns. Those factors were chosen because among Igbo middle-class people of this generation, the need for educational opportunities and a tradition of emigration appears to be the necessary conditions to make an Igbo person decide to immigrate, while economic factors like reduced economic opportunities in Nigeria or lower pay were merely sufficient conditions. The qualitative data presented here is intended to give new shape to research questions that will further develop our understanding of how the socio-economics of schooling and educational opportunities in Africa and the US come together to reinforce the brain-drain process in which promising young professionals leave Africa for industrialised regions.

Contrasts to Other Immigrant Networks

In network analysis of transnational communities, scholars study class groups from poor, rural and undeveloped areas of the world; for example, Filipino domestic workers, Greek fishermen, Turkish Gastarbeiterin, and Rancheros from Mexico (Van Hear, 1998; Moskos, 1999; Guerra, 1998; Farr, 2000). The immigrants in these networks generally do not have progenitors with much money or with much education and their primary motivation to emigrate is the promise of immediate employment. There is a tendency to view members of these groups as people with some sort of emergent transnational identities that also encompass the emergence of modern class identities.
In other words, it is asserted that many of these immigrants straddle a border that maintains two or more ethno-national affiliations even as they are beginning to see themselves as workers and urbanites instead of farmers and country-dwellers. A recent move towards unionisation and then strikes among mostly Mexican-American housekeepers and office cleaners in the US is a good example of the potential emergence of a differing subject identity (Greenhouse, 2000).

Almost immediately as I began my fieldwork, I realised that my group members barely fit the paradigms of transnational network studies conducted by other researchers because the Igbo people I know resemble middle class, professional Euro- and African-Americans in far more ways than other easily visible and coherent ethnic or immigrant groups. First of all, their educational achievements are immense, with all group members having completed post-secondary education (or they are in the process of doing so). Second, many group members grew up in good-sized cities in Nigeria with a wide variety of social contacts across ethnic and class groups. Frequently, they came from families with professional migratory backgrounds instead of land-bound farming families, a facilitating factor for transnational movement in many immigrant peoples’ backgrounds (see Van Hear, 1998:38). Many are the children of physicians, headmasters/headmistresses, teachers, writers, businessmen, and traders who like Americans of their age, grew up following their families, moving across Nigeria and Ghana in response to professional opportunity. And third, they themselves live in the US spread out across Chicago and the suburbs, with group members ranging up to 150 miles from the centre of the network on South Michigan Avenue in Chicago. This latter factor attests to their ability to survive outside the day to day support one might receive in ethnic ‘enclave’ neighbourhoods (Holli and Jones, 1977/1995); being so widespread correlates with their status as contemporary professionals who choose geographic living locations based on professional affiliation rather than the clustering in ethnic neighborhoods as often occurs with working class immigrants.

The information above is not intended to imply that there are not poor and undereducated African immigrants and refugees in Chicago. Rather, my enterprise in this study is to try to discover the *raison d’être* for this particular group, and why and how they stick together. They are interesting because they are representative of a transnational migratory trend among the Nigerian middle class; in many ways, group members are part of the ‘brain drain’ – a trend in which educated professionals depart from a country of origin in sufficient enough numbers to harm the economy and change the social life of the homeland.

**What is a Migration Order?**

In *New Diasporas*, Nicholas Van Hear (1998) posits a framework for understanding what it is that shapes ‘migration orders’. According to Van Hear, these orders are patterns of migrations that are defined by the various structural and cultural elements behind any given group’s migration tendencies. In order to understand the vicissitudes of a given migration order, Van Hear recommends that one looks at factors like 1) individual motivation, 2) household decision making strategies, 3) disparities between place of origin and destination, 4) the state of development of migration networks, 5) migration regime, which includes international laws and institutions that facilitate, hinder, or in some other way shape migrant movement and 6) the macro political economy that surrounds a migratory order. Although I touch
upon all six factors in this paper, I mostly present factors of education as individual motivation and how the traditional forms of socio-economics within the Igbo household affect emigration decisions, since those are primary motivators for emigration in this group. First I briefly tell about the immigrant group itself; then, I present evidence from formal and informal interviews and various field notes that begin to outline how Nigerians’ choices about immigration shape the Igbo migration order in the US.

The Organisation for Ndi Igbo (or ONI Group)
The immigrant group I joined is only one of about forty such groups in Chicago that reflect regions and ethnic groups from all over West Africa. The Organisation for Ndi Igbo (Igbo People) or ‘ONI Group’ (a pseudonym) has about 400 members, 125 families, who hail from the same 80 square mile region of Igboland, which is in the southeastern part of Nigeria. That they adhere to such a small area is due to the fact that they speak roughly the same dialect of Igbo and that they will nearly all have intermarried, endogamously within the region, and exogamously between closely associated villages within the region.

The ONI group reflects a chain migration from a specific area in Igboland, in which an initial or ‘primary’ immigrant chose to settle in Chicago (Yoon, 1995).1 One of the primary immigrants for this group arrived in about 1969 through education and subsequent marriage to an American. He is, by the way, now a local millionaire and city business leader. Subsequently, additional immigrants began to arrive in the area until a critical mass formed a network. The network immigration curve was slow at first, with only four individuals arriving between 1969 and 1978, but after that, a domino effect accelerated the rapid arrival and settlement of over 100 more families from the same region of Igboland. This network is formalised through ONI which encompasses a board of directors, a centralised fiscal account, and a regular schedule of activities including meetings for members, picnics, Christmas parties and an Ili-Ji or ‘New Yam’ festival.2

The ONI organisation also provides mailing services for members who are predominantly Catholic and Episcopalian (Anglican). In 1999 for example, those services entailed the mailing to all members invitations to five weddings, three christenings, and three wakes. These events involve cash donations and make up a central part of the economy of exchange and support among group members. Generally speaking, the funeral or wake is the most crucial to support since emergency air tickets to Nigeria for burials, and funeral services back home, are a heavy financial burden to a grieving family. Another example of how group members support each other is their response to individual emergencies. When I first joined the network, a member had been buried on the highway with debris from a dump truck with a loose back hatch. While this man was in intensive care, members joined together to support his wife and children and advised them on legal and workman’s compensation issues.

Besides these formal functions of the ONI group, the network provides members with a monthly chance to meet together informally to exchange information, argue and joke with each other, often employing regional dialects of Igbo and Nigerian pidgin. The organisation also provides an updated list of members with addresses and contact numbers, essentially helping to facilitate constant contact between members.
The Emigration Cohort

One important note on my data is warranted. The evidence I present here reflects the experiences of middle-aged Igbo people who share the following commonalities. First, they are all currently in their 40s or older and they lived a childhood through the Biafra-Nigerian war. Those who will talk about the war mention conscripting of boys, some combat fighting and air strikes, but all tell stories of starvation and disease. Another commonality is that a large number came of age for higher education around the time that the US completed a 1981 treaty with Nigeria admitting 240 Nigerians per year for professional training in the American higher educational system (US Secretary of State, 1987) – a fortunate coincidence in that it allowed many Nigerian brain drain communities to get a foothold in the US. A third thing they share is that they came to America during a relatively prosperous time in Igboland from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, when the Nigerian currency, the naira, was very strong against the US dollar. This meant that airfare was cheap and the US embassy became less stringent about issuing visas, under the assumption that Nigerians abroad would be able to support themselves on Nigerian savings accounts and would wish to return to Nigeria after sojourning. Although I have limited evidence from older and younger generations, I concentrate on the group that came to the US in the late 70s and early 80s in this study since I know the most about them and since they constitute the central core of the ONI group.

How did the Nigerians make the decision to emigrate to the US?

Higher education and professional achievement opportunities are the driving force behind ONI members’ immigration decisions. This is not to say that back in Nigeria, members don’t seek freedom of speech, or that they aren’t bothered by institutionalized graft and political instability – some are even political refugees. But overwhelmingly, my friends and acquaintances in the network cite the US as the right place for one to pursue education and professional practice.

A high number of Nigerian immigrants in Chicago have completed some sort of post-baccalaureate training in an academic subject. Indeed, all of my informants have told me that they hold at least baccalaureate degrees and most display framed diplomas from American and Nigerian universities in their offices or living rooms. They are engaged in diverse professional occupations such as research scientists, physicians, civil engineers, teachers, university professors, accountants, bankers, management consultants, lawyers, and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the Balch Institute (2001) also reports that African immigrants in Philadelphia have the highest rate of baccalaureate degrees obtained among all immigrant groups in the area.

It is important to note however that among Igbo people I know in Chicago about 30 per cent take post-baccalaureate certification in a trade or paraprofessional field, like respiratory therapy or small business management. They often do so while they prepare their own ventures and enterprises, many of which turn into extremely successful businesses. But other people who take paraprofessional degrees (or drive taxi cabs or work in valet car parks) do so in order to facilitate quick and effective employment whilst they wait for their African transcripts to arrive in the US and be evaluated by universities or employers. In fact, there is a growing ‘rip-off’ trade in companies that supposedly certify equivalency degrees for African college graduates new to the US. Some of these companies appear to ‘evaluate’ the degree only to suggest that their clients attend community colleges to get paraprofessional degrees, rather than helping them get high school degree clearances, baccalaureate equivalen-
cies, or helping facilitate entry into post-graduate institutions. Because of this, those
network members who obtained higher education exclusively in the US have done
better financially and have higher profile employment. This diploma certification
‘equivalency gap’ among Africans merits further research and unified advocacy
programmes with employers and universities.

**Education in Nigeria**

Back in Nigeria, institutional structures in education have the most to do with how
Igbo students of the 1970s and early 1980s chose to emigrate. I now turn to describing
educational backgrounds, including the types of schools people attended and how
their areas of study were determined.

Rural Igbo children who remain in the countryside were, and still are, unlikely to find
the university preparatory schooling needed to attain secondary or tertiary education
in Nigeria or abroad (see Egbo, 2000 for a related discussion that evaluates class
division in this regard). So especially if ONI group members were from tiny towns,
they were pointedly sent by parents to stay with responsible and caring urban
relatives who assured that these children attended school, usually through boarding
in the region’s privately funded high schools (called ‘colleges’ – secondary schooling
for about ages 12 to 18). These schools are called ‘dormitories’ and attendance at one
was, and is, also a class marker. Most ONI members were educated in private
religious schools, usually Catholic, and network members are so invested in
secondary school loyalties that there are fundraisers in Chicago, for instance, for the
‘Old Boys’ of Christ the King College (CKC) of Onitsha – a well-renowned Catholic
high school in Igboland. ONI group members mention their primary and secondary
schools frequently. At a recent general meeting of the ONI group a graduate of CKC
miscounted a list of members’ names. To make fun of the man, group members
reminded him that a well-known math teacher at CKC, mentioned by name, was
watching from heaven – and that the spirit of the math teacher was scowling at the
man’s mistake in simple arithmetic (Reynolds, fieldnotes, 24 September 2000).

Interestingly, this preference for private Catholic education is easily borne out among
group members’ children. A glance over the National Merit Scholars list from St.
Ignatius College Prep high school in Chicago shows that 10 per cent of these highly
successful students have Igbo, and sometimes Yoruba, surnames. About half of ONI
group members send their children to privately funded schools in Chicago. Also like
other middle and upper-middle class Americans, many Igbo brain drain profession-
als will purchase homes in suburbs that are well-known for their outstanding public
tax-supported educational systems.

Nigerian elementary and secondary schools do something akin to the tracking system
which was also employed in America until quite recently. That is, young children are
pigeonholed – by choice or by their teachers and parents – into pre-disciplinary
schooling. For example, all of the men but one I have spoken with in my network
attended schools that tracked them for science or for business, two different tracks. To
give an example of how prominent a feature of Nigerian schooling these tracks were,
there is even a neologism for the pre-science career track, ‘matmatsphysics’. This is a
blended and shortened word from the institutional curriculum category ‘mathemat-
ics, additional mathematics and physics as major subjects’. Another track in schooling
in Nigeria encompasses literature and the arts.
Interestingly, three leading men in the network have reported to me that the literature and the arts track is the one they often regret not entering as it is in hindsight the track most closely aligned with cultural preservation — although, of course, the focus of my questions, and my role as ethnographer probably brings forth that element of longing for cultural identification. Women explain, however, that the literature and arts track is heavily gendered. It was perceived as not adequately preparing men for financial leadership within the family and community leadership in business or technological development. Although women in the network did study in business and less often, science tracks, they were far more likely to study things like foreign languages and education in order to prepare to be school teachers — an occupation that has become increasingly female gendered since independence. Likewise, I have found that in general, women are more likely to feel comfortable writing in Igbo and to be able to spell Igbo words in one of the standard orthographies. This embarrasses and frustrates men when I query them about it and their quiet admission about an interest in having studied language and literature may reflect middle-aged hindsight and personal angst over the potential loss of culture among their American-born children.

However, there is a differential over time in the successes afforded to people who studied various tracks. In earlier days (before about 1993 when structural adjustment programs and political factors began to take their adverse toll on local economies in Igboland), a degree in education and language arts obtained one the respectful and reasonably well-paid position of school teacher. Today, teachers and university professors are very underpaid — or not paid for months on end — and they struggle with loss of salary and loss of prestige. Likewise, however, there were and are booms in other fields like engineering or business. Igbo children, like so many children elsewhere, choose their field of study based on anticipation of their socio-economic outlook. ONI members in Chicago, for example, encourage their children today to attend pharmacy school and to attend programmes in information science in anticipation of increasing opportunities in those fields.

Last, there is a sociological phenomenon to do with women’s educational choices and opportunities in that many women are sometimes educated only as far as their families see their net worth increasing as future brides. To vastly oversimplify the formula, men who come to the US will tend to want brides prepared to engage with higher education and the higher earnings abroad associated with those degrees. But for those women who intend (or were intended) to stay in Nigeria, other factors are much more important regarding women’s status and earning potential for the home. Since ONI group members sometimes did agree to parent-negotiated marriages, or since many chose their mates at least partially based on ‘market potential’, the level of education and potential for income earning was (and still is) a deeply considered factor in transnational matchmaking.

Every immigrant I have talked with has explained that their early educational experiences overwhelmingly affected both their decision to emigrate, especially to obtain higher education for professional careers. That is, those who studied business in high school, came to study business in the US and ultimately opened their own businesses. Those who studied the sciences, came to the US to study science and become professional scientists. That these fields of study exist in Nigeria and that these children are initially established in the various pre-career tracks is primarily responsible for Igbo immigrants’ professional and financial successes abroad.

Before I move on to a discussion of how individual decisions to study or work abroad are further facilitated by socio-economic factors in Igbo life, I need to enter into one
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There is also a way in which the structure of higher education in Nigeria forces some Igbo people to attend college abroad. It has to do with admissions standards and admissions slots abroad. An informant confided to me that he had to come to the US for college because his grade point average and his entrance examination scores were too low to obtain a university slot in business in Nigeria (in the early 1980s). It is quite possible that this factor—lack of available university slots or fierce competition for only a few slots—had much to do with the decision to emigrate among certain ONI group members. The micro-fluctuations in university admissions policies and numbers of admissions versus number of applicants in Africa are extraordinarily important for understanding the brain drain (see Adeyemi 2001 for a related discussion on Nigerian college admissions policies today).

Back to freedom of choice. Once an individual finished his or her track up to the age of roughly 19 years, these soon-to-be immigrants made the decision to pursue higher education at home or abroad. Unlike what occurs in many immigrant communities, the decision to attend school in the US by young men was often made by the young men themselves. This trend is rather unusual among immigrant groups, at least for groups outside of Europe and West Africa. To give a contrasting example, it is not uncommon to hear that in East Asian families the entire family will carefully choose and plan schooling and immigration strategies designed to minimise family risk and increase family status; for example, a common pattern among my Korean immigrant students involves parents who choose an older son to run the family business, while a middle son is chosen to attend college and (often) medical school abroad, eventually with the idea that he would return with a socially prestigious and high-earning medical degree. However, Igbo men have told me that they were relatively free to decide on their own to come to the US and many tell tales of setting the stage for their own independently conceived immigration plans.

This independence in decision making comes from three factors. First, by dint of class affiliation in their youth, ONI members were not burdened by concerns about raising money for the family. A second factor that still frees Igbo children (increasingly with girls too) to make their own decisions is that there tend to be lots of offspring in African families through which shifting financial burdens can filter. And third, it is relatively easy for Nigerians to emigrate, because they have the infrastructure and cultural migratory capital one needs to do so. To cover the last point first, potential emigrants have easy access to international flights and a government that will let them travel, as well as a long-standing tradition among their countrymen of immigration to places in the English speaking industrialised world, as well as Ghana, Cameroon, and migrations within Nigeria. Furthermore, part of the cultural migratory capital involved includes the familiarity that Igbo people have with modern Anglophone life, a familiarity attained both in Nigeria and abroad in US universities. This familiarity makes them more integrated into the mainstream abroad than other immigrants might be. They grow up speaking many varieties of English, for example, and they are deeply familiar with Western Anglophone education, both British and American varieties.

I now turn to some of the ways that economic burdens and risks are shared in the Igbo family system. The young Igbo men who were eventually to form the ONI network did not have a great burden to support family back in Nigeria. Rather, an older generation of lateral cousins and brothers and sisters was responsible to support mothers, fathers, grandmothers, great grandmothers, poor country cousins, nieces and nephews, and adopted neighbours and friends— all in a complex social
latticework of social ceremonial resource sharing and day-to-day support. For example, at a christening or naming ceremony, all of a baby’s extended relatives and even neighbours are obliged to give a monetary gift. Because Igbo families tend to be very numerous, these gifts can cumulatively be quite large – enough so to sustain a family for at least a few months after the birth of a child. The system gives young immigrants a chance to step away from the economic support system temporarily, letting others support family members, while they pursue education.

Another example I have from a woman informant is that she will give her in-laws extra spending money at the expense of her own comfort, in order to be certain that her own college-aged sons will not yet be called upon to make sacrifices in support of the family. This statement is patently that of a ‘good mother’ and amounts to a form of social prestige when it is well known that the children of the family can attend university comfortably. The Igbo system of lateral support has certainly eased the burden on young men and women. It is also an adaptation that large immigrant families can utilise under contemporary economic conditions, and especially under globalising economic conditions.

This outcome of this pattern – young men being able to go forth and obtain their education with relatively few financial worries – strikes me as being European bourgeois (in outcome, at least, if not exactly part of the same structure). The Igbo people in the initial cohort of ONI group immigrants had, as children, the commitment of their families to train them to reach full income potential and I believe this pattern may account for Igbo success abroad more than any other factor. It also reflects how the African brain-drain is structurally interlaced into cultural norms and higher educational background, at least in Nigeria.

The second culture-based reason that Igbos in my network cite for emigration has to do with siblings and inheritance. There is an enormous population pressure on the land in Nigeria, coupled with rapid urbanisation. Those two factors have caused changes in the traditional system of inheritance, a land-based system in which eldest boys receive family land, and middle and younger boys go forth and clear new land for their families. Over the last 75 years of education (‘clerkification’) and urbanisation, the system is approximating old-fashioned American and British systems in which eldest children inherit family monies. In either case – one eldest child receiving an entire inheritance, or a distributed inheritance, if there are several male siblings – it may prove difficult to get a sizeable inheritance. Informants who are youngest siblings often state that a good reason to immigrate was to build up personal capital so that inheritance would not be an issue of contention. Likewise, if a teenage boy or girl has a brother or a cousin in the US, it may prove much easier to immigrate, share resources and establish family capital abroad. Indeed well over half my informants have siblings who have also emigrated from Nigeria. And also, one friend told me he was able to live abroad, outside the circle of family financial obligations for several years, while he pursued an undergraduate degree and went on to do an MBA while an older male relative in business back in IgboLand supported the family there through his successful auto parts business. These are all the means by which large families are combining migrations and changes in the availability of wealth to spread wealth across families in new ways predicated by old (traditional) systems, especially fostering. In other words, they are quickly utilising immigration to spread the burden of financial care across members at different times, and in such a way that youths are a primary focus of the benefits of this evolving family economic system.
Macro-Political & Economic Developments

The colonial and post-colonial history of Igbo class development as part and parcel of a slow move towards vertical integration into globalised economies. In that sense, the brain drain is part of an historical continuum and not a new and startling development. When I write 'clerkification' in the section above, I do so to indicate that I see Igbo professional migrations as a form of economic and class stratification that began with the imposition of a colonial system in which young newly educated men were to be employed as clerks and teachers whose labour would generate value in international circuits. Much of the ethnographic and literary record has to do with stories of Igbo people who have great acumen with accumulating wealth, and inheritance politics loom large in Igbo families, especially within a changeable system. With my informants, I am not usually privy to these discussions and issues, not enough to produce reliable (that is, replicable) information, but my sense of it is that with ONI group members, the importance of traditional land inheritance means less and less to them as a form of class expression nor is land an asset to hedge for the future. Rather, my informants see their future as being connected to holding more diversified assets of value on the global market.

Igbo people do, of course, need a place to be buried and a symbolic location of origin in the homeland, and some do return to Nigeria to build showcase houses in their home towns and many send durable goods as large as Mercedes cars to family members. But with the cohort that has emigrated abroad, the practice of investing capital in land or in other enterprises in Nigeria seems to be getting even rarer, especially with informants' continued frustration with political and economic instability in Nigeria. Their bank accounts ultimately will go to their children, who are generally speaking, destined to live abroad as second generation immigrants anyway. With the declining value of the naira and forecasts about Nigerian governance that are not particularly rosy, informants find it much easier to support family back in Nigeria through remittances based on salaries in stable dollars, pounds sterling or euros rather than returning home to work for nairas. The perceptions of the stability of the future for Nigeria do indeed stand a chance of creating an accelerating vortex in which Igbo professionals may focus more intently on developing assets and investments outside of Nigeria. All of this continues to force vertical integration at the global level, rather than encouraging local and national development efforts on African soil. I tentatively theorise here that this form of globalisation probably incurs widening class division in new permutations back home (see Buggenhagen, 2002, for a related Senegalese example of how new diasporas are changing West African socioeconomic structures).

The New Diaspora Continues

This section first makes note of how the Igbo migration regime is fomented by the structure of US visas for brain drain immigrants. After discussing the migration regime and its impact on professionalization among ONI group members, I then set the stage for the conclusion of this article by explaining how new immigrant communities create and sustain new cultural migration capital that will have continuing effects on the brain drain.

Among Igbo immigrants the means by which one enters the country has a deep impact on professionalization and continued household economic prosperity. Unlike Filipinos who have direct political connections to the US and who are eligible to obtain a wide variety of visas, or Europeans who enter on tourist visas, or Mexicans
who can literally walk across the border, Nigerians' perception of immigration is based on the fact that one's best bet for entry into the US is on a visa for education. The means by which they gain work permits also entails converting student a visa in higher education instead of, for example, the experiences of Africans who enter on refugee visas or enter by the lottery (with post-1980s cohorts of the ONI group, immigrant entry is often also connected to visas involving personal sponsors and relatives). Indeed, the ways that educational and professional visas are structured in the US directly encourages brain drain modes of immigration among Igbo people, rather than illegal entry. The option to immigrate as a student propels them further into the professional class, since the very expertise they attain warrants their presence in the US; if they want to stay, they must get the education. Later, this same completed education will warrant their claims to H1B professional visas – visas which are linked to specific high-paying corporate sponsored professional jobs. Interestingly too, because of this they are far less likely to be exploited for their labour than other immigrants, although many were in fact exploited during their studentship, since student visas usually prohibit legal employment. Ultimately too, with higher educational and professional attainment, applications for citizenship seem (to me) to go through quickly and nearly all Igbo families can afford, or at least financially prioritise, high-quality immigration lawyers to facilitate the process.

Before leaving the discussion on cultural migration capital, I need to stress that the notion of how to emigrate within Igbo communities continues to change vis-à-vis immigrants groups like ONI. As Nicholas Van Hear notes, one is far more likely to immigrate successfully if one's own cultural traditions include migration (1998:38). Many Igbos in Nigeria were or are traveling merchants, and probably close to one-third of the people in the ONI network lived outside of Igboland within West Africa at some time in their childhood. The impetus to travel and even immigrate in order to establish business ties and far-flung family outposts is certainly reflected in my interviews. Another source of cultural capital for Igbo immigration and African immigration in general is, of course, the immigrant association.

As I mentioned before, the ONI organisation facilitates the system of exchange and support in which members help each other during a funeral, after the birth of a child, and so forth. Any immigrant to the US tries to find an association as quickly as possible to also find job leads and business affiliates. Interestingly, my friends in the network report that even while in college in places like Alabama or Arkansas, they relied on their own ethnic immigrant networks more than general African student associations. That the ethnic networks were far flung did not matter so very much – most Igbo people in my group can tell you about other immigrant groups very similar to ONI in cities like San Francisco and Washington, DC. And today, many of the ONI members are mentors and providers, that is, they are extending the West African system of 'fostering' for Igbo college students in distant states. The point I wish to highlight is that young Igbo men and women in Nigeria know that these organisations exist and rely on their help; that the immigrant associations are also loosely based on endogamy also increases the chances that there will be familial as well as regional obligations to look out for the well-being of young immigrants in college or at university. This sort of immigrant capital is crucial to maintaining chain migrations and these close links between Igbos from the same home areas will certainly continue to shape Igbo communities in the diaspora far into the future (see also Trager, 2001 for a discussion on Yoruba home-area organisations).
Conclusion
This paper has described the history and functions of the ONI immigrant's group and especially its members' reasons for choosing to emigrate/immigrate. In highlighting this group, I have pointed out that they are highly skilled professionals, which I call 'brain drainers', whose migration order was predicated upon economic pressure, but that also, their decisions to immigrate were precipitated first and foremost by the desire for professional education abroad. I have also discussed middle class Igbo family expectations for education, including the ways that education is assured to youth, and how education is gendered. I also discussed how the extended family system of support and inheritance law facilitates young men's decisions to emigrate. At the level of socio-economics in Nigeria and abroad, I discussed how the once high and now declining value of the Nigerian naira and the structure of US State Department visas work in tandem to entice students abroad into remaining in the US upon the completion of their degrees. Last, I discussed how the role of Igbo village or regional based immigrant organisations encourages specific chain migrations by providing support to young immigrants as they first arrive in the US.

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Endnotes
1. Similar networks — also chain migrations — are occurring or have been established in places in the US like Houston, Texas, Washington, DC, Atlanta, Georgia, and in the UK, London and Nottingham, and Johannesburg, South Africa.

2. There are many analogs to this type of club; they are a widespread immigrant phenomenon. Italian, Polish and Puerto Rican immigrants to Chicago have established social clubs, although they tended to purchase and maintain actual clubhouses while Africans tend to rent halls or meet in private homes (see for example, Nardini 1999). Besides these highly organised clubs which are legally registered with the state and maintain a not-for-profit status, there are also informal immigrant 'hang outs'. Several local commercial establishments that happen to be owned by Igbose or Nigerians often serve this function. In Chicago, for example, Christy’s African Restaurant in the 2000 block of South Michigan is very much a place for Nigerians to gather.

3. There are reports in Chicago that a few corporations are allegedly indenturing (i.e., severely underpaying and refusing to promote) professionals under H1B visas, by which one cannot leave one’s sponsoring corporation. This apparently has not happened with ONI group members who tend to be 'high up' enough on the professional ladder that their skills warrant competition for retention between corporations or non-profit institutions. It remains to be seen whether this problem will affect the younger cohort of the African brain drain.

Bibliography


This article will examine the experience of two transplanted communities of West African kru migrants. Originally from Liberia, these labour migrants became involved in both internal African migration as well as external migration to Europe. It will distinguish the cause and mechanism of migration within the broader development of British colonial activity in West Africa. Freetown and Liverpool will be examined in the context of these broader developments since they became two important centres in Kru diasporic settlement. Economic opportunities became the raison d'être for Kru migration and this manifest itself in terms of short-term transient migration to the permanent establishment of thriving diasporic communities. Socio-political and historical conditions provided the broader parameters within which these peoples became 'scattered' across the globe over the last two hundred years or more. The historical and economic connections between the two ports of Liverpool and Freetown, and the role of the Kru in British maritime trade here influenced patterns of settlement and the nature of community organisation and development. The article will examine current theories to the study of diasporan communities and will draw on ethnographic research undertaken in Freetown and Liverpool.

**Diaspora Discourse**

Diaspora discourse impinges on a number of historical and contemporary experiences; it includes a broad array of groups and has a variety of different features, many of which are salient for some groups at different times in their history, but not for others. Thus the notion of 'diaspora' is ambivalent; it is a process whose terminology/discourse has been translated to apply to different groups at different times. Safran (1991) attempts a definition of diaspora that encompasses collective experiences in terms of their similarity and difference. The main features identified in his model include; a history of dispersal; myths and memories of homeland; alienation in host country; desire for eventual return; ongoing support for homeland; collective identity defined by this relationship.

Clifford has argued that Jewish history has had an important influence on the language and definition of diaspora. However, he argues that this should not be taken as a definitive model since discourses around this concept have been appropriated widely due to decolonisation and globalisation (1997). The concept of 'diaspora' then is historically changing and the process of shared experience of displacement, adaptation and resistance can be as important as origin (1997). Thus Tololian (1991) writes of diaspora that:
The term that once described Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community (1991: 4-5).

The notion of diaspora can also be seen as a critique of ideas that emphasise ‘fixed origin’ whilst simultaneously recognising the importance and desire for ‘home’, though not necessarily ‘homeland’ (Brah 1996). Diaspora’s have to be contextualised in their own historical, socio-economic and political context. And whilst many diasporic movements may share a number of characteristics in common, as identified by Safran there are those who are very different from one another.

Paradoxically, diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots ‘elsewhere’. These journeys must be historicised if the concept of diaspora is to serve as a useful heuristic device. The question is not simply about who travels but when, how, and under what circumstances? (Brah, 1996:182).

In general terms, many migratory movements occur as a result of prior linkages between two or more places, whether this is based on colonisation, trade, cultural ties, political influence or investment. In each case the state of the receiving country plays a major part in ‘initiating, shaping and controlling movements’ (Castles and Miller, 1993). For Zolberg (1989) labour migration is directly tied into the workings of a transnational capitalist economy, which ultimately determines the factors that ‘pull’ migrants to the receiving country and which also influence the ‘push’ factors that make migrants leave in the first place. Fawcett and Arnold (1987) use a ‘migration systems’ approach whereby labour migration is positioned within a broader context involving the movement of goods, services, information as well as people. For Fawcett and Arnold, ‘migration systems’ approach is based on the concept of global interdependence. This can be seen as the interaction between macro and microstructures. The former exists in both the sending and receiving countries (which directly affect the control of migration and settlement which includes the political economy of the global market, laws, practices and structures). The latter is composed of informal networks that act as survival strategies (this includes chain migration networks, the dissemination of information and cultural capital to enable one to survive, find work, accommodation and so on).

Such informal networks are cultural responses which form the basis of ethnic group formation. This is often reinforced and strengthened when such groups are subject to economic, social and cultural exclusion or marginalisation. Then what emerge are distinct ethnic minorities (Castles and Miller, 1993).

In the post-war period, labour migration was followed by family reunion, settlement and community formation. This was true of New Commonwealth immigrants to Britain from the former British colonies; of migrants from the Mediterranean to Western Europe and Australia; from Latin America and Asia to North America (Castles and Miller 1993). The construction of ‘minority communities’ can be through a process of exclusion and marginalisation – racism by the majority, or it can be on ‘self definition’ based on shared historical and cultural ties (ethnicity) of the members involved. Ethnicity becomes politically important when the boundaries of different cultural practices are pushed beyond this to incorporate the notion of ethnic identity as being a necessity or useful in the context of competition for power and resources. This is ‘situational ethnicity’ and can be applied to the West African Kru people, the subject of this article. Thus the construction of ethnic minority communities is not an
automatic result of immigration; rather, it is the consequence of marginalisation and racism, which affects different groups in different ways.

Glazer and Moynihan (1975) and Bell (1975) emphasised in the context of the US, the political role of ethnic identification. Similarly Cohen's (1969) work on Hausa migrants in Yoruba towns showed how ethnicity was central to the political organisation of this group. For Bell (1975) ethnic mobilisation is symptomatic of the declining power of class identity in modern industrial society (Castles and Miller 1993). For others like Clifford the notion of ethnic groups within a diaspora embodies the notion of 'resources for a fraught coexistence' (1994).

Gilroy's work (1987) on black culture in Britain and America demonstrates how the notion of diaspora explains the continuities and changes of black cultural expressions. This ultimately resulted in a diverse range of social movements (for example civil rights in the US and anti-colonial struggles in Africa, the Caribbean and South America). For Gilroy, black culture in Britain is not simply a response to racism, though this has to be acknowledged, rather it is a syncretism of diverse black histories and politics combined with elements of 'British culture' itself constantly changing and which presumably contains elements of black cultural expressions? (1987). Thus, the notion of diaspora as used here incorporates a broader geographical and ethnic range of black people, whose dispersal originated with the slave trade, but whose separate geographical and cultural elements retain a 'cultural syncretism'. Such an approach to diaspora is inclusive and for Solomos and Back (1996) reflects liberating characteristics rather than a more narrow ethnic absolutism. Clifford summarises this as:

*Black diaspora culture currently being articulated in post-colonial Britain is concerned to struggle for different ways to be 'British' – ways to stay and be different, to be British and something else. Complexly related to Africa and the Americas, to shared histories of enslavement, racist subordination, cultural survival, hybridisation, resistance and political rebellion (1997:287).*

This raises a number of issues concerning identity and how this relates to the notion of 'home'. Whether one chooses to identify one's place of settlement, or indeed one's birthplace as 'home' is dependent upon the way processes of inclusion or exclusion operate, and how these are felt under certain conditions. Brah (1996) has observed that whilst it may be possible to feel at home in a place, one's experience of social exclusion hinders public expressions of this. Brah cited the example of a black British woman of Jamaican parentage who may feel London is more of a home than Kingston, but whose self-identity is Jamaican or Caribbean. This confirms an identity she feels is denigrated by racism since it excludes black people from being 'British' and therefore beyond the realms of 'Britishness'. Another woman of similar background might occupy a different subject position by asserting her black British identity and thus repudiate her exclusion (Brah, 1996). Brah explains:

*They articulate different political positions on the question of 'home', although both are likely to be steeped in the highly mixed diasporic cultures of Britain. On the other hand, each woman may embody both of these positions at different moments, and the circumstances of the moment at which the same person makes such 'choices' are equally critical (1996:193).*

Thus many diasporan communities may feel a multi-placedness of 'home' but can still feel settled or refer to the place of settlement as 'home'.

Yet this has been challenged; the most notorious example in the context of Britain was when the former Conservative Cabinet Minister, Norman Tebbit accused British
Asians of having no allegiance to Britain because of their support for Indian or Pakistani cricket teams (Brah 1996). This has to be seen in the context of other sporting events. For example, when England plays Scotland in an international football event and those of Scottish descent support Scotland against England, the allegiance of Scottish people living in England is not usually called into question. Nor is this the case with Irish or Welsh people. For Brah, Tebbits 'cricket test' merely leads to responses from those communities that result in one's identity as Indian or Pakistani or whatever it is, becoming a way of resisting racist definitions of Asian-ness. Identity as engendered in the notion of diaspora is a plural, ongoing malleable process that incorporates an array of economic, political and cultural relationships. These relationships form a commonality between various heterogeneous elements that include differential class, gender and sometimes 'race' lines or stratum (1996).

Migration & the Colonial Context

The issues discussed thus far raise a number of important questions with reference to the Kru diaspora. In the context of international labour migration, Kru people in Liverpool and Freetown share a number of traits with other migratory groups whose social and political experiences can be contextualised within the broader arena of colonialism. The broader political and economic context of Western European trading relations with West Africa and elsewhere throughout the nineteenth century and eventual colonial expansion at the end of the nineteenth was important. These colonial linkages between Liverpool and West Africa made labour migration possible. The emergence of 'legitimate trade' after the slave trade was officially abolished by some European powers became the dominant feature of trade with West Africa. Legitimate trade, unlike the slave trade, demanded free but cheap and mobile labour. Thus West Africans in common with Indian and Chinese labour were used as indentured labourers around the middle of the nineteenth century to replace freed slave labour on the plantations of Trinidad, Guyana, as well as other Caribbean countries (Castles and Miller, 1993). West Africans were also encouraged to migrate to West African countries where local labour was inadequate or unsuitable. Explanations to account for this migration are indeed complex and multifaceted involving factors that relate to the Kru themselves and the socio-economic and political positions they found themselves in Liberia. Yet the historical context of merchant capitalism and colonialism also played a significant role in the creation of a Kru diaspora. These provided the conditions within which Kru labour was encouraged to migrate to far and distant places such as Liverpool and the Guyana's as well as closer to home in Sierra Leone. This broader structural and historical framework placed constraints and limits upon Kru migration so that ultimately the notion of 'free' choice in determining migration was constrained. Therefore analyses of labour migration that attempt to couch this in simple and ahistorical 'push/pull' terms cannot be of any benefit here (Cohen, 1987; Zolberg, 1989). At the same time the position that Kru migrants occupied in the British system of colonial trade - mainly as articled seafarers and stevedores - made them unique as migrant workers. It meant that itinerant work patterns provided opportunities for permanent or temporary migrations.

In some cases these work opportunities were negotiated or fought for with other ethnic groups and within the Kru ethnic group. So that what emerges on the West African coast is the eventual monopolisation of seawork from Freetown by the Kru ethnic group. This partly arose from the colonial tradition of labelling certain ethnic groups as being 'naturally' good at certain types of work. But it was also based on the Kru's historical traditions of fishing and trading on the Liberian coast that enabled
them to acquire seafaring skills. Both these factors impacted on each other. But we also have to recognise the role of the Kru people themselves. They had sound expedient reasons for encouraging a label that described them as 'naturally' skilled in seafaring work. In the absence of viable economic opportunities in Liberia and with increasing political dissatisfaction with the Liberian (colonial) state Kru people were active agents in their migrations around the West African coast and beyond, including Liverpool. Merchant/colonial capitalism ultimately provided the parameters within which Kru migration operated; it dictated the terms and conditions within which they were forced to work and determined where they could migrate. Yet we must also acknowledge the role of human agency and the role the subjects themselves played within the overall confines of this system.

Kru migrations to Liverpool in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries undoubtedly arose from prior and continuing economic relations between here and West Africa. Indeed this went as far back as the slave trade. Such patterns of migration would be built on by future generations and would indeed be replicated in other parts of the globe. The developments that precipitated migration of Kru labour from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century onwards was trade. The growth of ‘legitimate trade’ between Britain and West Africa that gradually replaced the trade in African slaves was based on such primary products as palm oil, timber, groundnuts, gold and rubber. Freetown became an important centre for the export of primary products. Its deep-water harbour allowed large vessels to be more easily loaded with raw materials. Freetown had also been a convenient post for replenishing supplies of firewood and fresh water (Fyfe, 1962; Ade Ajayi and Crowder, 1974; Fyfe and Jones, 1968).

Shipping companies and merchants that traded along the West African coast were reliant on the use of local labour. Such labour was used in both extracting raw materials and working the plantations as well as transporting these primary products to the coast and ultimately Europe. Kru worked on both shore, including rivers, and at sea, transporting bulk cargoes from West Africa to the markets of Europe.

Kru labour had been recruited as stevedores and seafarers from Liberia from at least the early nineteenth century. But increasingly, many began to migrate to Freetown where they were guaranteed shore and ship work, and where they were able to migrate free from the restrictions imposed by the Liberian government (Frost, 1996).

Later when numbers began to increase, restrictions were imposed on the number of Kru that were allowed to migrate to Freetown (Fyfe 1962; Harrell-Bond 1978). The particular needs of British merchant capitalism encouraged labour such as the Kru to migrate to those areas of trading activity. In this case, Kru were encouraged to leave their native Liberia and migrate to Freetown, Sierra Leone. From here, Kru labour acted as stevedores loading and discharging valuable cargoes around the West African coast, and as able-bodied seamen that went beyond the confines of West Africa to Western Europe and elsewhere. Various reasons can account for their recruitment, including their cheapness vis-à-vis European workers, the convenience of not using wholly European crews that were prone to malaria and high morbidity, and their apparent acquiescence and sobriety compared to European crews. Such reasons combined to encourage their widespread use in merchant operations along the West African coast (Frost, 1994).

Much of the trade between Britain and West Africa was conducted from the port of Liverpool which had a long tradition of trading with West Africa that stretched back
to the notorious slave trade. Kru who migrated to Freetown often found their way to Liverpool as seamen on the merchant ships that plied between these two ports. Many Kru in Liverpool remained transient, staying there for a few days or weeks at a time before embarking on a ship bound for West Africa. In some cases, Kru stayed on permanently in Liverpool by jumping ship or failing to sign articles for the return journey to West Africa. There were many incentives for staying in Liverpool, including the fact that if they signed on ship in Liverpool they received higher wage rates than if signed on in West Africa (Lane, 1990). Thus British merchant shipping was literally the vehicle through which Liberian Kru migrants found their way to Freetown and in some cases Liverpool. Such migratory processes could occur in one or several generations, so that Kru people in Liverpool could be Liberian or Sierra Leonean born. The dispersal of the Kru from their original homeland in eastern Liberia had two dimensions. First, there were temporary migrations that occurred throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Second, was the permanent settlement of Kru migrants that derived from this initial temporary migration? Whilst this began in the late eighteenth century, it was not until the nineteenth century that such settlement increased dramatically. This can be directly related to the needs of European capitalism in the more marginal areas of the world economy. Here there was a demand for mobile and contractual migrant labour that would plug the chronic labour shortages that ensued in areas such as the Caribbean when slavery was abolished (Schuler, 1986).

Similarly in West Africa, African labour was widely used for the maintenance and perpetuation of a European colonial trading infrastructure. The Kru people and others were recruited from along the coast and transported temporarily to areas of labour shortage. By the mid-nineteenth century, Kru labour was prominent in a system of ‘shuttle migration’ where gangs of labourers spent their working lives travelling to and from their home and work ‘down the coast’. These of course were temporary migrants who met the short-term needs of European, but mainly British colonialism throughout the nineteenth century. A temporary migrant sub-culture emerged; a crucial feature of which was affection for their home. Work abroad was seen as a temporary state, done and geared towards society back home (Martin, 1985).

The Kru diaspora also had permanent features. Inevitably, some Kru people became domiciled in those places where they initially went as temporary migrant shore workers; others such as those working at sea, might decide to ‘drop’ at a particular city and eventually settle. The economic needs of British colonialism led to the accidental but permanent establishment of Kru communities in places like Lagos, Accra and Sapele where Kru people were engaged in shore work in the lumber and palm-oil industries. Indeed by 1911, there were more Kru men in Lagos than in Freetown (Martin, 1985). Permanent settlement was also encouraged by the British colonial authorities in places such as Freetown where a ready supply of relatively cheap labour could be drawn upon from one convenient location. The creation of a Kru diaspora would come to have profound social and economic consequences not only for the Kru people themselves, but also for those communities where they settled. The number of Kru people migrating did not assume magnificent proportions at any one time. But its significance lies in its cumulative effects over time. Thus in 1900, the British Consul in Monrovia estimated that 5,000 Kru people and others were leaving Liberia each year to work in other areas, mainly British territories. Less conservative estimates put this figure at 20,000 (Foreign Office, 1899; Davis, 1976). Kru labourers had been actively encouraged to migrate to British territories both in and outside of West Africa throughout the nineteenth century.
Kru people and other West Africans also migrated to territories closer to home. Thus in the 1870s, it was estimated that between 2,500-3,000 Kru men travelled each year on British steamers bound for the main centres of Nigeria. In 1890, the acting Governor of Nigeria estimated a ‘floating Kroo population’ at Lagos to be 1,200. By 1911 the Lagos Kru community had reached much larger proportions with an estimate of 2,680. This was larger than Freetown’s Kru population, which was an estimate at 1,551 at that time (Martin, 1985; Harrell-Bond, 1978). Requests for Kru labour from so many sources was an important contributory factor in the growth of the Kru diaspora, since although many had returned to their homeland, some inevitably stayed behind either by accident (because they lacked the resources to return) or because they decided to settle. Those who did return, often migrated again to a different part of the coast or further afield. By the 1920s, it was estimated that 13,000 Kru lived in the Gold Coast, and the subsequent ‘Krutown’ established in Accra exists to this day. A further 8,000 could be found in Monrovia and 5,000 more in Freetown. Large numbers could also be found in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast (Davis, 1976; Buell, 1928).

Migration to Freetown was in the main stimulated by the opportunities Freetown offered in terms of ship work. Kru were enticed and pressured to settle permanently in Freetown, since their average stay by the beginning of the nineteenth century was between 18 months to two years. But the inducement of £5.5.0 for the first six Kru men to bring their wives and families in 1808, with the addition of two acres of land to cultivate at a minimum, for a period of two years, could not convince them (Brooks, 1972). By 1826, there were thought to be approximately 1,100 Kru people living in Freetown (Holman, 1840). This created competition in shore work between Kru labour and others, including Creole labour (Frost, 1999). Administrators began to complain of Kru people taking away jobs and wages from Creoles. Also, that the income Kru men earned in the colony was being taken back to Liberia, rather than being spent in Freetown to the colony’s loss (Holman, 1840).

A series of acts were passed between 1820 and 1825 in order to restrict Kru immigration to Freetown. Thus the Kru population of Freetown after rising from 615 in 1820 to 1,100 in 1826, dropped dramatically to 505 in 1831. Nevertheless, the Kru population remained stable throughout the rest of the century (Martin, 1985; Webster, 1967).

Economic opportunities grew as Britain consolidated its hold over Sierra Leone and increased its empire under colonial expansion at the end of the nineteenth century. The increased export of raw materials from Africa and the importation of cheap manufactured goods demanded large numbers of labourers to work this huge operation. In Sierra Leone, various indigenous ethnic groups were drawn to Freetown, as were non-indigenous groups such as Kru and Bassa people. Although small-scale manufacturing and processing did exists for such products as tobacco, building materials, furniture and food, so called ‘legitimate trade’ throughout the nineteenth century was mainly concentrated in the export of raw material.

**The Impact of Migration**

Most of the labour recruited for ship and harbour work around the West African coast was taken from Freetown, and this was increasingly so by the early twentieth century. Indeed, articled Kru men who found their way to Liverpool, another aspect of the Kru diaspora, often came from Freetown. Why then was this the case? Why were Kru people increasingly taken from Freetown rather than the Kru coast of Liberia?
Kru people were initially attracted to Sierra Leone because of the naval opportunities it offered. They were present from at least the 1790s onwards working around the wharf as lightermen and longshoremen and for the Sierra Leone Company's vessels. They also worked as stevedores and other port workers in Freetown. The Royal Navy employed Kru men in information and transport duties, and as Tonkin suggests, this was probably to save the health and lives of white sailors in the tropics, who often died of disease, including malaria. With the introduction of the steamship in the latter half of the nineteenth century, new jobs were created in the engine room; firemen, stokers and greasers. On deck, winchmen and stevedores to load and discharge cargo were needed. Kru labour could be found performing these roles in and around the port of Freetown (Tonkin, 1985). The Kru became an important element in the operation of Freetown as a major harbour in West Africa, since it was from here that both the coal and deckhands needed for the coastwise journey were taken.

The Kru people with their experience were in great demand, especially as stevedores to work the cargo on board ship down the coast. Ships from Europe would stop at Freetown to pick up these stevedores who supplemented the European crew. Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century, Kru men began to be signed on ship articles as firemen, stokers and greasers that sailed back to Europe or North America. As relations between European shipping companies, and in particular British shipping and the Liberian government soured over the port of entry tax, labour increasingly began to be taken almost entirely from Freetown. This in turn led Kru people in Liberia to make their way to Freetown, in the hope of being recruited. Thus, the Kru community of Freetown emerged in response to the particular needs of British merchant shipping interests. The requirements of the British shipping industry served to proletarianise Kru people who had once been fishermen and peasant farmers in their native Liberia. Participation in a cash economy meant capitalist labour conditions now informed Kru social being and life experience. The Kru as employees entered into socio-economic relationships with various shipping companies, with white personnel and crews, and with each other. This experience was both a class one and a colonial one for while conditions generally were poor for both white and African crews until the Second World War, the Kru experience as Africans was sharpened by this racial dimension.

Seafaring work impacted on Kru people in several significant ways. It encouraged the temporary flight of Kru labour from their native Liberia to areas of British colonial activity. It also led to permanent settlements and the creation of distinct Kru communities around the globe, including Liverpool and Freetown. Indeed the shipping/trading connections that existed between these two ports meant Kru people were in a unique position. Relations between the two communities were strong because of the Kru's ability to 'jaunt' between these two places through the medium of work. These colonial linkages between Liverpool and West Africa made labour migration possible. However, the specific role that West African labour like the Kru performed on board British merchant ships that plied the waters between Liverpool and Freetown between 1850s-1960s made labour migration almost inevitable. As sailors, regular trips to Liverpool (and elsewhere) meant that the transition from temporary sojourn to permanent settlement could be easily realised, especially when there were many incentives to stay on in Liverpool.5

The Kru people were unique in some ways from other labour migrants because they had been exposed to the place of eventual migration/settlement, and had acquired some practical knowledge of this, sometimes over several months, but sometimes this
extended to years. This could aid the decision to settle permanently, though for those who remained economically active in seafaring, they often retained a foot in both camps. But how far do the Kru people constitute a diaspora?

The Kru Diaspora

The Kru people originated in Eastern Liberia, West Africa and successfully established communities in other parts of West Africa (including Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Sierra Leone), as well as Liverpool, Cardiff and London in the UK. The migration of Kru people to Freetown and Liverpool was important in reformulating and enhancing their own sense of identity. Identity and links with the homeland was closely tied to their work situation. As ordinary and able-bodied seamen, and stevedores, they worked from the port of Freetown, a British colony since the late eighteenth century. The British had good reason to encourage this migration. It meant they would have access to important labour supplies for British merchant ships, and indeed for Royal Navy vessels involved in the suppression of the slave trade since Freetown was the headquarters of the British Anti-Slave trade Squadron (Frost, 1999).

Ethnicity & Identity

If we consider some of the points identified in Safran's model that defines diaspora, we can say that the Kru people have a history of dispersal; that they retain memories of homeland; that they have felt alienation in a host country (UK) and that they have a collective identity. However, not all Kru people in Liverpool had a desire for eventual return for good practical reasons. Not least because in recent years both Liberia and Sierra Leone have been plagued by a brutal civil war, causing much devastation and the persistence of high levels of absolute poverty. In the past between 1850-1960s when Kru people were economically active in Liverpool, the desire to return was largely met through the frequent sailing's of Liverpool ships to Freetown, of which the Kru were part of the ships crew.

Brah rightly argues that diasporas have to be positioned in their own socio-economic, political and historical context. On doing this, we discover that not all diasporas are the same (1996). Thus whilst the Kru people share certain things in common with other groups, they also have a fairly unique experience in other ways. A useful analysis of labour migration is offered by Zolberg who links labour migration to a transnational capitalist economy (1989). For the Kru, British colonial trade provided the wider parameters, which ‘pulled’ Kru migrants to both Freetown and Liverpool. Here they worked as sailors and stevedores on board British merchant ships. For Zolberg, it is the demands of transnational capitalism, which also influence those factors that ‘push’ migrants to leave their home. In the case of the Kru people, the demand for their labour in Freetown led to their initiating and actively encouraging Kru migration here. Kru also left Freetown to settle in Liverpool, not because they were actively recruited (they were much more valuable as cheap labour in Freetown), but because of the prior economic and political linkages that existed between Liverpool and Freetown. Indeed, this ties in with Fawcett and Arnold’s migration systems theory that utilises the concept of global interdependence (1987). Here macro-structures like the economy interact with microstructures such as informal migration networks that allow such groups to adapt and survive. Thus labour migrants like the Kru people are positioned within a broader context that includes not only the movement of labour, but also goods and services, information.
Thus when Kru people came to Freetown from Liberia and from Freetown to Liverpool, they brought with them information and ideas on how to adapt and survive. This is what Castles and Miller see as the genesis of ethnic group formation (1993). In the case of the Kru people, this was only part of the story. The Kru had already entered a process of ethnic group formation due to the position they found themselves in, in Liberia. Suffice to say, migration to Freetown reinforced and strengthened the identification of the Kru as a distinct ethnic group. The reasons for this cannot simply be attributed to economic and social marginalisation or exclusion, as has been the case of many minority ethnic groups in Britain.

The Strengthening of Identity

The identification of the Kru people as a distinct ethnic group partly relates to ethnic formation in Liberia, and partly to the particular economic niche they occupied in colonial and post-colonial Sierra Leone. In common with other migrant groups, Kru in colonial Freetown had their ethnic identity strengthened. Colonial ideology cultivated the idea that certain ethnic or ‘tribal’ groupings were naturally good or able at certain types of work (see Harrell-Bond, Howard & Skinner, 1978). It is no accident that the term Kru (also spelt Kroo) is phonetically the same sound as ‘crew’ and that the two names became synonymous in the context of colonial West Africa. Thus the Kru people acquired a reputation in Liberia as excellent sailors, and it was for this reason that they were encouraged to migrate to Freetown, where they could be easily recruited for work on board British vessels.

Moreover, the Kru as a community encouraged this ethnic label as a way of safeguarding their monopoly over seafaring from Freetown. In the context of Liverpool, the Kru as a distinct ethnic minority, whether this referred to their position as ‘black’ as West Africans, as Sierra Leone’s/Liberians, or Kru (they were all of these groups in different contexts) were all strengthened at various levels. Thus in common with other groups in Liverpool, Kru social and economic marginalisation strengthened their wider group identification as ‘blacks’ or Africans. Yet their association with other black minority ethnic groups reinforced their other ‘identities’ as Liberians or Sierra Leoneans vis-à-vis Nigerians or Ghanians; as Kru people and not Yoruba or Igbo or Creole people. The microstructures that Fawcett and Arnold identify that consist of informal networks of coping strategies represent cultural responses to a new and sometimes hostile environment (1987).

In the context of Freetown, Kru ethnicity became institutionalised in the colonial bureaucracy, The Tribal Administration (1905), as it became known, was a tool of Britain’s policy of indirect rule in Sierra Leone. In Freetown, urbanisation brought many different ethnic migrant groups from the hinterland of Sierra Leone and some from outside this area. As a way of maintaining some control, and in order to implement British colonial policy, Tribal Heads were appointed in cases where distinct ethnic groups could be identified. Where these didn’t exist, they were created (Harrell-Bond, 1978). This proved successful amongst the Kru people not least because they had traditionally settled in an area specifically created for them in 1816. This was called the Kroo Reservation. It allowed for colonial taxes to be more easily collected and proved convenient for labour recruitment for the ships. In the case of both Liberia and Freetown, the ethnic label ‘Kru’ was important to safeguard the economic niche they came to occupy. In Freetown, seafaring work was open to labour competition. A combination of ethnic labelling by the British authorities who believed Kru people to be naturally talented at seafaring, became a self-fulfilling prophecy in many ways, though there were other non-Kru individuals who proved to be just as
skilled once exposed to such practical experience. The all-embracing influence of seafaring work on the Kru community in Freetown impacted on their social organisation and cultural expressions. This was less so in the context of Liverpool.

In Freetown, Kru cultural expressions reflected the dominance of seafaring in their lives. Certain customs and practices, including language stayed with the first generation, and elements of this continued in subsequent generations. This was partly because of the continued linkages Freetown Kru maintained with neighbouring Liberia – a country geographically close. The constant flow of Kru people from Liberia to Freetown and vice-versa reinforced these elements, but which themselves were subject to change. They could also be found in adapted forms in second and subsequent generations. For example, during field work in Freetown in 1989-1990, elderly Kru people often made reference to the younger second generation Kru who did not speak the same Kru language as themselves. Instead they spoke a kind of hybridised language incorporating elements of Kru and elements of Krio, the main language spoken in Freetown (Interviews, 1989-1990 Freetown). This cultural adaptation in the context of Freetown by second and subsequent generations is not unique to the Kru people. It represents a survival strategy in an environment where the Kru community has to interact with the receiving society, and at the same time, maintain an ethnic distinctiveness for expedient economic reasons.

Thus ethnicity here was not about economic marginalisation and racism from other Sierra Leoneans, it was about competition and maintaining control over a particular area of work. The issue of racism manifests itself more broadly and could be seen in the colonial relationship between subjugated African colonial subjects and the power of European colonial rule. So that in the context of Freetown, different ethnic groups were played off against each other (Mende and Kru in shipping for example). Africans were denied economic opportunities that Europeans enjoyed. Thus on board British merchant ships, officers were wholly white British before the Second World War. Africans were also excluded from all but junior positions in the colonial administration. This marginalisation of Africans underpinned the unequal power structure that existed in the colonies, and made more salient the racial divide between Africans and Europeans. Of course there also existed a hierarchy within the broader category of ‘African’, but essentially the racial divide predominated.

The experience of the Kru people in Liverpool resembles more closely the experience of other black migrants to Britain. The group maintained linkages with their homeland, but for Kru people, only as long as they remained economically active on board ship. Once this ended, such links were more difficult to maintain. In Liverpool, Kru people have been exposed to the same level of marginalisation and racism that other black communities experienced. They are perceived as ‘African’ or ‘black’ both inside and outside their work environment. In the past, to be identified as ‘Kru’ in the shipping industry that traded with West Africa had positive connotations – of reliable, highly skilled sailors. But the demise of this trade since the 1960s-70s in both Liverpool and Freetown had meant that the ethnic label ‘Kru’ inside the shipping industry no longer serves a useful purpose. In Liverpool work had a significant influence on the nature of community but of course this was very different from that of Freetown. Liverpool was not a colonial possession as Sierra Leone was but was at the heart of Britain’s colonial trade with West Africa. Thus whilst Tribal Administration was not an issue in Liverpool, other factors such as ‘race’ and class were of particular significance (of course these were also important in Freetown). Thus along with other black workers, Kru people occupied a low socio-economic position in the context of Liverpool and were discriminated against on the grounds of ‘race’.
In Africa, this racial divide was even more prominent. But seafaring work in Liverpool manifests itself on the community in ways that were significantly different from Freetown. Thus whilst Kru women eventually joined their migrating partners in Freetown, in Liverpool this did not occur to the same extent. The community here remained predominantly male (with a handful of Kru women) because seafaring brought Kru males to Liverpool and the forging of relationships with local women was one incentive for settlement, especially if such unions produced children (Frost, 1994).

The absence of Kru males away at sea meant that unlike in Freetown where Kru women perpetuated Kru ethnicity through language, social organisation and church, in Liverpool, the mothers and wider kin of Kru children were often white British. It was this influence that had a formative impact on these children who came to be identified as black British of African descent. Such influence was buttressed by the wider influence of white society. The nature of seafaring meant the Kru people in Liverpool were not migrants in the conventional sense. Initially they were transients travelling between one port and another so that they may decide momentarily to stay and eventually settle permanently, whilst still retaining a link with their homeland.

The Impact of Work on Community

The Kru's work as sailors then created an ethnic identity amongst themselves, as distinct from other ethnic groups in Liverpool, and in the shipping industry with West Africa. In Freetown this manifest itself in diverse ways. Womens' groups and societies flourished as a means of mutual aid and support in the absence of Kru males (uncles, fathers, husbands, brothers, and grandparents) who frequently went to sea. Such societies also provided a medium through which more positive aspects of community life could be expressed, for example during the birth of a child and marriage. The strong sense of loyalty and solidarity amongst these women was the result of the frequent absence of male Kru from the community. Kru women also sought refuge in the various churches that emerged. Churches were an important feature of Freetown social life generally, but played a particular role in the community organisation of the Kru people. Again, the absence of Kru men from the community meant that women tended to form an even larger majority of the congregation than is usual. Furthermore, because attendance tended to be higher amongst women than men, organisations within the church, for example church societies, and the work performed by the church stewards again reflected this imbalance between men and women. The frequent absence of Kru males no doubt contributed to Kru women's' strong commitment to the church and church organisation (Frost, 1999).

Shipping pervaded almost every aspect of Kru social and political life. The political and social organisation amongst Kru people illustrates this point in an almost exemplary fashion. In Freetown, the colonial system of 'indirect rule' had many repercussions on the Kru community there. Colonial administration and rule became embroiled in the issue of labour supplies. Kru tribal heads became important instruments of colonial shipping, especially through their management of shipboard discipline and through taking overall responsibility for the supply of ship workers. The institution of headship emerged amongst many immigrant groups to Freetown for varying reasons, including labour recruitment, interpreters and intermediaries in trade (Harrell-Bond, 1978). For the Kru people, headmanship was a response to their need for somebody to co-ordinate the supply and demand of labour to Freetown and to take responsibility for the labour gangs that were taken from Liberia. They also
represented their communities in complaints to government concerning living conditions, prices and wages. Their other important function was to implement colonial policy amongst their respective communities by ensuring that their communities adhered to colonial laws; that levels of immigration were regulated and that disputes would be settled through the enforcement of colonial law and order (Harrell-Bond, 1978; Colonial Secretary’s Office, 1906). This ‘indirect rule’ over British colonial subjects such as the Kru was very closely bound to the domain of work, and in particular to British maritime interests where Kru labour from Freetown was dominant.

The system of Tribal Administration in Freetown worked well among the Kru people because they had the largest funds of all the ethnic groups. These funds helped sustain an efficient administration, which enabled the Kru to provide funds for education and welfare provisions. Such financial solvency was only possible because of their virtual monopoly of ship work from Freetown, their high profile in seafaring and the relatively high wages (by African standards for ‘unskilled’ work) that they could earn (Report of Tribal Administration, 1955). Relatively high and regular wages also enabled the Kru people to organise friendly societies and other mutual-aid organisations. Voluntary organisations in West Africa provided newly arrived urban migrant communities with social, emotional and financial support. Such organisations were important in enabling traditional organisations, values and loyalties to be adapted to a new urban setting. Friendly or mutual-aid societies encouraged regular subscriptions to provide support in times of unemployment and hardship, sickness and death. This substituted for the support of the wider kin that would have traditionally been met by the village (Wallerstein, 1963; Kilson, 1969), and which was important in the absence of state provision or personal savings.

Some societies made special provision for seamen; for example one of the Kru clans the Draeo (Do) gave loans for seamen only. Some societies organised employees of a particular shipping company, for example the Barber Line Kroo Society established in 1928 (Sierra Leone Blue Books, 1899-1938). Other societies took the names of Elder Dempster ships, one of the main British shipping companies in West Africa. These included the ship names of Accra, Abossa and Apapa, which in turn were named after West African towns or areas (Banton, 1957). Whilst Kilson (1969) has argued that such organisations flourished among the urban poor, it must also be pointed out that these could only exist amongst the relatively better-off sections of the poor. The ability to contribute regularly could not be maintained by those whose work was very infrequent or very low paid by African standards.

Whilst such societies could be very volatile, existing one month and collapsing the next, surprisingly many societies were very stable between the period 1899-1939 (Sierra Leone Blue Books, 1899-1938). This perhaps suggests that subscriptions were set low enough for members to spread the risk and join several at any one time. Those seamen that were in work would contribute a fixed sum after every trip. The Kru people were also able to establish a ‘Kru Fund’, which allowed the community to set up their own church and school, independent of established and official bodies.

The Kru people in Freetown were active agents in the making of their community and their identity, as well as being the subjects of this particular urban social form. Kru political organisation in common with other West Africa communities has been shaped by the external influence of British colonialism. This fed into the Kru’s occupational-cum-ethnic identity as sailors, and this in turn had some influence on Kru social organisation. The dominance of ship work on this community helped
shape aspects of community organisation and informed the character of the community. It gave the community in Freetown an ethnic-occupational coherence.

The symbolic importance of seafaring on Kru community life was especially pertinent when one examines the organisation of certain Kru friendly societies, where the hierarchy of office was sometimes based on that of a ship. Two such societies, the Victoria and King Albert established in the early twentieth century and whose names reflect the pervasiveness of empire and monarchy (though this has a certain twist) were composed of a series of positions that mirrored that of a ship's hierarchy. These included the 'Doctor' who 'examined' the deceased and reported this to the society, the 'Purser' who was the treasurer, the 'Quarter Master' who called the attention of members by blowing a whistle. There existed an executive, composed of 'Dock Captain', 'Sea-going Captain' and 'Officers', who donned part or whole uniforms acquired during their work. Rank and file members of the society were named 'Abs' and were controlled by the 'Bosuns' (Lewis interview, Freetown 1990).

Of course much of this activity was symbolic and ceremonial since the main objectives of these societies was assistance in time of death, sickness or financial hardship. The emphasis on ships' hierarchy distinguished Kru friendly societies from other ethnic groups, who tended to organise along the lines of the colonial Administration. Both symbolised similar authority patterns.

Conclusion

In the context of post-colonial Sierra Leone, ethnicity has remained important, even though the demise of the Kru people in seafaring has been gradually eroded since the 1960 and 1970s. Today, very few Kru people are recruited on British merchant ships due to the overall decline in trade with this area; the increased use of containerisation requiring smaller crews and the increased use of crews from the Far East. Such development have also meant that the community in Liverpool has not been replenished with new migrants. In the context of a city that has one of the highest rates of bi-racial mixing (between African and White British), the ability of the community to reproduce itself ethnically or otherwise is made more difficult. This is in contrast to other diasporan communities in Britain. For example south Asian communities.

Sierra Leone has recently emerged from a civil war that has caused much devastation and death. In the post-civil war Sierra Leone it will be interesting to watch how important Kru ethnic identity is to that community. Of course ethnic politics more generally is an important aspect of this country's history, but the smallness of the Kru community has meant that ethnic mobilisation for political purposes has not been an issue for this community. The Kru people can no longer hang on to their ethnicity as an occupational-cum-ethnic category, except perhaps for nostalgic purposes? The material conditions that gave rise to this groups identity in Freetown no longer exist, what we may ask, is the purpose of this today?

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Endnotes

1. Castles and Miller give the examples of Mexicans migrating to the US via recruitment; South Asians and African Caribbean's to Britain and Algerians to France because of the former colonial relationships here; Koreans and Vietnamese to the US because of military involvement.
2. In the 1840s and 1850s the introduction of indentureship in the Caribbean to replace former slaved labour on the plantations saw the importation of predominantly Indian but also African labour. Between the 1840s and 1860s a total of 2,421 migrant workers from the coast of Liberia went to the British and French Guianas, with smaller numbers going to Jamaica, Trinidad and Martinique. This accounted for approximately seven per cent of the total number of African immigrants. See M. Schuler, 'Kru Emigration to British and French Guiana 1841-1857' in P.E. Lovejoy (ed.), Africans in Bondage, Studies in Slavery and the Slave Trade (1986:155-156). Schuler claims that British Guiana had the second largest Kru diaspora after Freetown who had the largest at mid-century; but available figures dispute this. In 1850, 560 Kru could be found in Freetown (see R.R. Kuczynski, Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire (1948, Vol. 1 80), whereas according to Schuler, approximately 989 men and a small number of Kru women migrated to British Guiana between 1841-1853.


4. The incentives included higher rates of pay if signed on in Liverpool (though these were still lower than local white labour), relatively higher standard of living compared to colonial West Africa; greater employment opportunities and in some cases emotional ties through partners and children (the result of such relationships).

5. The colonisation of Liberia by the Americo-Liberians or settler Liberians under the auspices of the American Colonisation Society led to conflict with the Kru people, who had taken away from them and taxes imposed of them if they left Liberian ports. The Americo-Liberians officially recognised the kru (who were actually a collection of different people with similar though not identical backgrounds) as an ethnic group in the nineteenth century, which underpinned their identity as a distinct ethnic group. See D. Frost (1999), Work and Community Among West African Migrant Workers, Liverpool University Press.

6. Pakistani communities for example, are sustained and replenished through continued linkages with 'home', through frequent visits and through the institution of marriage, where it is not unusual for prospective marriage partners to be brought to Britain from the sub-continent.

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The Socio-economic Basis of a Diaspora Community: *Igbo bu ike*

Ola Uduku

In this article the author discusses the history and actions of the Igbo community, primarily via their 'home town unions or associations' and more recently through the activities in the diaspora of the World Igbo Congress (WIC), both to establish their presence in their adopted countries throughout the world but also, and more importantly, to maintain links with 'home town' communities. This takes place especially via large and small-scale economic ventures, including capital construction projects, local investments, and occasionally local recruitment for the international market, from 'home towns' (often small villages) in Eastern Nigeria. The first part of the paper discusses the socio-economic activities that Igbo 'home town unions' are involved in, the second discusses the historical background to these unions, the third analyses their success and what future contributions such groups might have in a rapidly 'globalising' world economy.

Introduction

The Igbo ethnic group, found in southeastern Nigeria, comprises the largest population group in the region and is one of the three largest in the federal republic. The location of the Igbos in tropical rainforest and surrounded by other ethnic groups, has restrained their expansion, and thus 'Igboland', to use the informal term employed by some writers (Crowder, 1971:129; Uchendu, 1965; Meek, 1967; Isichei, 1971; Afigbo, 1981 to name a few), is relatively small. Pressures on the land for farming, housing and other requirements has no doubt had some influence on their lifestyle.

Igbo clans have traditionally been associated with trades and professions which have involved travel, such as the ironsmiths from Awka, the medicine men from Orlu, and the long-distance traders from Nkwerre. However it was probably the impact of international trade – initially the barter systems set up with coastal traders, and later the slave trade – which expanded the horizons of the Igbo traders and others who acquired tradable skills with the advent of colonialism (Afigbo, 1981:345-346). Some Igbo, especially long-distance traders and purveyors of specialised skills like the Aro, Nri, Umunneoha, Nkwerre & Awka, traveled extensively among the Igbo and their neighbours but never before did Igbo businessmen have as much opportunity for travel as they had under colonial rule. By the 1920s they made their presence felt amongst the Yoruba and Hausa; by the 1940s it was becoming a raging storm and causing disquiet on the part of the host communities.
There have been four main phases of significant movement: first, the pre-colonial era up to the end of the slave trade in the mid-19th century; then, the colonial and early post-colonial era, up to the mid-1960s; the exodus of refugees during and after the Biafran war; and, finally, the current era of movement which, although lacking a clear start to demarcate it from the post-war period, has seen different reasons for migration become prominent, such as the effects of global recession in the late 1980s.

In this article an attempt will be made to present an overview of the three post-slavery periods in relation to the Igbo diaspora. It also aims to identify the uniqueness of the Igbo experience in comparison to the similar experiences of others such as the Yorubas and Hausas, who have been the subject of more extensive research. Finally, it presents a diagnostic analysis of the extent and state of the Igbo diaspora in the early 21st century and concludes by speculating on the future of the diaspora and its relationship with 'Igboland'. The Igbo experience, it is argued, is unusual for various reasons. First, this is because of a background in different traditional institutions: the Igbos have an acephaleous political structure in contrast to hierarchical structures of both the Yoruba kingdoms and Hausa emirates. Igbos also retain a closer attachment to their village unit, or 'home town, than to the greater Igbo 'ethnic' grouping – considered a 'constructed' colonial identity as evidenced by the failure of the Union Igbo project (Van den Bersselaar, 1997). Second, the Igbos were involved in one of the earliest African post-independence wars of secession (after the failed attempt of Katanga in the Congo), the Nigerian (federalist) Biafra (secessionist) civil war (1966-1970). This was a historic moment that saw the Igbos unite to defend (albeit unsuccessfully) their perceived group interests. A third factor is that 'Igboland' itself, with its poor farmland and limited population-holding capacity, has provided the 'push' to give impetus to the movement of Igbos far afield to make a living; yet their considerable success at creating a 'diasporic' identity with continued strong links with local community or home town networks is distinctive in comparison with other ethnic groupings.

Finally, whilst the Yorubas – their western Nigerian neighbours with similar diasporic relations, show strong signs of ethnic identity in their 'new' communities – the Igbos, though perceived as cosmopolitan and receptive to change by researchers, are paradoxically more involved in home town kinship activities and consider their residence 'abroad' as a sojourn, expecting (until very recently) to return to their native home town or village on retirement, or when rich enough (Gugler, 1971; Peil, 1991:37-38; Osaghae, 1994). Thus the notion of permanent Igbo communities in the diaspora, although a longstanding reality, has only recently begun to be grappled with by Igbos at home and abroad.

The existing literature on the diaspora, though substantial, is of varying quality, especially when related to the experiences of different ethnic groups. A lot was written in the 1950s and early 1960s on the activities of home town improvement unions (see Ottenburg, 1955; Gugler, 1961; Nwaka, 1986:58), and the origins of the 'heeboes, Iboes and Igbos' have been the subject of various anthropological studies by early missionaries and anthropologists such as Jones (1924), Meek (1967) and others.

Possibly the most well-known writing on Igbo culture, as viewed over a spectrum of time and with some relationship to Igbos in the Diaspora, is provided by Chinua Achebe's (1958-1964) trilogy of novels – in chronological order of their settings: Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God and No Longer at Ease. The fullest account of life in 'Igboland' prior to this era was Olaudah Equiano’s (1793), An Interesting Narrative of his life before his capture and enslavement. In more recent times there has been a collection of
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self-published literature by Igbos who live or have lived abroad, with anecdotal information about their life experiences and 'advice' for would-be travellers (Oji, 1992).

Conversely and equally significant today are the number of Igbos in the diaspora today who have become a part of the criminal underworld, and who live up to the media stories about their nefarious activities (West Africa, 1998). More positive are the largely undocumented achievements of second- and third-generation diaspora families who have acquired academic and professional qualifications which have ensured their entry into the 'elite' stratum of the diaspora. More recently, the names of sports personalities of ethnic origin, usually competing for their adopted country, have shown the success of the Igbo and Yoruba diaspora communities; specifically the names Kris Akabuiisi in British athletics, and Akeem, 'the dream' Olajuwon, in American basketball readily come to mind.

Igbos in the Diaspora

Living in a hinterland region has meant that the Igbo's history of contact with the outer world is much more recent than that of ethnic groups with coastal access, such as the Yoruba in southwestern Nigeria. Before the expansion of trading activities brought about by increased contact with the Portuguese and other European traders during the slave trade, the rainforest habitation of the Igbo and their relatively insular lifestyle based on subsistence farming and limited inter-clan trade relations, afforded most of them little opportunity (except for occasional wars) to expand their horizons outwards to new areas of influence in trade, politics or culture. The Awka ironsmiths, Arochukwu 'medicine men' and possibly the Onitsha traders, to name a few exceptions whose distinctive professions were in demand in many parts of Igboland and elsewhere, were able to travel farther afield, although there are no reports of substantial Igbo communities established in West Africa or elsewhere in this 'pre-diaspora' period, prior to direct contact with the West from the slave trade onwards.

The First Diaspora Era

The first period of diaspora, comprising the era from the slave trade until the colonial period, had a direct effect on Igbo and their global outlook. The location of Igboland proved critical to its involvement in human traffic as much of the area became criss-crossed by 'slave routes', from the hinterland to the sea. Discussion of the slave trade is beyond the scope of this paper, however there is clear evidence of the transfer of thousands of Igbo amongst other Africans affected by the trade. Also crucial were the records and narratives of freed slaves, missionaries and others about these events (Equiano, 1793; Waddell, 1970). In each of these cases the communities formed by the dispersion and resettlement were neither unique nor possibly identifiable as a discrete ethnic community: the experience of Igbo speakers was the same as many others in West Africa.

However Gugler (1961) cites the first instance of an Igbo Union in existence in Freetown in the late 19th century; this and subsequent Igbo communities were established by groups who felt affinity ties with southeastern Nigeria. Aside from these activities in this era there were also the autonomous actions of agents such as the Anglican CMS (Church Missionary Society) and the United Free Church of Scotland (Presbyterian), who sent chosen Africans (Igbos in this case) to theological colleges
and medical schools in the UK (for example, Africanus Horton was the first black medical student in Edinburgh University).

The Second Diaspora Era

This period, from colonial times until the first few years of the independent nation-state of Nigeria, directly affected the Igbos. Having found the benefits of western education most Igbos actively grasped the opportunities and vistas that education could offer. Much of the Nigerian colonial civil service had lower grade clerical positions filled by Igbos in northern and western Nigeria. Many commentators such as (1994) and Peil (1992) note the significant numbers of Igbos who took up residence in ‘Hausaland’ and ‘Yorubaland’ over a relatively short period of time from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. At the international level, the race for higher education, or the ‘Golden Fleece’, began in earnest as Igbo families and clan groups who could afford it sent their ‘illustrious’ sons for further education abroad. Other careers such as joining the army or taking up a commission with the merchant navy also attracted Igbo men and, in the latter case, became a catalyst in the creation of one of the oldest Igbo diaspora communities which was formed in Liverpool, England in 1935 (Uka, 1992).

The diaspora Igbo communities, which existed in this era, principally in the United Kingdom, other parts of Nigeria and West Africa did have a distinctive bias. Although other groups, such as the Yorubas, Efik and, to a lesser extent, the Hausas, all had community networks in places abroad where significant numbers of them lived, the identity, form and function of many of the Igbo Improvement Unions was unique. Primarily, these Igbo diaspora communities formed ‘home town’ improvement unions that had two principal aims. The first was to look after the welfare of kin affiliated to the group abroad (the most important function being help with transporting the body of deceased members or their close family ‘home’ for burial). The second was to improve the welfare and development of the home town community through the construction of schools and hospitals and sometimes contributing to scholarship funds to enable ‘illustrious’ sons of the soil to become doctors and lawyers for the greater glory of the village community (West African Builder, 1961; Achebe, 1960). The ethnic ‘Ibo Union’, although also in existence during this period, had more of a political role than a community focus. Thus as a diaspora group, Igbos seem to have been more concerned with the local issues of home town politics than the wider issues related to ethnicity and political power and usually became a member of one’s home town union.

The Third Diaspora Era

The third and differentiating diaspora period for Igbos occurred during the forced migration before, during and immediately after the Nigerian/Biafran civil war of 1966-70. The preceding ethnic cleansing pogroms that took place during this period have been discussed by others (Amadi, 1978; Ojukwu, 1989; Ikeazor, 1997). These events forced thousands of Igbos to flee their homes in northern and to a lesser extent western Nigeria, principally to return to the core Igbo ‘homeland’ region in southeastern Nigeria, but also in some cases to neighbouring West African states or further afield, principally the US and the UK. In many ways, this parallels the experience of the Ugandan Asians at the height of the Idi Amin dictatorship. Many Igbos found themselves having to redefine their relationship with their former diasporic communities (in northern and western Nigeria).
By the end of the crisis in the early 1970s those who returned found that their identities had been reassigned from being local members of multiethnic communities, to being sojourners in their former diaspora communities. The still tense issue of 'abandoned property' in cities such as Port Harcourt and Lagos highlighted the continuing plight of Igbo returnees who found their assets had been 're-possessed' in their absence. From this period, the 'myth of return', which had begun to recede from Igbo city dwellers in the 1960s, came back to the fore. Most telling of the level of integration prior to 1966 was the multiethnic name of one of the key 1966 coup figures – Major Kaduna Nzeogwu, born of Igbo parents in northern Nigeria. The name Kaduna is a northern town whilst Nzeogu is Igbo; this combination was unusual. Since then Igbos elsewhere have developed concrete plans to 'return' to their home towns at retirement, kick-starting the building boom in villages throughout Eastern Nigeria from the 1970s to the present day (see Uduku, 1996).

Residence and spatial definitions of territory were also attenuated as Igbos who returned and re-settled in host communities in northern and western Nigeria were more likely to live in close proximity in certain city areas such as the Tudun Wada and Sabon Gari neighbourhoods of northern Nigerian cities, and Ajegunle, and the former 'Maroko' in Lagos. These areas had often been original non-indigenous settlements, but since the 1970s they have become more so (Peil, 1991:37-38; Schwerdtfeger, 1982). Life for many returnees in close proximity with others from the same ethnic group further contributed to the development of a 'supra diaspora', or Igbo national (as opposed to home town union) identity. As the Igbo community has often be able to organise itself effectively for evacuation or defence in times of conflict, this has been a useful strategy in towns in northern Nigeria where continuing ethnic and religious related conflicts remain.

The civil war and its consequences thus worked to enforce stronger ethnic identities and allegiances. It also ensured that for Igbos in the diaspora within Nigeria their new situation and identification with their host community was seen as clearly temporary or transient. Clearly with Nigeria's shifting geopolitics, one's relationship with one's home town and with other Igbo kin was all that could be assured. The Igbo villages and their home town development unions became the major beneficiaries of this adverse situation as development activities were actively channelled to them. Economically then, the aftermath of this period was a shift of focus in planned financial activities towards both individual house building and also capital-intensive home town development projects in Igbo villages. Thus the old Umuahia Development Union completed the electrification of the village in 1974 and commissioned a self-financed borehole providing pipeborne water at each hamlet in 1984.

In the international sphere Igbos in the diaspora, most of whom were students, also found themselves affected by events in Nigeria. There were also a limited number of Biafran/Nigerian war 'refugees' who managed to escape to Europe and the US leading to the transformation of Igbo communities within the UK and US. The former home town development unions – combined to work with Biafra Unions – now became places of information, news and fund raising for the 'Biafran cause'. Thus the greater supra Igbo identity came to the fore in importance during this crucial period which in turn had a long term effect on the Diaspora community abroad.

For some Igbos, the civil war and its aftermath simply increased their length of stay abroad until they and families could return safely; for others, the war served to delay and eventually result in some families and individuals giving up the idea of returning to Nigeria. The fantastic, but short-lived oil boom which followed the war, however,
was enough to ensure that most Igbos living abroad returned to Nigeria during this period; however, many retained their international ties and relationships with Igbo Unions abroad. The Igbo Union minutes for Liverpool (1998) record visits of former residents who have now ‘returned home’ but keep ties with the UK.

Similar to the diaspora groups within Nigeria, the effects of the Nigerian/Biafran war also influenced the positioning and politics of Igbo groups abroad who had had working relations with other Nigeria ethnic group associations. In Liverpool, the Igbo Union broke off relations with the Nigeria Union (1998) which supported the Federal side in the civil war (Uka, 1996). For many also, the ‘myth’ of Nigerian unity and the principle of being able to settle and work anywhere in Nigeria was abandoned as the ‘return’ home to Nigeria had certain formal or informal caveats. Ethnic quotas were more likely to be adhered to for jobs outside one’s area of origin, and often top government posts were awarded on political and not meritocratic grounds.

Thus international returnees were likely to immediately spend time living and re-establishing contacts in their home towns, many having already built houses there whilst still abroad. They would then either take up government jobs close to home (usual for doctors, lawyers and other professionals) or, having developed a home town base, would then go on to pursue private sector jobs or become self-employed as entrepreneurs in the economic ‘boom’ towns of Lagos, Kaduna, and Port Harcourt, where they often became part of the Igbo diaspora community in these urban areas (Port Harcourt had been part of the Eastern region prior to the civil war, but became Rivers State of Nigeria in 1967).

Economically and politically, this phase of diaspora Igbos initiated the contemporary organisation of the Igbo unions. With their exposure to western education and employment, the idea of development plans for home towns, investment in small- and medium-scale industry, was pursued with the harnessing of capital from diaspora-domiciled Igbos. For the first time since the Biafra/Nigerian war, there was also the development of an Igbo shared political identity. This era coincided with Nigeria’s short-lived return to civil rule from 1979 to 1983 in which Igbos in the diaspora helped fund ethnic Igbo ‘Peoples Club’ movements which was a precursor to the unbanning of political parties. The Peoples’ Club movement became part of the Eastern dominated NPP, (Nigerian People’s Party) which captured the most seats in the two Igbo States in the 1979, and 1983 elections, before the coup d’etat and reinstatement of military rule later on in 1983.

**The Fourth Diaspora Era**

The final era of the diaspora dates from the collapse of the Nigerian economy in the mid-1980s to the present. Over this period, the nature and character of the Igbo diaspora has changed substantially. Within Nigeria, recent clashes in Kaduna, Kano and Lagos have meant that ethnic groups have had to work hard to ensure their members were evacuated or protected in ethnically diverse areas.

The issues relating to most West African communities in the international diaspora today are immigration, employment and secure forms of remittances to home countries. These issues clearly are important for Igbos abroad. Few want to return immediately to Nigeria given its deteriorating economic and political situation; however, the idea of eventually returning remains a goal to be strived for. Those who do return, tend to be wealthy enough to have covered their financial odds with secure offshore investments and have dual or more nationalities. In some local authorities in
the UK there has been a near 100 per cent increase in residence of black Africans (Daley, 1998).

This more permanent nature of residence away from ‘home’ in the diaspora brings about generational differences. Whilst most older Igbos in their 50s still express a wish to go ‘home’, their offspring, many born in the diaspora, are less sure about where their loyalties lie. Their children – the grandchildren of the first residents – are often totally assimilated within the diaspora community, although occasionally expressing an interest in finding their ‘roots’. For diaspora communities nearer to Eastern Nigeria such as those settled elsewhere in Nigeria, and in both West and Southern Africa, ‘home’ is still relatively nearby, with such groups often returning on annual Christmas visits causing gridlock on major routes into the region.

Economically migratory employment and remittances go hand in hand. For most West African migrants abroad, there is the need to work in whatever job is available, to exist and most importantly, to enable remittances to be sent ‘home’. For Igbos, the traditional home town unions have retained their validity and existence into the 21st century with annual ‘New Yam’ Festivals and fund raising events taking place. In the mid-1990s micro-credit banking was introduced in eastern Nigeria. For many local communities the major capital base required for these banks has come from diaspora residents able to contribute significant amounts due to favourable hard currency exchange rates (Old Umuahia Development Union, 2001).

There has also been the re-emergence of the supra-ethnic union – the World Igbo Congress – which has socio-economic as well as political aims. Now in its seventh year, it is based mainly in the US with contacts throughout Western Europe (World Igbo Congress, 2000). In its latest 2001 communiqué there are calls for Igbos to invest in education technology and small industries in Eastern Nigeria (World Igbo Congress, 2001).

In today’s global economy those working in the international diaspora have become closer to ‘home’. Electronic money transfers, fast intercontinental air travel, and amongst Igbos and other Anglophone West Africans, the primacy of English as the international mode of communication makes life in the diaspora and links with ‘home’ much easier today than it would have been in the 1940s. However, there is a confusion in identities – especially amongst the young. On the one hand, there is the global bombardment of ‘multi-cultural’ media images such as Bennetton and Coca-Cola and, in America, the public acceptance of mythical identities such as the Afrocentric’s promotion of the ‘Kwanza’ movement. On the other hand, there are the more damaging stereotyped images of the perceived hopelessness of Africa and ‘Africans’ as well as that of Nigerians as criminals.

For many in the diaspora there has been the pressure to take on their adopted country’s nationality and assimilate into the ‘mainstream’ community, only paying lip service to the discrete diaspora identities. In the UK, the controversial ‘Tebbit test’ – named after the MP who proposed it – meant that the true test of ‘Britishness’ for assimilated migrants at for instance, sporting events such as cricket, was to clap in support of the British team and not one’s original home town team. In the US and Canada, often well-paid employment is either conditional on, or gives preference to, those with full nationality. For many professionals, this has often been the only way to ensure career progress; for others, the solution has been to adopt the identity required of the moment.
The later generations of residents of the diaspora, have thus begun to undergo the classical forms of assimilation, mainly because discrete ethnic identities are difficult to maintain and often have little to offer within a global milieu. Furthermore, societal norms and mores become difficult to enforce within the diaspora community if they are in opposition to the dominant moral context of the main community. In Liverpool, the Igbo Union has a dwindling membership as the younger Igbos, predominantly diaspora born, have no affiliation with the Union which still conducts its business in Igbo, a language few of the younger group speaks, remains sexually segregated (the women have a female ‘mother’s’ union) and often meets on a Sunday evening in direct conflict with the weekly television airing of Liverpool United football matches – the city’s major sport (Igbo Union, 1998).

Igbos in the 21st Century Diaspora

*Ndi Igbo Kwenu* (literally translated as ‘greetings to the entire Igbo population present’) is the rallying cry for Igbo meetings. Whilst the negative aspects of the global city suggest that we will soon witness a mono-cultural ‘meltdown’ (aside from the events of 11 September 2001), there are also practical indicators that tell a different story. The Igbos are a middle-level diaspora community by African standards and have come to the situation rather late. The Yorubas, Hausa, Fanti and other West African ethnic groups, have older, and in the first two cases, demographically larger communities than the Igbo. The nature of the engagement and linkages with ‘home’ and the diaspora community ‘abroad’ however is already changing. The Community Association or Development Union, as a welfare net for its first generation indigenes ‘abroad’, is unlikely to change mainly because the social functions which reify identity and culture remain in demand by this group; future ‘diaspora born’ Igbos however have a diffident relationship to these structures.

The semi-autonomous nature of the Igbo community and its strong ties with kinship sub groups also work to strengthen ties between diaspora and home, as conceptually the relationship to home town tends to be stronger than the supra groups of (Igbo) ethnicity and nation. The fluidity of Igbo culture means that much of the cultural and social mores, which exist in more organised African diaspora groups such as the Yoruba community, are applied less rigidly. The ability to assimilate where necessary and ‘make do’ where required means that the community already exists minimally between the modern and the traditional. Also, the effects of the civil war episode have served to reinforce amongst many the need for an organised community in diaspora situations.

Economically also, the Igbo’s success in rebuilding their business interests in the informal and more recently the formal small and medium enterprise sector since the end of the civil war, has been phenomenal. In Nnewi for example, the Igbo community have established a motor parts industry that relies on ethnic ties to reduce transportation costs (World Bank, 2000:171). The growth of these economic empires show no sign of slowing down with the information and telecommunications sector looming in their sights. Nigeria’s continuing political uncertainty remains the only deterrent to growth, although the strategic targeting of most Igbo diaspora investment in ‘home towns’ has meant that much of the crises taking place in Nigeria’s cities have yet to affect eastern Nigeria.

Obviously, as the location of ‘Igboland’ is in southeastern Nigeria, its existence ultimately is influenced by events in all of Nigeria. The uncertainty and lack of resolution of the current crisis in Nigeria therefore has a strong bearing on the future
of Igbo development and that of other ethnic groups. It is to be seen whether this situation and the full assimilation pressures from adopted countries of the diaspora will result in future generations redefining the community's identity within their different world frame. A key lament at the World Igbo Congress has been the loss of ability to communicate in Igbo by younger Igbos. Their solution was to move a resolution to establish Saturday Igbo language schools in all cities in the US with a significant Igbo population; the results are yet to be recorded (World Igbo Congress, 2001).

Conclusion: O rugo niomume (the time has come to act)

This paper has assembled strands of information and factual evidence about the specific historical and socio-economic development of the Igbo Diaspora within a local and global context. Its thesis has been that the Igbo community in the diaspora has shown remarkable characteristics of evolution and development and continued attachment to their geographical region 'Igboland'. When compared to other Nigerian and African ethnic groups, their development of the home town union structure and most recently the World Igbo Congress, has been unique.

The relative middle-level, 'meso' size of the community and its late arrival onto the global scene seems not to have substantially affected its progress and development. Furthermore, the acephalous, relatively un-hierarchic nature of Igbo culture and society has enabled its diaspora community to adapt a flexible attitude to change based on the experiences of the Biafran/Nigerian civil war which served to further influence these attitudes to change – mainly through it being a catalyst to forge a united group Igbo identity. Since the end of the crisis this identity has survived fragmentation and conflict to remain a uniting aspiration for many diaspora Igbos despite their differences. The impetus of the groups and supra-ethnic bodies such as the World Igbo Congress, remains to further the development of Igboland socially, economically, and politically to push for Igbo representation at presidential level (World Igbo Congress, 1991).

In the 21st century, the Igbo diaspora has become more dispersed throughout all continents and most countries in the world. They have become an established international diaspora with the US being home to the majority. With the continuing socio-political crisis in Nigeria this diaspora has become formalised. There are now two established generations of Igbos in the diaspora in much of the US and parts of Europe such as the United Kingdom.

For first generation diaspora Igbos, the day to day issues of employment, immigration, and secure remittance facilities remain uppermost in their struggle to adapt to their adopted country. Unfortunately for some, their association with crime and the underworld has had a negative effect on the group profile of many Igbos and West Africans in general. Except for port cities such as Liverpool who can trace an older community, most first generation diaspora Igbos are now aged over 50, whilst the second generation, many of whom were born in the adopted countries are in their late teens to early 20s.

For the majority of this group however there is a socio-economic class and race struggle to overcome with only a very few having the status to gain entrance to middle or upper class society. Most have a constant struggle to establish their status, often working in the harsh unregulated employment sector, where immigrant labour is welcome but grossly underpaid. With often irregular immigration papers, many
are illegal or 'invisible' persons to the official authorities and therefore are open to economic and social exploitation at all levels. Furthermore, as ethnic blacks there is also the racism attached to colour that many encounter, in their socio-economic transactions with the 21st century Western economy, similar to early diaspora communities who had to survive in 19th century Europe and the New World.

For the more established Igbos in the diaspora, the politics and long term socio-economic development of Igbo land have increasingly come to the fore – as seen by the creation and objectives of the World Igbo Congress. There has also been the evolution of an 'international' elite in the Igbo diaspora, with figures such as Chinua Achebe, Emeka Anyaoku, and Olu Oguibe, all of whom live 'abroad', although identifying with their African if not Igbo 'roots'.

As a second generation of Igbos reach maturity, new issues of identity and relationships to 'Igboland' are having to be redefined. The connection to Igboland remains strong as most visit eastern Nigeria during vacations, and the home town union movements ensure that there is regular contact with other Igbo families in the diaspora. However, issues of dual identities and loyalties can often pose a problem for diaspora-educated Igbo youths. The proposed Saturday Igbo language schools for American Igbo youths will need more support and relevance to begin to successfully espouse and promote a 21st century Igbo identity, relevant to a sophisticated youth. Also in countries with smaller, less established, diaspora populations this may not be economically or logistically possible.

Now is the time to consider what the future holds. For the time being, the majority of the Igbo diaspora will continue to operate within a global society exploring and reconstructing their identities and economic status at home and abroad, within a constantly changing landscape.

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* Igbo Buk 'ike translated literally means 'Igbos are strong' or, more loosely, 'powerful' which alludes to their influence – in this case on the global stage.

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Zanzibar's Turbulent Transition

Greg Cameron

On 29 October 2000, 10 million voters in 231 constituencies cast their votes for 13 political parties throughout Tanzania. The election on the Tanzanian mainland was predictably won by the ruling CCM (Party of the Revolution) against a divided and weak opposition. In Zanzibar, on the other hand, the CCM faced a fierce challenge from the CUF (Civic United Front) as approximately 450,000 people voted in 50 constituencies for the Union and Zanzibar Presidents, and candidates for the Union and Zanzibar Legislatures. The elections on Zanzibar were grossly mismanaged and deepened the growing political crisis in the United Republic of Tanzania. And indeed, on 27 January 2001, throughout the major cities of Tanzania, there were mass protests against the electoral coup on Zanzibar. The police killed between 30 and 70 people and wounded upwards of 600 people. Thousands fled to the mainland and more than 2,000 Zanzibaris, mainly Pembans, fled to Kenya as refugees (Human Rights Watch, April 2002).

Underlying the political crisis in Zanzibar is a democracy movement on the Isles that represents both a challenge to the coalition that came into power in the wake of the bloody events of the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution, and to the Dodoma government which has steadfastly refused to countenance reform of a Union that the majority of Zanzibaris see as a threat to their Isles' autonomy. It is the contention of this article that Zanzibar's contemporary crisis has its origins in CCM's post-1964 development project. The regime's lamentable economic performance, coupled with its pursuance of 'revolutionary' politics long into independent Zanzibar's political history, alienated a large segment of Zanzibari society from the leaders of the 1964 revolutionary coalition, especially on the impoverished island of Pemba whose cloves were the main source of the Isles' foreign exchange. Throughout the 1970s and onwards, a growing number of Zanzibaris began to view the 1964 Union with Tanzania mainland as an instrument to preserve the economic status quo by keeping the Isles politically prostrate.

This article draws on observation, informal discussions with Zanzibaris of a variety of backgrounds, including political activists, as well as Tanzanian newspapers, political party manifestos, and human rights reports. My analysis builds on a decade-long engagement of living, working and researching on the Isles (1988-1998). Below I seek to explain how and why the current political stalemate has come about. I focus on the election campaign, attempting to put flesh and bones on these traumatic days, and to provide a feel for events on the ground as they unfolded. I detail how the contemporary political transition on the Isles is one towards a growing authoritarianism by the CCM regime, a process which does not augur well for the future stability of the African continent's last political union between two hitherto sovereign states (Zanzibar and Tanganyika formed a Union in 1964 in the immediate aftermath of the
1964 Zanzibar Revolution). Unfortunately space does not permit a longer political history of the Isles or Zanzibar's relationship with the mainland. Rather, I shall focus on the parties' election campaign, its formal and not so formal processes, as well as the debates which raged in Zanzibari society around the content of political practice and aspiration, even as a deeper violence cast a shadow over this latest attempt at multiparty democracy on the Isles. I conclude with a brief analysis of the recent Accord between the CCM and the CUF, suggesting areas in which the Accord could serve to regenerate organisational and political life on Zanzibar, if indeed the regime is serious about substantive political reform.

Background to the 2000 Election

The demise of the single party system on the Isles was a protracted affair. Throughout the single party period classical popular organisations, such as trade unions and cooperatives, were subjected to an even greater degree of incorporation than their Tanzania mainland counterparts, and in recent years, the same can be said for most of the Zanzibari NGOs registered from the early 1990s. The subsequent decimation of the political, legal and administrative structures of the multiparty system was only the latest in the suppression of organisational life on Zanzibar. This pattern of authoritarianism must be seen in light of the reconfiguration of the 1964 coalition on Zanzibar (CCM Zanzibar) – the resident mainland population, most of the Unguja peasantry (on the main island) and the Union government – which gravitated from a populist-cum-African Socialist (Ujamada) mass mobilisation model during the single party era, to a more overtly ethnic and racial populist pre-revolutionary era model during the economic and political turmoil of the multiparty period.

CUF was formed in 1992 from a merger of a Zanzibar political advocacy group, Kamati ya Mwelekeo wa Vyama Huru (A Committee for the Enhancement of Free Political Movements) and a mainland-based party, Chama cha Wananchi (The People's Party). CUF represented a broad alliance of urban intellectual and business interests, and the vast majority of rural peasantry on the second island of Pemba, with some limited rural support on the main island of Unguja. Potentially containing contradictory economic interests within its coalition, its language was one of human rights, constitutional reform (including aspects of the Union) and a broadsided critique on the state of the economy. Though in need of further empirical investigation on the nature of the respective coalitions, the general pattern throughout the two multiparty elections appeared to represent a constant chiseling away at the support of the CCM Zanzibar coalition on the main island of Unguja, an ominous threat that goes some way in explaining the regime's electoral machinations during Zanzibar's 1995 and 2000 General Elections.

The immediate origin of Tanzania's contemporary political crisis was the 1995 elections on Zanzibar, narrowly won by CCM. There was a widespread perception among the opposition and Western donors that CCM's Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) had fraudulently manipulated the presidential results in favour of CCM's Salmin Amour against CUF's Seif Sharif Hamad. CUF, in protest, boycotted the Zanzibar legislature where it had won 24 of the 50 elected constituencies, including all of Pemba's 21 seats. Most Western donors froze aid to the Zanzibar government though crucially not to the Union government.

The years prior to 2000 were marked by a deteriorating political and economic climate with widespread, albeit low level, violence in the aftermath of the 1995 elections. The salient events of high politics included the CUF retaining a crucial Stone Town
constituency which CCM went to desperate lengths to win, and the arrest and incarceration for over two years of 18 CUF leaders on treason charges. Throughout the period leading to the 2000 elections the Union government of President Mkapa took a 'hands-off' approach to the deepening problems on the Isles.

There were also attempts to break the political stalemate. In May 1999 the Commonwealth Secretariat in London announced an agreement between the CCM and CUF. The formal signing of the agreement in June 1999 raised expectations that four years of political strife had ended. The fifteen Articles of the Agreement covered controversial areas such as review of the constitution and electoral laws, reform of the ZEC, compilation of a credible voters' register, equal access to the government-owned media, guaranteed freedom for all parties to seek voter support unhindered by government obstruction, reform of the judiciary, reconciliation, compensation to some CUF members, and an ending of CUF's boycott of the Zanzibar legislature. CUF ended their boycott of the Zanzibar legislature in June 1999, thereby recognising the government of Salmin Amour. CCM stalled and refused to implement its part of the agreement, including the creation of an independent ZEC (Article 19:14-17). Therefore, by 2000 there was little left to democratise in society. For the regime's opponents, it was an all or nothing electoral insurgency to capture the Zanzibar state. The stage was now set for political disaster.

The 1995 and 2000 General Elections on Zanzibar shared parallels in terms of similar campaigning styles, messages and programmes. What stood out from the 1995 experience, however, was a determination by both sides not to give in to the other. CUF in particular were less intimidated by CCM's coded threats than in 1995, and more determined to resist by mass protest 'multiparty elections as ballot rigging'. The emergence of the Union government from behind Zanzibar's constitutional veil and into open conflict with the opposition was also another hallmark of the 2000 elections. The overwhelming presence of the Tanzanian army prompted one paper to ask whether this was 'protection or intimidation and invasion?' (Al-Imam, September/October 2000). Despite these signs, there were calm assurances from the Zanzibar government. The Chairman of ZEC guaranteed international observers representing the OAU, SADCC and the Commonwealth, led by former Foreign Minister of Botswana, Dr. Gaositwe Chiepe, that ZEC had taken every precaution to ensure the election would be held without allegation of vote rigging as in 1995 (Daily News, 14 October). October 29 would see Zanzibaris voting for Isles representatives at the councillor and legislative levels and Zanzibar President, and for the Union level, representatives for the Dodoma Parliament and Union President.

CCM on the Campaign Trail

Amani Karume, son of the assassinated first president and Minister of Communication and Transport since 1995, was chosen to be CCM's presidential candidate. Karume beat the preferred candidate of CCM Zanzibar, and President Amour's chosen successor, Chief Minister Bilal. Delegates from CCM mainland supported Karume against Bilal much to the suspicion of CCM Zanzibar and CUF alike. Though CCM packaged the newly selected Karume as 'new and improved', in reality however he was 'old and unreconstituted', and would continue the winner-take-all strategy of his former boss and erstwhile comrade-in-arms, 'Commando' Amour and, in fact, undertake wider repression.

Throughout the campaign Karume said his main task would be to defend the two pillars of CCM Zanzibar: the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution and the Union. At Micheweni
District at Shaame Mata Grounds in north Pemba, Karume promised victories for the foreseeable future. Lambasting CUF’s claims that life was better in the colonial period as ‘idiotic’, Karume directed his wrath at Seif Sharif Hamad’s tenure as Chief Minister:

*We Zanzibaris nearly elected him as president. I’m sure Zanzibar would have been in shambles today (Daily News, 21 October 2000).*

And to a cheering roar from the audience, Karume exclaimed that when his father came to Micheweni there was nothing but an mbuyu (baobab tree) on this spot:

*The results, today at Micheweni there are apartment blocks, schools, a hospital, shops and other things. And who brought these, the colonial power? (Daily News, 21 October 2000).*

Karume also promised reconciliation to overcome the inter-island division between Pemba and Unguja, while, at the same time, adamantly ruling out a National Unity government with the CUF if CCM were to win.

Other CCM leaders claimed that CUF wished to return the Omani Sultanate, associating CUF with the pre-revolutionary Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) which was democratically elected in 1963 and subsequently overthrown by the Afro-Shirazi Party (the party that assumed power after the 1964 Revolution and which merged with TANU in 1977 to become CCM). Mama Mkapa, wife of the President, exhorted her audience at Jadida Wete, Pemba, a virtual CUF redoubt, to beware of opposition leaders dreaming of a return to the pre-revolutionary regime:

*Before the 1964 Revolution the people of the Isles were slaves in their own country. I call upon you to be more analytical before you support parties with hidden agendas aiming at humiliating your dignity as independent people (Daily News, 30 September 2000).*

During this period in late September and early October, President Mkapa was campaigning on the mainland, but bracing himself for Zanzibar. He even broke away from his campaign in Mara to go to Butiama to pray to the ghosts of Nyerere and Karume, asking for their blessing for the tough campaign ahead on the Isles (*Tanzania Leo*, 5 October, 2000). The Union was another important theme throughout the Zanzibar campaign. CCM regularly invoked the memory of Julius Nyerere as the visionary behind the Union, the first anniversary of his death being during the campaign. CCM continued to advocate a two government policy; that a federal system as proposed by CUF would break the Union, ‘something that will never be allowed to happen’ said President Mkapa in another campaign speech, hinting at the expulsions of Pemban businessmen and their families to the Isles if the two-government union collapsed (*Nipashe*, 17 October 2000). A CCM leader at Kariokoo, Dar es Salaam was more direct:

*Pembans, you have more shops on the mainland than in Zanzibar, therefore if you try to break the Union, those who will be affected are you (Nipashe, 17 October 2000).*

The CCM Jambiani rally on 16 October 2000, in CCM’s Unguja rural heartlands, illustrated all too well the mixture of historical, political and economic messages, and the coded threats underlying the ‘other face’ of CCM, as well as the ambivalence of grassroots CCM supporters themselves vis-à-vis their hardline leaders. At the rally itself, President Amour, against a background of breezy skies, smoky hearths, coconut fronds and CCM regalia, held Karume’s hand in the air, exclaiming in his sonorous voice ‘*piga ndiyo CCM: jibu pekee kwa wapinzani’* (‘vote yes for CCM: the only answer to the opposition!’). Warmly bidding farewell to the ‘Commando’ as he
lumbered off the podium, Karume exhorted the crowd with 'CCM oiye' with the crowd responding 'oiyeeee'. Karume began by stating that CUF has no policy, only 
\textit{vurugu} (disruption); whilst CCM has a policy which it has already begun to implement: road construction, electricity, and airport construction in Zanzibar Town and Chake Chake. Whether the economic crisis, ongoing for many years, could be attributed to donors, poor policy and implementation, or longer term structural problems, was a matter of debate. For Karume, the source of economic stagnation was self-evident as he continually qualified socio-economic development on the lifting of the aid freeze, a situation he blamed on CUF for urging the freeze to Western donors in the first place. Karume continued: aside from Tunisia, Zanzibar leads Africa in the number of established mobitel companies (there was a lukewarm response from the villagers to the growth of the mobile phone industry). Of more relevance to the villagers, Karume promised a seaweed buying company (to buffer against the poor prices), technical training for youth ('the leaders of tomorrow'), small-scale credit for the informal sector, deep sea fishing boats, as well as effective development projects like small credit funds and the revival of the co-operatives. Harking back to his father's old allies and projects, Karume said China will aid the completion of the Michenzani flats, a CCM stronghold, and that the World Bank was ready to resume aid to Zanzibar after the elections (subsequently denied the following day by a World Bank spokesperson in Dar es Salaam). Next, Karume said the CUF is filled with former CCM supporters: 'we brought them up!' as the crowd roared and stereo speakers erupted, with gyrating female dancers bursting into a musical frenzy on the secondary podium. In a stern, almost fatherly voice, Karume reminded the faithful that CCM's number one weapon is peace and stability and inside of this, independence and lack of exploitation based on the revolutionary tradition of equality. Karume then introduced President Mkapa. An articulate speaker, Mkapa said, among other things, that the opposition was full of 
\textit{ubinafsi} (individualism) going abroad and urging Western nations to boycott Tanzania. Concluding the rally, Mkapa warned that CCM had introduced multiparty democracy to advance the development of Tanzania – not to break up the country's unity, create chaos and turn back the clock (observation, Jambiani, 16 October 2000).

Prior to the rally, thousands of CCM members and supporters were bused into Jambiani village on the east coast of Unguja. Many hundreds arrived early in the afternoon and went strolling along the picturesque shoreline as high tide gradually submerged the village's seaweed \textit{shamba} (plots) and coir mounds. Militant youth in shorts, t-shirts and dark sunglasses jogged up and down the beach chanting: 'Seif hatupeleki Ikulu; Umeacha kwako; Umekuja kwangu; Mpumbavu' ('Seif we are not sending you to State House; You have left your place; you have come to our place; fool'). Other CCM youth indulged themselves at the tourist resorts, lounging on the deck chairs, while the few with money ordered drinks. It was a kind of 'world-turned-upside-down' holiday that surprised sun tanned tourists, including a British couple trying to keep a stiff upper lift as they pretended to read their novels. These CCM youth whom I talked to, a mixture of villagers and outsiders bused in for the rally, had mixed feelings about the Isles' governance. Some Jambiani women lamented the poor market for seaweed exports because many homes were stuffed with unpurchased seaweed and prices had dropped drastically, where in the words of one woman, '\textit{watu wamajuta sana}' ('people are really regretting this') because they have neglected traditional agriculture (personal discussion, Jambiani, 16 October 2000). However, appreciation of government projects like rural electrification, road building and some employment, both formal and informal, in the beach resorts tempered an outright criticism of CCM for the collapse of the seaweed industry.
Whether the popular memory of slavery and land reform, either as passed on through generations or as taught in state schools, was a major factor among CCM supporters in 2000 is unclear. At Jambiani, CCM youth did not overtly mention these symbols of CCM's predecessor, the Afro-Shirazi Party. Most simply said the CUF is a party of *fujo* (tumult or disturbance) and that in Jambiani they were 'prohibited' from holding rallies. Likewise in the *Ndjambien* (the peri-urban areas outside of Stone Town) constituency of Kwahani, CUF was ejected on grounds that the opposition had never run a rally there: 'We cannot let the meeting take place here even if it means losing our lives', exclaimed CCM activists (*Guardian*, 9 October 2000). Police had to whisk Seif Sharif Hamad away for his own safety. Karume later said Hamad would be stripped naked by locals if he ventured into CCM-controlled Kwahani constituency again (*Daily News*, 21 October 2000 and *Guardian*, 25 October 2000). More generally, among many CCM followers, there was a common perception that a CUF victory would mean a return of land nationalised in the 1960s to the 'Arabs', a perception no doubt reinforced by CCM activists working door-to-door spreading this message. Moreover Zanzibari Christians feared the CUF would introduce Islamic law. Attempting to assuage such anxieties, CCM urged mainlanders resident on Unguja not to fear expulsions (*Nipashe*, 12 October 2000). CUF's lack of access to campaign areas in Unguja had in fact been an ongoing problem since political liberalisation in the early 1990s and may have solidified racial and regional stereotypes of the opposition among rural Ungujans. Not surprisingly, CCM was the preferred party in rural Unguja, a kind of 'there's is no alternative' choice to what they imagined would otherwise be in store for Zanzibaritis were the party of the 'Arabs' to occupy State House (*Ikulu*). Many of the CCM youth at the Jambiani rally also reflected the view that the younger Karume's rise was refreshingly new and yet, the 'Baby Lion' (*Mtoto wa Simbba*), as they hailed him, had stood at his father's side - the elder Amani Karume - on the floors of State House (personal discussion, Jambiani, 16 October 2000). Amani Karume was thus a kind of primogeniture linked to the revolutionary heritage and in their eyes had no greedy ambition since he had already tasted power. The younger Karume, therefore, would successfully fight corruption better than the outgoing Salmin Amour. Numerous CCM supporters also pointed out that the younger Karume's simple high school education would make him nearer the people (*wananchi*). Though years earlier, in 1990, the 'spin' on Salmin Amour from CCM was that as a doctor of economics he would solve Zanzibar's economic crisis.

Though many families were divided by politics, the bonds of community were in many instances still alive and well. Such familial and neighbourhood networks would buffer the jagged edges of confrontational politics, where as one Ungujan woman said of political rallies, 'ni kita cha mapitio' ('they come and go'), suggesting that villagers must still live a communitarian existence in their villages and households in a world apart from the state (personal discussion, Jambiani, 13 October 2000). An indicator of the real tensions between familial and party loyalty was at the CCM local candidates' meeting in Jambiani. A candidate for the council seat passionately cited three reasons for staying with CCM, despite his family being CUF: peace and security, the absence of exploitation, and development (*maendeleo*) such as roads and schools. He said he was kicked out of his home for being a CCM candidate, and ended by exclaiming 'CUF hana mpango' ('CUF has no plan') as the crowd joyfully erupted, with one old Swahili man, barefoot and in a *kanzu* (long-sleeved white gown), running up to him and standing at attention, saluting (personal observation, Jambiani, 13 October 2000). Yet at the end of the meeting, a CUF activist went to greet his brother, who was running for the Zanzibar House of Representatives on the CCM ticket, where they joined hands to a thunderous applause, symbolically affirming that blood was thicker than politics.
CUF on the Campaign Trail

Commonplace on the campaign trail were CUF’s slogans of *jino kwa jino* (tooth for tooth) and *ngangari* (unshakable) – rally cries which meant its determination to see through its democratic rights; for the CCM it meant proof of the opposition’s predilection to cause chaos. On campaign issues, CUF’s platform was common to both the Isles and the mainland. For instance, Professor Lipumba, the Union Presidential candidate, said that CCM’s school fees for education had denied many an education and created an army of *machingas* (petty traders) throughout Tanzania (*Sunday Observer, 1 October 2000*). For Tanzanian agriculture, the party pledged to promote irrigation agriculture as well as improve the conditions of service for agricultural extensionists. The promotion of farmers’ organisations to circumvent the corrupt mainland co-operative unions was also cited as vital for the revival of the cash crop sector (CUF Election Manifesto, 2000). In terms of Zanzibar’s agriculture, CUF was unclear on whether the party still stood by an earlier pledge to compensate those expropriated in the 1960s under the ASP land reforms. More generally, to tackle unemployment in Zanzibar, CUF called for foreign direct investment in small-scale industries such as juice and fish canning as well as coconut processing. At the CCM constituency stronghold of Donga in Unguja, Hamad said that he would revive the Mahonda Sugar Factory, something that CCM had failed to do (*Guardian, 30 September 2000*). Hamad did promise to abolish the death penalty and the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council, arguing they were not in the spirit of the democratic tradition, and that there would be a First Vice President for Zanzibar in order to protect the Isles’ interests (*Guardian, 16 October 2000*).

As in the 1995 campaign and in line with the Nyalali Commission, CUF advocated a three government federal structure: a government of Zanzibar, a Tanganyika government, and an over-arching Union government based on the original powers ceded in the 1964 Articles of Union such as Defence and Immigration. CUF feared that, otherwise, Zanzibar would become another region like Mafia Island. CUF also claimed that the Union government coveted hidden off shore oil reserves, something CCM strenuously denied, and that a CUF government would begin drilling immediately. Other complaints against the Union included the recently-introduced VAT on port duties. For many, Zanzibar’s limited economic base – tourism, cloves, and the port – contrasted unfavourably with Tanganyika’s huge resource-endowed land mass. However, many opposition supporters failed to point out the benefits of the links with the Union such as electricity from the mainland, and which had gone unpaid for many years.

At local candidates meetings, CUF vigorously sought to highlight CCM’s unfulfilled promises. On 25 October there was a candidate’s meeting for Kikwajuni constituency at Mnazi Mmoja Grounds just outside of Stone Town. Vendors were omnipresent, selling political paraphernalia, water, peanuts, roast corn, ice cream, coconuts and so on. Many women wore bangles and blue and white khangas with pictures of Seif Sharif. There was lots of campaign sloganeering like ‘hakiiii! sawa kwa wote!’ (‘equal rights for all’) with responses of ‘hakiiii!’ (‘rights!’) from the crowd. The CUF speaker praised Seif Sharif for his good work as Chief Minister in the 1980s in the CCM government: Seif’s unbuilt house in Wete, Pemba was testimony to his incorruptibility while in office for he could not afford its early completion on his official government salary. Hamad began his speech by focusing on the problems besetting Kikwajuni, pointing to the nearby flats located around marsh land as the ‘malaria headquarters’ – a chronic state-of-affairs CCM has steadfastly ignored. Hamad continued: neither did CCM build a library and cultural centre as promised in 1995,
while the nearby Mao Zedong sports stadium had deteriorated to the point of becoming cattle pasture. Hamad promised to implement CCM's unfulfilled promises so that youth could excel in sports and learning. The local candidates were then introduced (personal observation, Kikwajuni, 25 October 2000).

Many in CUF, though not all, did not so much dispute the outcome of 1964, in which many had either participated in or had family who had, but rather that CCM's political excesses had not been followed by reconciliation and compensation to victims. CCM's line that CUF would invite back the Arabs was rebutted by pointing out that the return of expropriated property would also mean that even CUF followers would lose their property in opposition strongholds like Stone Town which were nationalised after the Revolution. Opposition supporters pointed out that CCM itself had failed to deliver on the promise of the Revolution such as better health and education – that is why CUF said life was better prior to 1964 when education and hospitals were the envy of the East Africa of the 1950s (personal discussion, Stone Town, 10 October 2000). Post-1964 was the key issue. For those gravely injured or ill showing up with empty pockets at empty hospital wards, 'Mapinduzi Daima' ('the Revolution Continues', CCM's militant battle cry) would not help ward off premature death. Top CCM leaders on the other hand went abroad when ill, some said. CUF promised improvement in social services within 100 days and the collection of port taxes to pay for them. Many opposition supporters asked what more could CCM do after 40 years in power?

The fact that civil servants had gone unpaid for at least two months, and some longer, during an election campaign full of ahadi tamu tamu (sweet promises), left CUF followers wondering what would be the performance of CCM after the elections when it would no longer be seeking votes. Moreover, Mkapa's continual urging of mainland Pemban businessmen to invest in their home island during the campaign parroted the same message former President Ali Hassan Mwinyi use to give in the late 1980s, a call that ignores the fact that no rational businessmen would invest in such an economically depressed region, and besides, many mainland-based Pembans would have be sending remittances back to their kin on Pemba Island.

In the Pemba countryside, a CUF stronghold, clove farmers and pickers continued to have a grievance with the government's exploitative monopoly on the clove producer price which was approximately 50 per cent less than the informal market price during the election period (personal discussion, Chake Chake, 3 November 2000). CCM's arguments on the need for clove profits for development clashed with Pemba growers and pickers' perception that foreign exchange earned supported the infrastructure of the Zanzibar Town or found its way into the pockets of elites and bureaucrats, rather than into their own rural communities. There is a long history to the clove monopoly. In 1978 the prices offered to clove growers was 7 per cent of the world price, a shockingly low price even by standards on the African continent (Sheriff, 1994:167). Clove producers fetched better prices during the colonial period, and indeed the current structure is in a sense a continuation of the colonial monopoly. Government pricing policies contributed to a staggering drop in clove production. CCM ignored the fact that pricing policies were a contributing factor to Pemba's political protest against CCM from 1964 onwards. In contrast, many Pembans believed that CUF would break up the monopoly under the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation and allow a free market in cloves.
Campaign Dynamics

Both parties' supporters made allegations of electoral irregularities: mainlanders voting, residency status issues, under age voting, plans to stuff ballot boxes, double voting by security forces personnel, local headmen (Sheha) being pro-CCM and so on. Police brutality against supposed opposition 'trouble makers' was constant and one sided, however, and culminated in the shooting of six CUF supporters at a rally at Kilimahewa, the wounded subsequently being charged at their hospital bedsides. After this rally, youth came streaming back into the opposition stronghold of Stone Town, spreading the word that 'watu wamepiga shaba' ('people have been shot by copper' [bullets]). Shortly after Kilimahewa, Hamad said: 'it is depressing to see that CCM has decided to start fighting using state organs', adding that a CCM victory would return authoritarian rule like that experienced in 1964 (The Guardian, 12 October 2000). In rebuttal, Vice President, Dr Omar Ali Juma said:

CUF is a party which organizes its people to fight with the police and who take pictures of the fighting which they then send to London, England and Denmark in order to slander (Nipashe, 17 October 2000).

CUF's final campaign rally took place at Mnazi Mmoja grounds on 27 October. Approximately 30,000 were present. The police blocked off the main road as hundreds poured onto the field. I saw several youth clubbed by the police and hospitalised for being in a low level fracas, which could have escalated had the other youth, stones in hands decided to hurl them at the nearby police. There were FFU units (riot police) all about as well as international observers and reporters. An army jeep drove by into the TV Zanzibar grounds to cheers from the crowd, reflecting the sentiment that the army was more neutral than the police. Later, as Seif Sharif Hamad spoke, tensions built up to the extent that police fired their weapons into the air mere yards from the surging crowd near the House of Representatives on Mapinduzi Road. After urging the crowd to be restrained, Hamad said the peace of the nation was in ZEC's hands (personal observation, Kikwajuni, 27 October 2000).

Away from the public gaze of campaign speeches were rumours and intense debates by Zanzibaris of all walks of life. On 19 October, a CCM youth band from Pemba atop the speedboat 'Sepideh' triumphantly trumpeted the return of the Mkapa campaign - allegedly cut short by the evil giri Popobawa. Popobawa, a kind of bat that sexually assaults its victims, especially men, had last made its appearance just before the 1995 General Election in Pemba, an ill omen. For some CUF followers, the appearance of Popobawa was significant: Popobawa had been sent to Pemba to eject those in the dominant party who would come to their island to insult Pembans, rumours being that even Mkapa himself fled in haste. Photocopies of a newspaper cartoon (Wananchi, 24 October 2000), depicting half-clad CCM members in a desperate flight from the dreaded insatiable bat, were widely distributed at CUF rallies. Unlike 1995, however, there was no clear consensus that Popobawa had truly returned.

The rumour of Popobawa may have also reflected the fear for the future. An Mkunazini man was worried because Karume had not unequivocally stated that CCM would hand over power if CUF won. That CCM was dominated by so-called 'Liberators', a revolutionary hardline group with mainland origins (known as Wazanzibarad), though according to Radio Kifua ('Radio Chest': the talk on the street), CCM itself, divided between the Karume and Amour factions, had sent out mixed signals such that many believed that Amour and Sharif had come to an understanding whereby Amour would not tamper with the ZEC if CUF were to win. Offhandedly he simply added,
'we'll see what happens on the 29th, The Day of the Jackal' (personal discussion, Mkunazini, 25 October 2000). Adding substance to the rumours was the perception of Amour's lukewarm campaigning and a toning down of his militant rhetoric which appeared to many Zanzibaris to be an indicator of this rapprochement with the CUF leadership. The private press also noted that President Amour was absent at the opening of the CCM campaign (Rai, 28 September to 4 October 2000). He also took a number of trips, just before and during the campaign, to Oman, Malawi, and especially the Indian Ocean states of the Seychelles and Mauritius where he appeared to have a particular penchant to regularly visit. Many Pembans seemed confident of the seriousness of the split, remarking that celebrations in Pemba would be a time to remember. More cautious notes were sounded, however, for Amour was still the Deputy Chairman of CCM. More substantively, others asked who really called the shots on the island even if Amour was supposedly with the opposition? During the ensuing crisis, another rumour would have it that the Union government held Salmin Amour under house guard.

At Kikwajuni, a CCM sticker closest to old-style Ujamaa messages: ‘CCM Ndiyo Uchaguo wa Umma’ (‘CCM Indeed the Choice of the Masses’) and ‘Chagua Amani Alete Amani’ (‘Choose Amani [Karume] So That He Brings Peace’) graced the neighbourhood walls near the old Golf Club, a bar popular with CCM security officials. At the Stone Town bars, the New Happy and Starehe Club near the premier Serena Hotel, where the Commonwealth Observers were lodged, local and mainland youth connected to the tourist industry had more and more spare time on their hands as Wazungu (Western) tourist numbers rapidly receded. Invariably talk turned to politics, with one mainlander remarking that she's out of here 'before Zanzibar is returned to the Arabs' (personal discussion, Stone Town, 28 October 2000). A local Zanzibari youth said the Isles' youth want jobs not history lessons: ‘mamboya utumwa na sultani ni hadisi’ (‘matters about slavery and the Sultan is only a story’) (personal discussion, Stone Town, 28 October 2000). More quietly, others were anticipating a CUF victory and the white collar employment that would result; local youth said they were tired of sitting idle or smoking drugs because they were expected to support their Wazee (parents). More somberly, other youth said they would migrate from the islands to go abroad if CUF did not win. Tensions fuelled by drink saw mainlanders query local youth as to their political affiliations, with arguments breaking out over CCM's development record. In one instance, a mainland handicraft seller, his eyes half shut in a drunken stupor, stumbled up to a table of local Rasta youth and broke out into an anti-Arab tirade. Another CUF supporter said CUF would win because God does not favour the sinful CCM leaders, adding that Ungujans, believing CCM propaganda, feared that CUF would only develop Pemba or take away their jobs, which was not true, he stressed. Quaffers and non-quaffers alike remarked on the younger Karume's intense love of whiskey, one adding that Zanzibar would be far ahead if his father – the first Karume – were still alive: a bit of a tyrant perhaps but he led by example, even doing construction work on the Michenzani flats himself. Not all were so talkative however. Not uncommonly numerous youth simply stared into their drinks, some undoubtedly wondering what would become of them.

**Election Day**

Both sides predicted victory, especially CCM who claimed that Pembans had abandoned CUF in their thousands. In contrast, a confident Seif Sharif Hamad reiterated his promise to form a national unity government. As election day, 29 October, loomed the world famous Stone Town became a ghost town, devoid of
tourists who had sought sun and sand elsewhere. Large police patrols of mixed mainland and local police passed empty hotels throughout Stone Town, making night sweeps through residential areas like Sokomuhogo, Vuga and Mkunazini and subjecting the locals to random beatings (known as mkg'oto) if caught sitting on their verandahs. Foreign and local reporters were also detained during this time, perhaps because the regime perceived that the opposition was effectively utilising the international media (and internet sources, I should add) to articulate its views of events over the weaker state-controlled media. By nightfall on the 28th, many people had bought extra supplies in case of emergency. Even the normally busy Forodhani food stalls outside the House of Wonders were deserted, save a lone vendor selling sugar cane bites to the odd passerby. The deserted streets of Stone Town around Shangani were busy with military and police vehicles (personal observation, Stone Town, 29 October 2000).

Election day witnessed a high turn out but with problems reported in all constituencies. One CUF activist wondered where all the international observers were since they didn’t stay long in any one place. In particular, in the 16 Urban West constituencies in and about Zanzibar Town, literally a stone’s throw in a few instances from ZEC, ZEC failed to deliver ballot papers at all! Late in the day, ZEC ordered a stop to the counting in all 50 constituencies. The ballot boxes of the 34 constituencies were immediately and forcibly taken from party agents by police and ZEC officials for ‘safe keeping’. ZEC then ordered a rerun of the 16 Urban West constituencies for the following week. For the remaining 34, ZEC said it would be too expensive to rerun, especially when serious problems were only in the 16. A crisis had begun.

CCM’s Central Committee’s extraordinary meeting hurriedly convened in Zanzibar Town on 2 November. Press pictures showed Amour warmly receiving Mkapa, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, Rashidi Kawawa and other lesser luminaries at Zanzibar Airport (Guardian, 3 November 2000). The Central Committee meeting, chaired by Mkapa, issued an official statement which was read to the press by CCM Secretary General Philip Mangula. The statement alleged that CUF had masterminded the electoral chaos in the 16 Urban West constituencies because they knew they were going to lose; that CCM would not have consciously sabotaged the elections in its own strongholds around Zanzibar Town. It blamed ZEC personnel colluding with CUF for the disruption. The statement noted that CUF did not complain after the ballot papers went missing on election day or protest at the late opening of the polling stations. CCM also accused CUF of using hooligans to provoke the security forces into self-defence. The party supported ZEC’s decision to rerun the 16 constituencies only and affirmed CCM’s decision to participate in the rerun (Guardian, 3 November 2000).

In response, CUF’s Vice Chairman Shaaban Mloo, at the party’s election commission office at Vuga, dismissed CCM’s Central Committee charges as childish, rebutting that the subterfuge was orchestrated by CCM itself through its ‘Action Plan 2000’, overseen by campaign manager Diria, Minister of State in the President’s office (Guardian, 4 November 2000). Professor Lipumba, the CUF Union Presidential candidate, speaking at a Dar es Salaam press conference, said the party’s stand was that the ZEC must be disbanded, an interim government formed, and there must be a rerun of all 50 constituencies:

CUF will not recognise any would-be union president if no fresh elections were held in all constituencies in Zanzibar. We will merely recognise him as a military ruler imposed by the Tanzanian army and police forces (Guardian, 3 November 2000).
At Lipumba’s side was Fathma Maghimbi, leader of the opposition of the last Union parliament, who said that the ballot boxes had in all probability been tampered with, adding that in her Chake Chake Pemba constituency at Madungu primary polling station, early voting showed that she led by 673 votes against CCM’s 27 (Guardian and The African, 3 November 2000).

The rerun was boycotted by all of Tanzania’s political parties except for CCM, the UMD (Union for Multiparty Democracy) and initially NCCR-MAGEUZI (The National Convention for Constitutional Reform). NCCR’s national leadership subsequently denied its participation in the rerun, stating that their party would take action against the two NCCR Zanzibar members who had said that they would participate in the rerun. One of the two was the husband of Naila Jadiwa, a former CUF leader widely considered to be pro-CCM.

The electoral mayhem was roundly condemned by civil organisations on the mainland including the National Youth Forum (NYF), the Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), the Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO) and a number of academics at a workshop at the University of Dar es Salaam. Spokespeople were unequivocal in condemning the electoral fiasco as a joint covert plan hatched by CCM’s NEC (National Electoral Commission, the mainland body) and ZEC. CGG Coordinator, Wallance Magunga said statements issued by President Mkapa and other leaders implied that the government was not ready to accept the people’s choice in Zanzibar; while the NYF and TEMCO called on ZEC to rerun all 50 seats. TEMCO said that the ferrying of ballot boxes by district ZEC officials and police was not accompanied by party agents who had at any rate objected to the unprecedented stoppage of the voting process (Guardian, 3 November 2000). TEMCO also noted the failure of ZEC to release an authoritative eligible voters’ list for the Isles which suggested that the registration process was not transparent; moreover, delays in the accreditation process by ZEC made it difficult to monitor the two week registration process (The African, 3 November 2000). At the University of Dar es Salaam, Law Professor Issa Shivji argued there were no legal provisions which empowered ZEC to stop the counting of votes, neither had NEC delegated this power to ZEC, let alone order a rerun (Guardian, 4 November 2000). The Tanzanian Writers Association Chairman, I. Mbenna, said that the growing levels of state violence and human rights abuses did not augur well for Tanzania, hitherto known for its peace and tranquility.

The Elections 2000 Media Monitoring Project said the public media favoured the ruling party, especially in Zanzibar (which is potentially more serious given the absence of a private media on the Isles) where the ruling party got 72.69 per cent of news coverage on radio and TV (Guardian, 22 October 2000). On the other hand, pro-government editorials urged national reconciliation and the opportunity for the younger Karume to be given a chance at governing. Most Zanzibari NGOs appeared quiescent over the controversy.

**Victory & Celebrations**

The Zanzibar elections were not free and fair and were, in fact, ‘a shambles’ and a ‘colossal contempt for the Zanzibari people’ according to the staid Commonwealth Observer Group (Guardian, 31 October 2000). As Karume reminded the observers that they were not electoral supervisors, most if not all of them said the elections had been deeply flawed and immediately left so as not to legitimise the rerun.

Violence intensified throughout the week leading up to the rerun, scheduled for 5 November. A police riot broke out at Darajani Street where youth and even women
were soundly beaten and dumped onto police Land Rovers to be thrown in jail. The police alleged that locals threw stones at them, though it appears many were merely cheering the CUF leader as he passed by in a motorcade. KMKM (coastguard) soldiers patrolled around the CUF office at Vuga, indiscriminately pointing their AK-47s at officials, locals and foreigners alike, including myself. President Mkapa, in a Radio Tanzania broadcast on 1 November to the nation, assured Tanzanians that the government is still functioning despite the delay to the electoral process. Mkapa also praised the security services, especially due to what he claimed were the 'provocations' they experienced at Darajani. Around this time there occurred a mass exodus of women, children and the old to Pemba and Dar es Salaam. A series of minor bomb blasts throughout Zanzibar heightened tensions and injured a CCM cadre in Pemba. CCM said CUF set off the bombs, which CUF denied, alleging that CCM was responsible for the blasts which it used as a pretext to arrest CUF activists.

During the week leading to the rerun, the well-armed Tanzanian Peoples Defence Force (TPDF) and its Chief of Defence, General Robert Mbona, hosted a highly publicised Chinese military delegation led by General Li Jinai of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) (Daily News, 31 October 2000). Perhaps the visit of the PLA was meant to reinforce among the opposition the spectre of a Swahili-style Tiananmen Square response to those bold enough to attempt a Serbian or Ivorian Coast-style mass demonstration against the CCM regime. No doubt newspaper pictures of piles of corpses of Ivory Coast youth reminded local Zanzibari youth that even in successful outcomes to the overthrow of despots like General Guei some would inevitably die. Stone Town youth lamented that they were too young to die but that in the end they were bound to obey their leaders.

The hitherto silent Amour, who had not apologised to Zanzibaris for the electoral chaos, emerged to tell them to turn out, not to be afraid and vote in great numbers - the security forces would deal with those who try to intimidate people. The result of the rerun, which had a low turn out due to the CUF boycott, gave Karume the 'victory' with 67 per cent and the CUF leader Seif Sharif Hamad with 33 per cent (Guardian, 8 November 2000). In the Zanzibar legislature, CCM won 36 seats and CUF 16, aside from the nominated seats. CCM now had the two-thirds majority to unilaterally change the Zanzibar constitution. Five of these 36 seats came from Pemba, a historically unprecedented number, and included the much sought after seat of Mkanyageni, a traditional ASP stronghold. The Mkanyageni Pemba seat would soon produce Tanzania's next Vice President, Dr Mohammed Sheni, after the death of Omar Ali Juma later in 2001.

The Union presidential results were as follows: Mkapa 71.7 per cent, Lipumba 16.3 per cent, Mrema 7.8 per cent, and Cheyo 4.2 per cent, with CCM winning around 90 per cent of the Parliamentary seats on the mainland (Guardian, 9 November 2000). The three main presidential candidates at a Dar es Salaam press conference alleged that even the mainland elections were not free and fair. In regard to Zanzibar, they stated that Mkapa had a Tanganyikan government given that there was no rerun of all 50 constituencies; they added that the opposition MPs elected on the mainland would attend the Union Parliament. The Zanzibar CUF recommenced its boycott of the Zanzibar and Union legislatures, demanding a rerun of the elections in their totality within four months.

On 7 November, a CCM youth band was practicing outside a Vuga CCM branch as ZEC prepared to announce victory. In the early afternoon, just prior to the official announcement, CCM supporters were already congratulating the Kikwajuni candi-
date outside the House of Representatives. Women in their finest dresses were already off to CCM-sponsored sherehe (celebrations) – some expressing doubt as to what the Wazungu (Westerners) would do next (personal discussion, Kikwajuni, 7 November 2000). The CCM celebrations took place mainly around the Michenzani Flats and Creek Road. Thousands of youth marched in and around the Flats cheering and shouting, such as ‘Rudi Arabuni!’ (‘Return to Arabia!’), and dancing to various ngoma (dances). Around Darajani Street sped 50 or so vehicles packed with joyful CCM supporters, some of whom were in fact quite entertainingly agile, one man hanging onto the wooden beam of a passenger lorry pirouetting on both feet, his rubber sandals scraping the concrete. More darkly, a dump truck packed with armed KMKM (coastguard) soldiers rumbled along in the middle of the procession. Another carload of youth chanted ‘Chinja, ua, hatutoi nachi’ (‘Slaughter, kill, we won’t give up the country’) with one lone but truculent soul in the otherwise quiet pro-CUF crowd shouting ‘Hakt!’ (‘Rights!’). A few of these vehicles then entered Stone Town along the harbour on Mizingani and Shangani Streets – a more dangerous route had opposition supporters decided to hurl stones.

**Spectres of Violence**

The days leading to Karume’s ascension were frightfully tense and palpable with the possibility of deep violence were things to go awry for CCM. CCM’s ‘othering’ of the opposition – CUF leaders as ‘Arabs’ and Pembans as ‘washamba na zvapumbavii’ (bumpkins and fools’) potentially had as its logical outcome the possibility of pogroms against Pembans on the mainland and ethnic attacks in Zanzibar by CCM wanamaskan (squads) and security forces. Paradoxically, tourists began to return in large numbers. The rerun had caught many tour operators off guard since they had scheduled tours assuming the worst would have already been over. Throughout Stone Town, tourists snapped pictures of wooden doors and purchased carvings, blissfully unaware they were on the brink of a ‘Year of Living Dangerously’. One CUF member said ‘CCM hawatoi’serikali’ kwakaratasi (‘CCM won’t give up the government by ballot paper’), that Mkapa only used multiparty to get donor aid but that at least Dodoma’s dictatorship is open for all to see. Jaded oppositionists asked why bother having multiparty and all the wastage of resources, organisational effort, jail and torture, and the social divisions. If CCM would not allow a free and fair vote, then better to stay with the single party system for CCM is incapable of multiparty democracy, many said. Others urged a boycott of the ‘Bigs’ of CCM (Wakubwa), especially a petrol embargo on their magari makubwa (big vehicles). Pro-CCM supporters dismissed threats of mass demonstrations from the CUF, terming it as so much hot air (kelele), though other CCM supporters worried that some pro-CUF communities were preparing themselves for militant struggle.

November 8th found Zanzibar Harbour in a hive of activity as soldiers of the TPDF off-loaded equipment. As the ‘Sepideh’ speedboat gently approached the passenger dock from Dar es Salaam, green- and yellow-shirted youth atop the open deck chanted ‘twatesa twatesal!’ (‘we cause them trouble, we cause them trouble!’). Officials and foreign dignitaries of mainly Chinese, North Korean, Libyan, and Indian representatives, minus Western diplomats, disembarked for the swearing in ceremony of Karume. Later that morning at Amaani Stadium, the multitude of people, including about 1,000 from Pemba, braved a heavy downpour – seen as a sign of plenty – as they witnessed the swearing in ceremony. Aside from the usual platitudes of unity, reconciliation and development, Karume granted an amnesty to the CUF 18.
On 9 November the High Court set the CUF 18 free. Their spokesman, Juma Duni Haji, remained militant, pointing out that they were never in fact charged and instead credited their release to international pressures from Amnesty International and other foreign and domestic supporters (Guardian, 10 November 2000). Following the replacement of all of Amour's Cabinet ministers, Karume appointed a new Chief Minister, another Ungujan called Shamsi Vuai Nahodha, 38, a lightweight newcomer and former journalist.

In the wake of the CCM victory, Pemba Island was in shock. The security forces were taking no chances; a curfew was in place throughout Pemba’s towns, with large police patrols ordering people shortly after sunset to ‘kalaleni nymbani’ (‘go home and sleep’) (personal discussion, Chake Chake, 5 November 2000). Numerous people had sustained broken bones and bruises from the police mkong’oto (beatings). The few Wazungu (Westerners) about seemed to be in the shamba (villages) at Panga wa Toro near the Kigomashi lighthouse or at the resorts of Wambaa and Mwambe. One CUF MP-elect characterised the election as a ‘uchafuzi sio uchaguzi’ (‘disruption, not an election’). Another recently ‘elected’ CCM Pemba MP was apparently under sustained pressure from her family who were urging her not to take up her seat at Dodoma, for it was haramu (illegal) and not hers. Instead, she should follow the Chake Chake CCM Union candidate who, having just completed a holy pilgrimage to Mecca, had refused the seat offered by CCM because it would have been a sin. She disregarded this advice and took up her seat nonetheless. Alluding to spirit possession, someone remarked that now it would be up to the one who had his seat stolen to deal with her. A CCM campaign activist confided that the cheating on Pemba had not involved ballot stuffing per se but merely quoting the total of the opposition’s vote as CCM’s and vice versa, and then burning the ballots.

Another difference from 1995 was CCM’s assault on the CUF itself, particularly middle and lower level personnel. CCM certainly must have felt itself under threat both from the sheer numbers of hostile people and a strongly cohesive opposition party. CUF activists feared they were on a CCM arrest list, one remarking that Mkapa would love to provoke violence in order to crush the party, cause civil strife and thus make his task of swallowing Zanzibar that much easier. A local CUF activist articulated this fear:

*This man [Mkapa] is serious and has given his generals the following instructions: ‘These Pembans have given us [CCM] nothing but trouble from the demand for multiparty democracy to opposition in the Union Parliament, from challenging the Revolution to demanding the break up of the Union – therefore if these people get out of line start from the south of the island and work your way northward, finish them!’* (personal discussion, Kikwajuni, 2 November 2000).

Many CUF activists and functionaries, especially on isolated Pemba, were arrested; some were forced into hiding in the shamba (countryside) by sympathisers until fishermen’s ngalawa (outriggers) could be organised for twilight departures to the Kenyan coast. There were also rumours of disquiet within the police forces, especially on Pemba, where it was said there was a 50/50 split between CUF and CCM. A warning by a Pemba Regional Commissioner of a threat from ‘fundamentalist’ elements was also sounded (Guardian, 8 November 2000), intimating, again, that the ‘Arabs’ control CUF.

Unfortunately it is impossible to determine the true popular vote for the 2000 General Elections. Given that CCM won no seats in Pemba’s 21 constituencies in 1995 it would
be highly unlikely that, after another five difficult years, CCM would have enough support to capture five constituencies. Moreover, the electoral coup had indicators of preplanning such as the constant predictions in the government press of significant inroads being made in CUF’s Pemban heartlands. What the elections did reveal (and for the opposition the main obstacle to democratic reform was the Union) was CCM’s refusal to address the grievances of the majority of Zanzibaris on a Union well past its Cold War ‘sell by date’. It certainly resisted calls for debates on the Union during the single party era. And in 1995, the Union government did nothing after that electoral débâcle, and then undermined the Commonwealth deal in 1999. During the 2000 elections, its praising of brutal police actions, the Central Committee’s affirming the ZEC decision, the supporting of the less popular Karume faction, and its attitude towards the opposition as ‘traitors’, demonstrated that the Union government was a direct player in the disastrous 2000 elections.

This gloomy picture suggests that the CCM remains hegemonic in society, a view that would perhaps simplify complex dynamics and not take into account other aspects of organisational life on the Isles. Neighbourhood *barazas* (sitting areas) and the local mosque are comparatively impenetrable and would substitute for co-opted and/or undermined formal institutions as channels of political action. In my view, it would appear that religious politics is primarily anti-Union and anti-CCM and not ‘fundamentalist’ as claimed in some quarters. However, if CCM were to constitutionally incorporate Zanzibar and/or flood the Isles with mainlanders to build up its coalition then a political backlash articulated through Islam could not be ruled out.

More ominously for CCM, the current core of the CUF coalition, comprising an indigenous movement more akin to the old Zanzibar and Pemba Peoples Party (ZPPP) than to the ZNP, may be gradually widening. As one CUF youth put it, the CCM will eventually succumb in the next decade as even CCM youth tire of unfulfilled promises. This man is confident that one day Zanzibari flags will fly from government buildings, symbolising the triumph of the Zanzibar nationalist tradition as envisioned in the original Articles of Union in 1964 (personal discussion, Stone Town, 16 November 2000). Another positive development on the side of the CUF is that it is currently the main opposition party on the mainland, and is stronger than CCM’s latest Parliamentary majority would suggest. Though the future contours of its growth are difficult to predict, there is no doubt that CUF has no other opposition party to rival it at present. CUF people are quick to point out, moreover, that Christians are in its top leadership ranks and not just Muslims.

**Mixed Signals from the West**

As in 1995, the tepid response of the international community to the flawed outcome, brought both wrath, hope, despair and comfort depending on one’s political position. In a letter to the editor someone wrote: ‘when did these powers ever intervene in a country beset with turmoil before actual bloodshed?’, citing East Timor’s parallels to Zanzibar (*Guardian, 9 October 2000*). For some Western powers it appeared realpolitik had surpassed concerns for human rights. Pan-Africanist and anti-Islamic sentiment had emanated from the US ambassador, perhaps reflecting the misperception of CUF as ‘fundamentalist’. The US urging of an internal settlement as against a deepening of the aid freeze seemed to some to reflect this pro-CCM bias. A US Department of State spokesman called on the Zanzibar government to investigate the election irregularities fully and bring to justice those responsible; he opaquey urged the government to consult with political and civil society leaders to adopt a transparent and
participatory approach to reestablishing the legitimacy of the electoral process on Zanzibar (Sunday Observer, 5 November 2000); CCM itself took comfort from US electoral 'mismanagement' in Florida. In fact some in the opposition were confused by America, for in 1995 the US government was seen as the main Western country pushing CCM to implement the multiparty system; yet many remember that it was the US government which was behind the formation of the Union in 1964 to prevent Zanzibar from becoming 'another Cuba' (for details, see Wilson, 1989). When Ambassador Stith met leaders of the political parties to urge dialogue, opposition representatives intimated he was less than objective, citing US silence on police human rights abuses against opposition supporters and America's 1964 involvement in the feki ('fake') Union (Tanzania Leo, 5 October 2000). It appeared that the donor aid freeze against the Zanzibar government would remain in place but that the aid freeze would not be extended to the Union government.

### The Political Accord Between CCM & CUF

In the wake of the elections, the CUF finally called their supporters onto the streets in massive yet peaceful demonstrations against the regime, where upon the security forces brutally crushed the marches (for the grisly testimonials see the Human Rights Watch report cited above). The January massacres in 2001, and the massive criticism to which the CCM regime was subjected to, both domestically and internationally, may have been the catalyst leading to a political settlement between CCM and CUF. A seven month dialogue, held between March and October 2001, resulted in CCM and CUF signing a comprehensive Accord (Miwafaka) on 10 October 2001 – the basic contents of which did not differ significantly from those of the Commonwealth-brokered Agreement of 1999 (personal communication, May 2002). This Agreement is a comprehensive document that includes the reform of the Zanzibar Electoral Commission which is to incorporate opposition-selected representatives, the introduction of a permanent register of eligible voters, a review of the existing constitution and electoral laws, the re-training and re-organising of the security services, fair coverage for both parties in the publicly-owned media, and payment of compensation to those affected by the January 2001 shootings. CCM refused to accept CUF's demand for a re-run of the 2000 elections, but accepted that CUF representatives would have a greater share in governmental institutions such as in the diplomatic corps and in parastatals. There would also be by-elections in the 16 CUF constituencies which were declared vacant when CUF MPs were expelled following their boycott of the Zanzibar legislature. There would also be an independent inquiry into the January shootings. What makes the 10 October Accord different from the one brokered by the Commonwealth in 1999 was the implementation mechanism which includes a detailed programme with a time limit on each of the items (personal communication, May 2002). Also included in the Accord is the creation of a Joint Presidential Supervisory Commission (JPSC) containing an equal number of Commissioners from both parties to ensure smooth implementation of all these reforms (Ibid.). This was to be established under an Act of the Zanzibar House of Representatives in order to give the Accord legal status so as to avoid a repetition of the 1999 Agreement. Donor countries have signalled that their aid freeze to the Isles would end once the Accord was implemented (Tanzanian Affairs, No. 71 January-April 2002 [no author cited]).

What does the Accord mean for the content of Zanzibari politics in the short term? The Accord represents a historic opportunity to achieve political stability through greater power sharing underpinned by more neutral and independent media and government organs. Voter and civic education is also part of the reconciliation
process which, if pursued vigorously, could also begin to heal the political wounds of the past in a true spirit of reconciliation and accountability, as well as the charting of new political directions for the Isles. Above all, the Accord must deliver the components of a better life for ordinary Zanzibaris who have invested so much energy in the democratic process. And indeed, political reorganisation within the political parties should be geared to just such an endeavour: articulating policies that will deliver a better future for the citizens of the Isles. CUF could, for instance, clarify its agrarian policies to rural Ungujans, articulating how the party would solve their socio-economic problems. CCM, in particular, can now move away from the apocalyptic and violent politics which has so tainted a once great party. CCM rank and file members of the party, who have shown an increasing disapproval of their leadership’s submission to the dictates of the Bretton Woods institutions and to its coziness with fly-by-night investors (Wiki Hii, 20 September 2000), could support a resurgence of the traditional Left within the party. The CCM could build a social democratic programme around its African socialist tradition, such as fostering grassroots organisations, selective renationalisation, and the promotion of small scale industry for self-reliance. CCM could and should be ready to accept electoral defeat honourably as part of the cycle of renewal and reorganisation common to liberal democratic politics. CCM should not fear being a loyal opposition. Yet would the hardline Karume regime actually hand over power if it were defeated in the 2005 General Elections? Time will tell. For it is too early to determine whether the Accord is merely a simulacrum of fundamental reform undertaken by a Zanzibar government seeking an end to the donor aid freeze, or whether the Accord signifies a deeper transition that fundamentally addresses Zanzibar’s enduring challenges.

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Debate

Party Disintegrations & Re-alignments in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Adam Habib & Lubna Nadvi

In June 2000, at a scenic game park near Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, a group of academics, journalists and politicians got together under the auspices of the Politics department at Rhodes University to discuss the fate of and the prospects for opposition politics in post-apartheid South Africa. In the midst of the two-day conference, word came through that the Democratic Party (DP) and New National Party (NNP) had just cemented a pact and established the Democratic Alliance (DA) under whose banner they would canvass in the 2000 local government elections. Given the theme of the conference, this development tended to dominate the discourse with two views predominating. On the one hand, there were those who were positive about the development, not necessarily because they supported the politics of the new party, but more so because they felt it enhanced the prospects for serious political opposition, which, it was hoped, would have the effect of checking the drift to a one party dominant political system in South Africa (Giliomee, Myburgh & Schlemmer, 2001). On the other hand, there were a number of academics and political commentators who were concerned with the unprincipled nature of the alliance, and warned that the new party would soon collapse as it was held together by nothing more than an anti-ANC electoral pact, confined to support among minority racial groups (Maloka, 2001; Habib & Taylor, 2001).

The political honeymoon between the DP and NNP went on for two years. In the local government elections, the DA performed better than either its two individual components had in the 1999 general elections, although its share of the electoral vote was lower than the 20 percent received by the NNP in 1994. Moreover, the new alliance was unable to make significant inroads into the African areas, although it did retain significant support in the lower middle and working class communities of the Coloured and Indian population. But the jewel in the crown of the DA was its control of the Western Cape. Although the African National Congress (ANC) received the largest number of electoral votes in the province, the alliance between the DP and NNP enabled the latter to keep the former out of power. Moreover, the DA took control of Cape Town, the most prominent city in the Western Cape, and the site of the country’s national legislature. The DP’s Tony Leon and the NNP’s Martinus van Schalkwyk, leader and deputy-leader of the DA respectively, hoped to use the Western Cape as the basis of a national electoral challenge by show-casing the province as a model of good governance.

Yet this was not to be. Within a year of coming to power in the Western Cape, the DA fractured with party leaders publicly slandering each other. The trigger for the collapse of the DA was the street-naming saga that had embroiled Cape Town’s mayor, Peter Marais, one of the more prominent Coloured leaders of the NNP’s coterie within the DA. Marais, looking for quick credit on arrival in office, decided to rename two of Cape Town’s more prominent streets after Mandela and De Klerk. When it became apparent that this was by no means
unanimously supported, it was decided to poll the city's residents. It soon became apparent that the votes were being doctored, and when a city hall insider blew the whistle, the entire house of cards began to crumble. In the fall out that ensued, Marais was formally exonerated, but the image of the DA had already been tarnished.

In the aftermath of the saga, Leon moved quickly to restore the DA's credibility by publicly calling for the resignation of Marais. When he refused, Leon threatened disciplinary action and party expulsion, a move, which in South Africa's proportional electoral system would have effectively meant firing the City's mayor. Conducted in surprisingly clumsy, yet predictably arrogant fashion, Leon's public handling of Marais forced the NNP coterie within the DA to come to the mayor's defense. Van Schalkwyk publicly criticized Leon's handling of the issue, and reiterated his support for Marais. Leon and his lieutenants, incensed at this public challenge to their leadership threatened van Schalkwyk with disciplinary action. With Leon staking his and the DA's credibility on the removal of Marais, and van Schalkwyk feeling compelled to come to the defense of his NNP colleague, even a series of private meetings were unsuccessful in finding a mutually accepted resolution to the problem. Eventually, Leon laid down an ultimatum to van Schalkwyk: accede to Marais's removal and terminate the separate NNP caucus meetings, or face disciplinary action. An acceptance of these demands would have effectively cemented the leadership of Leon and the dominance of the DP in the DA. Confronted with the prospect of their imminent political demise, the NNP broke from the alliance and threw the Western Cape's political system into turmoil.

In the subsequent fallout, Marais was suspended as mayor of Cape Town, won a court challenge against the DA that restored him to the position, resigned it, and was subsequently elected premier of the Western Cape. His predecessor, Gerald Morkel, was suspended from the NNP for challenging the party's decision to withdraw from the alliance, forced to resign the premiership, subsequently elected leader of the DA in the Western Cape, and may even be the new mayor of Cape Town. Yet despite the almost soap opera melodrama surrounding the shenanigans in the DA, these were effectively sideshows in a bigger game in town. The ANC, the ruling party and the official opposition in the Western Cape, threw the NNP a lifeline by agreeing in principle to a coalition with the latter. Indeed, it went even further to promise the promulgation of legislation and constitutional amendments that would effectively enable national and provincial legislators and local councillors to cross the floor and join other parties without losing their seats. This opportunity is to be created so as to enable councillors elected on a DA ticket to shift their allegiance to the NNP, thereby permitting political change in the local administration of the Western Cape.

The ANC's decision was primarily motivated by the desire to win control of the Western Cape and, in no small measure, to at last get back at Leon who with his 'Fight Back' slogan had become anathema in the ruling party's circles. The senior leadership of the ANC justified the decision on two grounds. First, they maintained that a shift in the political control of the Western Cape would be in the best interests of poor voters who have been sacrificed in the allocation of public resources at a provincial and local level. Second, senior leaders in the ANC insist that a coalition with the NNP would advance the struggle for non-racialism in South Africa. But were these mere justifications by party leaders intent on undertaking questionable and unprincipled political actions, or is there some merit in these assertions? Moreover, what implications do these actions have for the entrenchment of a constitutional tradi-
tion, the realization of non-racialism, and the consolidation of democracy in South Africa? This article is directed to addressing these questions.

Constitutional Implications

Unprincipled political alliances are not new to post-apartheid South Africa. Since the country’s second democratic election in 1999, the ANC has had an alliance with the racially based Minority Front (MF), whose leader Amichand Rajbansi was not only a well known collaborator of the P.W. Botha government, but was also indicted by the apartheid regime for corruption, and bringing the legislature into disrepute. Similarly in June 2000, the DP and NNP established a strategic alliance in order to pose a more effective electoral challenge to the ANC. In both cases parties sacrificed political principle for short term electoral gain. The ANC used the MF to achieve a two thirds majority in the national legislature and enforce an equal strength government in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The DA represented an attempt at an electoral shortcut, a way to circumvent the arduous task of methodically building an electoral challenge from the grassroots. Post apartheid politics have thus been seriously compromised by the political opportunism of both the ruling and opposition parties.

The new ANC-NNP alliance does nothing to change this. In fact it has created severe ideological rifts in the party ranks, with the result that there has been mixed response to the coalition. Many of the party’s activists and lower level leadership would have preferred to let the NNP collapse. The national leadership were however, insistent on the alliance and overrode much of the party discussion on the matter. Yet is the alliance with the NNP not tantamount to keeping apartheid-era politics rooted in the philosophy of advancing minority rights very much alive? The senior ANC leadership clearly does not believe so. Indeed it has considered and is in the process of implementing a series of legislative changes and constitutional amendments that would facilitate the coalition by enabling NNP councilors in the DA to cross the floor without being penalized through the loss of their parliamentary seat. Initially this was to have taken the form of a proposed bill known as the

Loss or Retention of Membership of National and Provincial Legislature Bill, which effectively stated that, ‘A member of a legislature who becomes a member of a party (the new party) other than the party which nominated that person as a member, remains a member of that legislature if that person has become a member of the new party after the expiry of 12 months from the date of an election in respect of that legislature’ (E-Politics, 2001).

This was to have been conditional on the grounds that it is effected in and limited to a period determined by the president, after consultation with the leaders of political parties in the National Assembly and the premiers. Local councilors are also to be accorded this privilege, through a similar amendment of the Municipal Structures Act.

After a public outcry at the fact that these proposals would have enabled the president to manipulate the process in favour of the majority party, the cabinet released a new set of legislative proposals. These in effect recommend the establishment of two pre-determined periods per annum, in which MP’s would be able to cross the floor, without losing their seats. The proviso was that such a crossing of the floor would only be allowed if it involved at least 10% of the party’s representatives.

Clearly, these proposed legislative changes would of course have severe constitutional implications. A considerable body of opinion has for some time now argued for allowing constitutional amendments that would permit such
floor crossing (Jung & Shapiro, 1995). This was motivated on the grounds that it would effectively undermine the power of party bosses, enable MP’s to decide on issues with their conscience, and ensure that citizen’s preferences were given greater weight in the policy process. Why then was there such consternation over the initial legislative proposals? Because the privilege to accord the right was placed in the hands of the president, who effectively is the party boss of the majority constituent in the legislature. This would have enabled the majority party to abuse the legislative framework and the constitution for its narrow political ends. Where it suited its purpose, it would have promulgated the open-period for crossing the floor. Where not, it would have refused to do so.

The second set of legislative proposals clearly constitute an advance on the first. This is because these proposals do not enable the process to be blatantly manipulated by the majority party for its own ends. But even these proposals have provoked concern in some ranks. In particular around the provision that the floor crossing would only be allowed if it affected 10% of the party’s representatives. The drafters of this legislation insist that this provision is included to prevent representatives from engaging in floor crossing for opportunistic and careerist reasons. However others have argued that the provision was included to ensure that the ruling party does not become the victim of its own legislation. Indeed the ANC leadership is careful that this does not become the case. The party is aware that in the near future such an open period might not be in their organisational interest (Xako, 2002)

For some time now there has been increasing discord in the congress alliance. Cosatu and even the normally docile SACP leadership, are increasingly under popular pressure to challenge the party leadership on its neo-liberal policy prescriptions, as well as Mbeki’s obscure stance on Aids. As a result there has been significant protest against GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy), privatisation, labour rights and a whole series of social welfare legislation in the last year or two. This has provoked public spats between the ANC leadership and that of its alliance partners. A break in the alliance is not likely in the near future. But the ANC leadership is nevertheless being careful enough to ensure that should the unlikely happen and a section of the SACP and Cosatu leadership decide to break the alliance, they will not be able to immediately attract a cadre of MPs from within the legislature because of the fear that they would lose their parliamentary seats.

Clearly the proposed bill to enable an open period for floor-crossing is likely to be challenged by the official opposition in the constitutional court. But its real test will not be in the constitutional court but in the court of public opinion. It must be understood that legally correct is not the equivalent of politically astute. The ANC must take care to guard against its parliamentary majority for what would constitute naked political opportunism on its part. Already the fact that it is introducing the legislation now is seen by many as a manipulation of the legislative process. Had it pushed through its initial proposals, it would have not only weakened the DA, but also have undermined the constitutional character of the post-apartheid state, for a precedent would have been established where the constitution is manipulated by the legislative majority for their own narrow political and organisational ends. If the constitution is held hostage to the whims and fancies of the legislative majority, then it is not worth the paper it is written on. Moreover it would breed cynicism among the citizenry. The 1999 national and provincial elections, the 2000 local government elections, and recent polls demonstrate that this is a significant problem amongst large sections of the electorate (Lodge, 1999). Increasing the cynicism
within the electorate would undermine political stability and the prospects for democratic consolidation in post-apartheid South Africa.

**Prospects for Non-racialism**

What then, of the claim by the ANC that the coalition would foster a politics of non-racialism. This has been the rationale advanced by Terror Lekota, national chair of the ANC and Ebrahim Rasool, ANC leader in the Western Cape. This thesis does however need to be interrogated. Two philosophical assumptions on identity and political frameworks have dominated the constitutional debate in the South African transition. The first, articulated by consociational theorists and the original National Party (NP), accepted the reality of race and racial divisions and advocated a political system that institutionalised racial identities (MacDonald, 1992). A coalition government consisting of racially based parties, a federal political system and mutual and federal vetoes for racial and ethnic groups constituted the core of their constitutional proposals. These constitutional arrangements were seen as necessary if political cohesion was to be maintained in South Africa's multi-racial society.

The alternative view, advocated by the ANC and various other sectors of the liberation movement, argues that race did not inevitably have to constitute one's primary political identity. They insisted that the individual must be considered as the focal political unit in the post-apartheid constitutional structure. The philosophy underlying this constitutional proposal built on the tradition of political struggle and non-racialism developed primarily in the 1980s (MacDonald, 1992). Since 1994 however, this view has increasingly come under strain from within the ranks of the ANC. Senior government leaders and black economic elites have often tended to manipulate racial identities in order to advance their own narrow political and material agendas. The result is that the tradition of non-racialism which constituted the central core of the anti-apartheid struggle is increasingly under threat, from a new legitimised politics of race and ethnicity. The ANC and NNP coalition reinforces this trend. The party leadership's argument that the coalition would advance the politics of non-racialism can be challenged on two grounds.

First, it assumes that non-racialism can be achieved by political and legislative manipulation and elite appeasement, thus enormous effort is being put into promulgating legislation that would enable the NNP leadership to be incorporated in the structures of local, provincial and national governments. But non-racialism is by its very nature a mass phenomenon. It has to be structured and organized at the level of the citizenry, for if it is not rooted in this constituency, then the political and constitutional arrangements are likely to be out of synch with the prevailing identities among the populus. Second, the ANC leadership's rationale assumes that the NNP would continue to retain its support in the Western Cape. But the NNP's support base was in part attracted to the party, because of its opposition to the ANC. It could be argued that the 'NNP's Coloured support base' could in effect do what their White counterparts did a few years earlier, and abandoned the party for the DA. If this were to happen, then the entire rationale for the ANC/NNP coalition, would have been eroded.

But the costs would have been great. Coalition building among racially based parties, entrenches racial and ethnic identities, which can be detrimental in adverse socio-economic conditions. Racial and ethnic coalition structures have only really been successful in Western Europe, in particular because racial and ethnic groups were relatively equal in size, and these political arrangements operated in environments of material prosperity (MacDonald, 1992). Neither condition
exists in South Africa. Moreover, in the developing world, these arrangements have been largely unsuccessful. In fact, the entrenchment of racial and ethnic identities in parts of the developing world which experienced economic crises and contraction like Bosnia, Nigeria, and Rwanda, has had catastrophic consequences (Mamdani, 2001). While such a civil war scenario is unlikely in South Africa, it would be unwise of South Africans to become complacent in this regard. The multi-racialism implicit in coalition-building will effectively locate South Africa firmly within the politics of race. Given that the struggle against apartheid was essentially an attempt to move away from race-based politics, a relapse into a political environment that is configured along racial lines would constitute a regression and not serve the interests of the historically disadvantaged.

Politics of Non-racialism

How, then, can a politics of non-racialism be established in South Africa? The dilemma is, of course, how to address the historical disparities that are structured along racial lines without using race as the criteria for political action and public policy? The answer to this lies in South Africa's tragic history. Apartheid and the segregation that preceded it, bequeathed to South Africa a class structure that is largely racially defined. This overlap between race and class categories allows for a situation where a political strategy with class objectives at its core would in substance have the effect of mediating racial disparities. To put it more bluntly, non-racialism can only be built in South Africa by advancing a politics of the poor.

This, however, is not what the ANC has done. The ANC's post-1994 strategic political project is built on two public policy platforms: a neo-liberal macro-economic policy that rapidly integrates South Africa into the world economy, and a raft of affirmative action legislation that lends historically disadvantaged people a helping hand in employment and promotions, access to social provisions like education and health, and support with small business development and procurements from big business and the state. This coupling of a neo-liberal economic policy with affirmative action has had two related consequences. First, it has limited the benefits of this transition to a narrow elite category within the African, Coloured and Indian population (Adam, Slabbert & Moodley, 1997; Habib & Padayachee, 2000). Second, the competition over a shrinking economic pie has effectively pitted the poor of one racial community against that of the other (Habib & Naidu, 1999). This, together with the tendency of leaders in the ruling party to resort to race whenever they are subjected to criticisms, has needlessly continued to polarize South African society along racial lines (Mare, 2001).

An alternative framework for the establishment of a non-racial politics would require the abandonment of the government's neo-liberal macro-economic strategy. A politics of non-racialism can never be built in an environment of economic scarcity. The Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) of the ANC creates such an environment and is thus not conducive to building and sustaining a politics of non-racialism. Such a politics would require an economic strategy that is directed at alleviating the plight of the poor. In this contemporary environment, it should at minimum take the form of a social democratic project involving significant Keynesian economic reforms including among others, increased social expenditure, significant regulation of the markets and capital, and an industrial policy directed at facilitating both employment and a decent standard of living (Michie & Padayachee, 1997).

Is this likely? Not in the immediate future. In an earlier contribution we
argued that the configuration of political and social forces in South Africa does not lend itself to the advancement of a politics and economics of the poor. In fact, we maintained that a break in the tripartite alliance was essential if such a politics was to be realized (Habib & Taylor, 1999; 2001). But this is unlikely given the political timidity and continuous vacillations of the COSATU and SACP leadership. Unfortunately, for now, the politics of non-racialism is not on the agenda. The ANC leadership, including its left-leaning figures need to come to terms with the fact that their own policies preclude the realization of such a politics. And, no amount of elite-pacting or political machinations is going to change this state of affairs.

The South African political grapevine reports every now and then that President Mbeki is enamoured with one or other book, normally written by a western political journalist on the subject of globalisation, and often advancing one or other version of the ‘Third Way’ politics that is now so popular in Europe. This tends to prompt Mbeki’s cabinet colleagues and many of the leaders in the ANC hierarchy to read the text if only to get into the groove of the President’s thinking. But Mbeki, his cabinet colleagues and other senior leaders in the ANC might benefit from more basic reading, one more common to the children of our world. J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series contains an enormous amount of simple lessons that our politicians could learn from. Perhaps the most profound of these for now is one contained at the end of the second book in the series when Rowling issues a philosophical and moral lesson through the character of Albus Dumbledore, the wise old headmaster of Hogwarths school. When Harry is troubled by the fact that his abilities and background are similar to that of the arch-villain, Lord Voldemort, Dumbledore comforts him with the words:

It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are (Rowling, 1999:333).

It is a lesson that the ANC would do well to heed. After all South Africa’s political honeymoon will not last forever.

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References


Briefings

A Window on Africa: An Interview with Adotey Bing, Director of the Africa Centre, London

The Africa Centre has long been a focus for political and cultural activities coming out of the continent. Originally established by the diplomatic missions of newly independent African states, its remit was to provide a forum for Africans in London, particularly students, as well as giving a voice to various political positions that were not being widely aired. Since then the fortunes of the Africa Centre have waxed and waned as the economic and political welfare of its original constituents has declined. It continues under the directorship of Dr. Adotey Bing who took over in 1995. Among his current concerns are focusing the mission of The Centre and securing long term funding which will permit some forward planning for the first time in its history. On 8 October 2001 Giles Mohan (GM) of the ROAPE editorial working group interviewed Adotey Bing (AB).

GM: The first thing is to set the scene and go back to the founding of the Africa Centre and the reasons why it was established.

AB: Then when is relatively simple: it was incorporated in 1961 and was formally opened in November 1964 by Kenneth Kaunda just after independence. The reasons: it depends who you speak to, but I sort of glean the following three reasons, though not necessarily in order of importance. One was to have a home from home for a growing number of African students that were present in the UK during that time. The other, linked to that, was to provide a place that would not be available to the sort of Nkrumahist, Russian or Soviet political propaganda of the time. I think the third reason was, because it originated from the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), the feeling that the post-colonial relationship needed to be mediated by something different or from a different prospective to that which had prevailed during the colonial times. I think those were broadly the three forces that drove the idea forward, and to that extent it’s a peculiar kind of mission.

GM: How do you feel things have changed in the intervening, nearly forty, years?

AB: Things have changed considerably. I think the first period was the decade when over twenty African countries became independent. A lot of them opened missions in London and vigorous, relatively wealthy, and confident leaders appeared on the African scene alongside their diplomatic missions. And everything was new and people were talking about what their countries would do and wouldn’t do and so on. And so the Africa Centre was a fairly vibrant place. Students were coming to London and there was hardly any place that they could go other than here. This was the sole focus of a lot of energies of people concerned with Africa. But that rapidly changed for a whole host of reasons.

The students were joined by exiles that didn’t have a stake anymore, or didn’t feel they had a stake in their country anymore. They became people who were critical rather than being generally supportive of the regimes. Then you had some people who didn’t go back and therefore you got a wave of more permanently resident people. Additionally, the relationship of some African govern-
ments with Britain was problematic with some of them less able to pay their way. Over the time we got this very significant change.

After a while some lost interest in Africa. When you picked up a copy of *The Times* or *The Telegraph* all you would find would be minutiae about what is going on in Africa in the '70s. Today you pick up a paper and Africa hardly gets a mention. So, all of that has happened with those students and others that have stayed is that they have become the first generation of a new diaspora. Our children have begun to build their own networks and organisations. In fact, they are increasingly more interested in what is happening to them and the African community here than they are in what is happening in Africa. While the Centre would normally be the natural stakeholder in this situation, African governments just don't have the political, intellectual or financial will or even the capability to drive it which is evident of the diplomatic missions lack of readiness to support the Centre. It is a peculiar relationship – a kind of an orphan.

**GM:** In that early period, what kind of activities did you undertake?

**AB:** The same sort of things we have now – lots of discussions and lectures. Many ministers came through and addressed meetings of their student population or talked to British government officials; plus a lot of artists displaying or exhibiting and a few musicians. The restaurant soon opened which was another attraction. But it was always known for being what people used to call a 'Window on Africa' with talks by artists like Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. There were also journalists from magazines such as, *Drum*. In fact this was the office of *Africa Magazine*, indeed, it all started from here.

So, all those developments happened and I think now we are in a position where there is a significant number of academic groups active in a range of areas plus those that promote the art of Africa that are based here. There are also a number of organisations that are trying to secure changes in policy and practice within Africa. Increasingly, there are many British people who know about Africa in a way that has not been mediated by a colonial experience and, I think, there has been a recent change in terms of South Africa. On the whole, African governments haven't been really able to project themselves. So, that's the package that we now have. And I think the dominant view of the continent is that it is, putting it crudely, a breadbasket in need of help and hand holding. And that is very different from what was there before. So, clearly, we need to sit down and rethink what The Centre is there for and how we can play that role.

**GM:** Is there a tension between the pressing concerns of development across the continent and this group of second and third generation diasporic communities who are less interested perhaps in the fate of the continent?

**AB:** Not for me, because I have been fairly clear in my own head about where The Centre should go in that regard. But there was a time when the influence on The Centre by those people in part of the diaspora who were seeking to bring about change within Africa became very pronounced. And that created a big problem with the government. My own view is that even though all the circumstances aren't the best that they might be, the appropriate role for a place like this is to identify the positive social, political, economic and cultural developments in Africa and bring them to the attention of the UK population. I don't think that it is the appropriate role for this organisation to seek in a direct way to campaign to change policy and practice within Africa. It has been the source of some slight tension, but I think that for me that is not a problem. You simply have to decide what you think you are supposed to be
doing. Similarly, I think what we have tried to do is to focus very much on issues coming out of Africa, rather than what is coming out of the diaspora; we don’t exclude it, but we make it the junior partner in what we front or promote. Again, that has had its critics, but I feel it is the right thing to do.

GM: So, how would you go about strategically pushing that forward over the next ten or fifteen years?

AB: About two years ago, one of the first things we did was the Board took the somewhat vague existing mission statement and put it into words. We then looked at it and said, is this what we want to be doing? We decided that it wasn’t and so changed it, and came up with a number of core objectives. The first was crucial: generating a positive awareness about Africa. The other was to seek to engage in activities that would support African economies and try to create a platform for them. The third was to champion Africa’s international aspirations. We don’t mean what individual governments might say or do, but collectively what people say. So, for example, a contentious issue is the whole issue of reparations. We would see it as our responsibility, not necessarily to take a side, but to provide a platform for people to speak, especially from within Africa, on the issue: why they take the positions they do and to liaise with policy makers, members of the diaspora or the press. The fourth is to try to support the cultural and social activities of the diaspora here and also to promote or champion social inclusion across all areas of life. Finally, to provide information.

At first we tried to develop individual projects but now we are increasing the programme in areas that we think can deliver our objectives with some clarity. We are not here as an immigration agency; we are not here as an employment agency; we are not here to help with housing, because other agencies do that. Those issues are important, but we do not see our expertise in that area. I see us trying to do what I call development of the African scene on the one hand and, on the other, promote that culture. None of the other groups that are around have that particular remit so we don’t see ourselves in competition but in a possible collaborative role that could be mutually beneficial – to provide a platform.

In terms of practical projects, what does that translate into? For example, we started a series of lectures called ‘Managing Contemporary Africa’ which was intended to bring high profile people here to discuss contemporary issues and problems. Among those who came are Sir Robert Posel, President Museveni and UN Ambassador Mary Robinson. We recently ran a series of conferences on how Africans use diplomacy to advance their interests. At the time we had Chief Emeka Anyaoku when he was Commonwealth Secretary General as well as the head of the ACP Secretariat in Brussels. We recently hosted a conference on the ‘African Renaissance’ with the Vice-President of South Africa. Last year we had a conference on what we called ‘unfinished business’, which looked at the relationship between Africa and Europe with Professor Ajayi of Nigeria and the Nigerian Commissioner for South Africa.

Finally, we have a broadcast capability which we’ve developed over the last few years and are hoping to develop further. At the moment we only do one programme a week which goes out on Spectrum Radio. For the past four months we’ve also got it on the net – a link that we want to develop which could develop into quite a powerful instrument and provide a voice or platform for different kinds of local organisations. And then on the artistic side we are developing a number of annual events. For example, we have a children’s literature festival in which we promote African writing amongst youngsters who don’t have access to that literature. We started off with
a one-day event here at Africa Centre inviting librarians and school parties and have tried to create a kind of cycle amongst this group which will hopefully be taken back into homes, into their schools. For instance, for 23 years the Centre has run a very intensive school workshop programme where we send people into schools. This time last year we had a residency of two South African artists who came in and worked with two schools in Westminster. This has developed further and is something that we are going to be doing on a regular basis. We decided that we would try and send the winner of the African literature prize on a tour around the UK’s eight literature festivals.

At the level of information, we got a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to develop a three-part internet database: the first is on individuals; the second will be on organisations, and the third will be a kind of chronology on Africa. What we did first of all was to scroll through the net and find whatever references there are about Africans and then develop a template which includes names, birthdays, achievements, and honours. This is our first year and by October 2001 we had 10,000 names. Through this process of research we’ve also identified organisations which will be on the database by November. After that we’ll move on to chronology start in 1950, and then go backward in time.

GM: Are these people on your database only based in Britain?

AB: They are basically everywhere.

GM: When you say any organisation, what do you mean?

AB: Any organisation: political organisations, NGOs, businesses. It is a major project and it will be a useful tool. For example, in academia we are involving only professors and readers, but when as we develop it we will also include senior lecturers and lecturers. Similarly, at the moment we are just taking chairman/women of companies. But it will get to a point when if you are looking for somebody who is expert it will come from the database. So, it will almost be like a job creation programme, and if you want to put yourself forward with a particular skill in the individual section you can do that.

As I say, they fit very much within the parameters you are talking about. One of the events we tried to do, was the hosting of a African business forum. By organising a couple of dinners to meet one another and talk seemed to be a good idea, but it just didn’t do well. But that is the sort of thing we would support.

GM: Is there a perceived need for that kind of thing amongst the business community?

AB: I think so. Certainly the people that were involved were very keen, but I think our sense of what they needed was slightly mismatched. We were doing it, but we didn’t have any money to do it. That was a problem in a sense that if we don’t have money to do something we won’t do it no matter how important it is. In the long run you cripple the organisation. So, if we can raise money to develop something like that then we will. But we can’t just spend our energy and time if we can’t actually pay for it.

So that’s some idea of the projects and programming that we undertake. It is about trying to create a space for The Centre in the present period and a space that doesn’t shut out the other people that are around. In fact, one could work with them.
that the Africa Centre could or should have acted as an umbrella to try and facilitate these smaller organisations to get their message across and be more effective?

**AB:** I think it can, but I think it can do so in a sustainable way only if that is a possibility. For example, if we take our radio capability to a point where we can get a full-time station, then if you want you have something that will be available. What has often been the case is that The Centre has not been able to raise its own profile, so we don’t attract as many people as we might. On the other hand, I think that the people who do get attracted to Africa Centre have a peculiar sense of what the relationship might be – it’s almost like you’re their uncle. They will come to you and will say ‘help us’. If you don’t have money to do those things and you try to do them consistently you will always run a deficit and eventually collapse the organisation. So, we have learnt that what most African organisations are looking for is money and if you can’t give it to them then perhaps they think well, what use are you? I think what they actually need is a capacity building programme; there are people here who don’t know the environment or aren’t used to systems that are being applied in terms of, for instance, accounts and the charity structure.

We have also come through some very difficult times. If you take a step back and say here is an organisation that owns a building for which it gets a net income yet is always in financial straits, you have to ask how and why that is the case. One reason is that the programmes that have been initiated have not been supported or funded; we have never been funded by anyone. Some would say The Africa Centre should be regularly funded by maybe the Arts Council or the London Arts Board – it has never happened. We always try to generate money and therefore always operated at a relatively lower level.

**GM:** Why do you think that was?

**AB:** I think that is an interesting question. I think it is partly because there wasn’t the mission objective of Africa Centre to be only an arts centre. So, there were ways in which it operated that just didn’t suit the people that looked at these things. The advantage now is some of the people in those institutions have taken a slightly different tack. For example, you can go to the Arts Council and make suggestions that ten years ago they wouldn’t look at. Now they are much more prepared to look at what is happening within this London community and people from different cultural backgrounds. Also, we have a problem in that in addition to the artistic work there were all the political lectures. The arts funds are only interested in your artistic work: what you are are doing with them, what’s your policy and who do you have working with you? So we have taken the decision that we are going to try to do what is artistically and culturally credible and give ‘A’ for excellence. Because without that we won’t have the cushion that we ideally should have. Last month we brought Miriam Makeba to play at the Royal Festival Hall. We are going to try and do something like that twice a year. If we were doing something with a small unknown group, it wouldn’t have had the same impact. So, we must do things that are high profile and we must do them well. When those two things come together people do notice you.

So, that is the problem. We went through a long period of serious financial difficulty and have not been able to respond to some of the requests. But in a way we are not best placed to respond to these requests. We are not able nor are we trying to mobilise or organise the African community here.

**GM:** Going back to the issue of governance in Africa, you talked about providing a forum in which that kind of debate occurs really. What are your aims in this
organisation and African organisations in Britain?

AB: Certainly I think Africans do have a presence. We sit on a couple of groups in an ad hoc and a regular way where issues about British policy in Africa are discussed. Whatever happens, you have a chance to voice your view, but I think it is a very difficult because there are so many different groups of Africans; we are not united or organised as a forum. It is very difficult to say somebody is speaking on behalf of or speaking for the African community. All you are doing in a sense is speaking for yourself. So, I think with the best will in the world it would be difficult for the British government to do a good job of mobilising. What it does do, I think, is to take individual stances on particular issues be they regional, thematic, perhaps to do with refugees, child soldiers or whatever and try to fashion some policy around that.

GM: You talked about the Arts Council application. What would that enable you to do in the future?

AB: Well, obviously they are only interested in the arts programmes but there are some things that are generic that will benefit the whole organisation. So, basically what they say to us is go and persuade an organisation to pledge a total of £100,000 for your arts funding for three years – which we did. So, on that basis they said OK, write up a plan on how are you going to spend this money, but also include, obviously because it is relevant, what to do with this building. This beautiful building which was last renovated in the 1960s is falling down around us: the roof is leaking and the electrics are gone.

We decided to do a root and branch operation. We produced a paper and sent it out to all members of the Board and staff as well as the African ambassadors and organisations that we have collaborated with over the years. It listed the issues and asked for their response. We are awaiting those. That will help us decide essentially what Africa Centre should do and which art forms we choose to host. One of the bugbears we have is that for many people this is a club. The other thing is that none of the major art forms we might want to encourage can be done comfortably under the present configuration. We have a narrow gallery around the balcony, but this is not suitable because you are either too close or too far away. We would like to show African films, but we can’t because we have no fixed seating which is a safety requirement. If we want to do major exhibitions or sculptures we have to put them in the main hall and then take them down after five days, because of the gigs here on Friday and Saturday evenings. These things are incompatible. If you want a reputation as a centre of excellence and develop the real skills to do that, you have got to be selective; we’ve got to decide what it is we want to do and assess its compatibility within the context and then build a plan on that basis.

Our aims will include an artistic programme with three key elements. One will be fund raising. Thus far, we’ve raised £100,000 a year for three years which is fine, but how do you keep that going? We need to know what it will cost to renovate this building and the chances of raising funds. Hopefully the Arts Council will pay for the renovation of the work. Once it is determined that we need five members of staff or certain members of staff doing A, B, C, or D for three years then we’ll look at how the finances stack up. We are committed to make up the funds so that we can continue to operate. For the first time in its history, The Centre will be in a position to think what it wants to do at a level that is commensurate with other organisations in the field, but with the appropriate funds to actually deliver. We hope to finish the actual writing and get it approved and hopefully by April 2002 so we will able to get things started.
GM: Have the noises been quite positive so far?

AB: So far the noises are quite positive. It has been a tough trial. This is our third attempt and this has been the most positive so far, and unless something goes drastically wrong I think that we will come through the other end. So, that means we will at least have a properly thought out organisation. We will have a plan for the arts programme, we will have the capacity to implement it and we will have the money to finance it. And then in a sense one can turn ones attention to the non-arts side and look at those as well. We are not likely to get a deal like that, but if we are imaginative in how we structure the Centre’s position we should be able to continue to do things like put on conferences and major talks as we have done in the past. These actually cost less money than artistic projects. For example, the Miriam Makeba conference cost us about £35,000. But you can't do anything like that unless you have support. So, once we have got the artistic centre we should be in a position to work on this other side of our activities.

Africa Centre, 34 King Street, Covent Garden, London, UK.

The Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Arbitration

Philip White

After two postponements in February and March, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission’s keenly awaited Decision was finally published on 13 April 2002. The Decision is an important milestone on the road to peace between these two countries, after a two-year war which began with localised border disputes and ended only after a full-scale Ethiopian invasion of Eritrea, the loss of some 45-50,000 lives, the displacement of 300,000 people, mass expulsions, massive economic, infrastructural and development costs, the stoking up of conflicts across the region, a legacy of mistrust and loss of trade between the two states and lost livelihoods in border areas, and serious political repercussions for the two leaderships which are still being played out.

In the weeks leading up to the publication of the Decision tensions had been rising as each side feared that the other would renege on its commitment to abide by it. Ethiopia accused Eritrea of moving 30,000 troops into the area adjacent to the Temporary Security Zone in which a 4,000-strong peace-keeping force of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) had helped to maintain the peace since February 2001, while Eritrea made similar accusations of Ethiopia. Conflicting expectations were particularly high in relation to Zalambessa in the central part of the border and the Badme area, scene of the skirmishes in May 1998 credited with sparking off the war in the first place, in the west.

In February 2002 the UN Security Council sent a high-level mission, including all 15 of its members, to both countries to consolidate this commitment and build confidence in the peace process, as well as to discuss mine clearance – a prerequisite for demarcation – and the release of remaining prisoners and detainees. Just before the mission’s arrival the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told Reuters news agency that he could not imagine a worse leader than Eritrea’s President Isaias Afewerki and said improved relations with Ethiopia depended upon his replacement. Both leaders appear to have made pledges to respect the Decision that were hedged with qualifications.

Each leader, in different ways, had much to lose from an unfavourable ruling which would provide ammunition to
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Each leader, in different ways, had much to lose from an unfavourable ruling which would provide ammunition to
their respective domestic oppositions in demonstrating that their huge sacrifices of the war had been in vain. Both leaders have faced serious political crises in the period since the peace agreement of December 2000. Meles has had to contend with hard-liners of the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) who feel he has been too ‘soft’ on Eritrea and should have taken Asmara when he had the chance, and who moved – unsuccessfully – to challenge his leadership in March 2001, as well as with dissent on the Amhara and Oromo fronts. In March this year the opposition Ethiopian Democratic Party organised a petition against any peace agreement that deprived Ethiopia of access to the sea. Isaias for his part has detained senior figures in his People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) ruling party who in May 2001 openly voiced dissent against what they saw as his autocratic tendencies.

The UN, after previous failings in Africa and having invested heavily in UNMEE, also had a great deal riding on a ruling that both sides would accept, leading to a lasting peace between the two countries. The Commission, therefore, while given a mandate that was essentially a technical and legal one, cannot have been unaware of the precarious political path it would be treading.

This Briefing summarises the mandate and findings of the Commission and comments on its achievement and role in the peace process. In doing so it shows in map form, based on a combination and simplification of six of the 13 maps in the Decision document, the two countries’ territorial claims submitted for arbitration, and where the delimitation line lies in relation to them.

The Commission’s Constitution & Modus Operandi

The Commission was established under the auspices of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in the Hague in accordance with the peace agreement between the two countries of 12 December 2000, Article 4 of which specified that:

1. Consistent with the provisions of the Framework Agreement and the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, the parties reaffirm the principle of respect for the borders existing at independence as stated in resolution AHG/Res. 16(1) adopted by the OAU Summit in Cairo in 1964, and, in this regard, that they shall be determined on the basis of pertinent colonial treaties and applicable international law.

2. The parties agree that a neutral Boundary Commission composed of five members shall be established with a mandate to delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty border based on pertinent colonial treaties (1900, 1902 and 1908) and applicable international law. The Commission shall not have the power to make decisions ex aequo et bono.

Article 4 went on to set out the rules of the game:

- Each Party would appoint two commissioners who would in turn appoint a Commission president, making up the five members none of whom could be nationals or residents of the respective parties;
- The UN Cartographer would act as Secretary to the Commission and make use of the UN Cartographic Unit;
- Each Party would submit to the Secretary its claims and evidence concerning the border, which the latter would pass on to the other Party and the Commission, along with findings identifying portions of the border which appeared not to be in dispute;
- Parties would present to the Commission written and oral submis-
The Commission's Approach

The Commission's task in this first, delimitation, phase was to consider this mass of submitted evidence in relation to three elements included in the above-quoted paragraphs of the December 2000 agreement: the 'pertinent colonial treaties'; 'applicable international law'; and the significance of the 1964 OAU Summit Resolution. Before summarising its findings it is worthwhile highlighting some key aspects of its approach to this task which, as the report details, are based on a consideration of prior cases dealt with by the PCA and International Court of Justice.

Interpreting the Treaties: The three Treaties concluded by Italy, as colonial power in Eritrea, and Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia in 1900, 1902 and 1908 between them described the entire common boundary between the two states as agreed after Italy's military defeat by Menelik at Adwa in 1896, and respectively relate to central, western and eastern portions of the border considered in turn by the Commission. Central to the dispute is the fact that the Treaties were never followed up by demarcation, and in the case of the eastern sector did not even involve delimitation, of the border.

After some delay the Commission adopted its Rules of Procedure in June 2001. In line with these rules written submissions were filed by each Party in the form of a Memorial, a Counter-Memorial three months later, and an exchange of Replies after a further month. Oral evidence was then admitted in a series of hearings in The Hague in December 2001, presented by the two Foreign Ministers and their legal consultants and advocates. Considering the substantial portions of the 1,000 km border that were in dispute, and the large volumes of written and oral evidence submitted by the Parties including some 250 different maps, the Commissions' publication of its findings on delimitation in 100-plus pages of closely argued text and accompanying maps by mid-April 2002 is no mean achievement.

Second, it allowed its interpretation of each Treaty to be modified by subsequent conduct of the Parties, either in demonstrating their interpretation of the meaning and purpose of the treaty or in affecting their legal rights irrespective of the established original meaning of the treaty. Thus if one party had over a
substantial period demonstrated acquiescence in the other’s exercise of sovereignty over a particular portion of territory, this could override its claim to that territory even if that claim was supported by the relevant treaty.

**Applicable international law:** In a similar manner the interpretation of ‘applicable international law’ was not – despite an argument advance by Ethiopia to the contrary – limited to international law as applied to interpreting the Treaties, but any customary international law which might have a bearing on the delimitation task. This meant, in particular, that the Commission felt itself obliged to apply rules of international law in respect of conduct of the parties, this being of three kinds: maps, effectivités (i.e. a party’s activity on the ground tending to show exercise of its sovereign authority), and diplomatic and other exchanges – including admissions before the Commission which as we shall see played a particular part in the decision regarding the central sector.

**The 1964 OAU Summit Declaration:** Reference to the landmark resolution of the 1964 OAU Summit accepting the principle of ‘respect for the borders existing at independence’ was included not only in the December 2000 peace agreement, but also in the OAU-brokered ‘Framework Agreement’ of June 1998, the ‘Technical Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework Agreement’ agreed in September 1999, and the ceasefire agreement of June 2000. The Commission saw this as having one particular significance: that the Parties accepted that the date as at which the border between them was to be determined was that of Eritrea’s independence, 27 April 1993, regardless of subsequent developments.

**The Central Sector**

**The 1900 Treaty line:** The central part of the border to which the 1990 Treaty applies runs from the junction of the Mareb and Mai Ambessa rivers in the west to the delta whereby the Ragali river flows into the Salt Lake in the Bada area to the east. The 1900 Treaty (in both English and Amharic texts) specifies the border in this area as following the ‘Mareb-Belesa-Muna’ line as traced on a map annexed to the Treaty, these being the names of three rivers. This map was therefore of critical importance. It was in fact a simplified version of an earlier map prepared by the Italian geographer Captain Enrico de Chaurand in 1894, and a comparison of the two maps was significant in terms of those features of the latter which the Treaty map chose to omit as not being of relevance to the purpose of the Treaty. A problem with both, however, was the small scale on which they were drawn (1:1,000,000) and their inexact correspondence with the topography and toponymy of modern maps. However the Commission did consider them to provide a reasonable depiction of the actual geography of the area.

There was no dispute about the Treaty line from its western end upstream along the Mareb and then into the lower stretch of the Belesa river before it joins the Mareb. However, a little further upstream the Belesa unites two large rivers, and from this point eastwards the claims of the two Parties diverged considerably as shown on Map 1.

The divergence arose from different interpretations both of the 1900 Treaty map itself and of the purpose of the Treaty. Eritrea considered the Treaty map to provide sufficient guidance for identifying the Mareb-Belesa-Muna line and held that the line follows the south-western branch of the Belesa (which the Commission named ‘Belesa A’) before running east over the watershed to link with the Muna. Ethiopia asserted that the Treaty line was intended to divide de facto administration of the districts of Acchele Guzai on the Eritrean side and Agame on the Ethiopian side, and that in any case the Treaty map does not accurately repre-
sent the relevant geography. According to Ethiopia the names 'Belesa' and 'Muna' were intended to apply respectively to the northernmost rivers (the Commission's 'Belesa B' and 'Belesa C') flowing into the Belesa, and on the eastern side of the watershed the Endeli, of which the river that Eritrea refers to as the Muna and Ethiopia calls the Berbero Gado is merely a southern tributary.

The Commission's approach was first to ascertain the intended route, on modern maps, of the 1900 Treaty line, and then to form a judgement as to ways in which the Treaty line so established should be modified to take into account ways in which subsequent conduct of the Parties affected their legal position.

The first of these tasks was essentially a matter of careful examination of the Treaty map in relation both to what is now known about the geography of the area from modern maps and satellite imagery, and to the de Chaurand map on which it was based. Such a comparison reveals the route of the Treaty line to favour Ethiopia's claim as far as the Belesa is concerned - that is, following the Belesa B and Belesa C rather than Belesa A - but then to continue to the headwater of the Belesa C just to the northwest of present-day Zalambessa (which did not exist at the time of the Treaty) from whence it makes a short overland link to a headwater of the Muna/Belesa B into Zalambessa and thereafter follows the latter to Massolae in accordance with the Eritrean claim. One of the considerations leading to this conclusion was that the Treaty map did not see fit to include the portion of the Endeli to the north of Alitena which Ethiopia claimed was intended as the Treaty line, even though the de Chaurand map shows it clearly.

The Parties also disagreed as to the eastern terminal point of the 1900 Treaty line in the Bada region. Eritrea considered this to be Massolae, where the Muna ends at its confluence with the Endeli, and held that the boundary from there follows the Endeli southeast to Rendoma (where the river takes a north-easterly turn and becomes the Ragali) and thence continued in a southeasterly direction to Djibouti in accordance with the 1908 Treaty formula (considered below). Ethiopia asserted that the 1900 Treaty line continues north-east along the Ragali (still depicted by the Treaty map as the Muna) and ends at the town of Ragali. In this case the Commission, in agreement with Ethiopia, took the Ragali river as being a continuation of what the Treaty map referred to as the Muna, but put the eastern terminus of the Treaty line at the northern end of the Salt Lake rather than Ragali town. This is what the Treaty map appears to indicate, and indeed the Ragali river continues to the Salt Lake even though it does so in the form of an inland delta which necessitated drawing a straight line from Ragali town to the terminus rather than following any particular channel.

Modifying the Treaty line to account for subsequent conduct: In addressing the second set of considerations, the Commission examined large volumes of material presented by each side as evidence that conduct subsequent to the Treaty demonstrated that their sovereignty over different areas in the central sector had been established and had been accepted by the other. Such conduct included establishing telephone and telegraph facilities, holding elections, maintaining local records, collecting taxes, stationing military and police posts, providing education and health services, regulating land use and so on. Only two aspects of subsequent conduct were judged as sufficient to justify modification of the Treaty line.

First, in the Belesa area, Ethiopia evidently scored a significant own-goal. In its formal written Reply to the Commission, responding to Eritrea's citation of incidents in a number of specific places as
evidence of its sovereignty in the area, Ethiopia stated that these incidents were irrelevant since 'Fort Cadorna, Monoxeito, Guna Guna and Tserona' were 'mostly ... undisputed Eritrean places.' As Map 1 shows, Monoxeito and Guna Guna lie on the Eritrean side of the Treaty line established by the Commission (though they are within the Ethiopia claim line); however Tserona and Fort Cadorna do not. The Commission therefore felt bound to adjust the Treaty line so as to place these latter places within Eritrean territory.

Furthermore the Commission felt that the evidence of Eritrean activity in the Acran region between Fort Cadorna and the southern end of Eritrea’s Belesa A claim line was sufficient to treat that region also as part of Eritrea.

Conversely, the Commission judged that the available evidence supported the conclusion that Zalambessa was Ethiopian. Such evidence included significant Ethiopian administrative activity over a long period, apparent acknowledgement by Eritrean officials on a number of occasions that the town was part of Ethiopia, and agreement by both sides that there is a customs post 2km north of the town.

Second, further east in the disputed Irob district between the Endeli and Muna/ Berbero Gado, the Commission was swayed by evidence of stronger Ethiopian administrative activity in its southwestern portion, as well as by maps and other material suggesting the upper reaches of the Endeli river as the limit of Italian occupation. This evidence however appears weaker in the northeastern part of the district. Accordingly the Treaty line was modified to include the more southerly and easterly part of Irob in Ethiopia.

No evidence of subsequent conduct in relation to the disputed parts of the Bada plain was felt by the Commission to warrant modifying the Treaty line in this area.

All in all, then, the boundary arrived at by the Commission in the central sector, including the determination of its eastern terminus, effectively split the difference between the two sides more or less equally in terms of territory. Eritrea
keeps Tserona, Fort Cadorna and the Acran region, Guna Guna and Monoxeito, while Ethiopia succeeds in its claim to Zalambessa, around half of Irob district, and the Bada plain – all bitterly fought over during the war.

The Western Sector

The 1902 Treaty: The 1902 Treaty which superseded the 1900 Treaty in the western sector covered the location of the tripoint between Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea (and was in fact a tripartite agreement involving Britain as well as Italy and Ethiopia) and the boundary between Ethiopia and Eritrea between this point and the confluence of the Mareb and Mai Ambessa rivers (see Map 2). Interpretation of the Treaty was hampered by the absence of any treaty map (unlike the 1900 Treaty) as well as a confusion over names of rivers.

There was no dispute over the location of the tripoint as the western terminus of the border, though the Commission notes that this was amended in 1903 to a point on the right bank of the Setit river immediately opposite the mouth of the Khor Royan. However, contention arose because the English version of the Treaty, in Article 1, stipulates that the boundary follows the Setit:

... to its junction with the Maieteb, following the latter's course so as to leave Mount Ala Tacura to Eritrea, and joins the Mareb at its junction with the Mai Ambessa.

The line from the junction of the Setit and Maieteb to the junction of the Mareb and Mai Ambessa shall be delimited by Italian and Ethiopian delegates, so that the Canama tribe belong to Eritrea.
While the equally authoritative Amharic version is similar except that instead of 'Maieteb' it specified 'Mai Ten'. This left uncertainty about which river was here being referred to, and about the course of the link between that river and the Mareb.

The Ethiopian claim, as shown on Map 2, took the 'Maieteb' in the English version as the Maiteb which joins the Setit some 20km east of Om Hajer, and drew a straight line between this and the Mareb – Mai Ambessa confluence. While this claim was not as favourable to Ethiopia as the original 1900 Treaty which took a straight line from roughly the western terminus directly to the Mareb at Todluc, it does provide some confirmation of similar claims that had been made on maps prepared since 1993 by the government of Tigray, including one prepared as recently as 1996 (with German technical assistance) for the region's primary schools which, to Eritrea's deep consternation, showed the border following the Setit to somewhere between Biaghela and the Sittona, then tracing a route to the Mareb roughly at Ducambia. This in turn could have been based on the de facto division of control of the area established between the TPLF and EPLF during the 1980s – though this is not a consideration to which the Commission would have given any real weight.

Eritrea initially took the 'Mai Ten' in the Amharic version to be the Mai Tenné which joins the Setit almost 90km further east, and drew a straight line from this junction to the Mareb – Mai Ambessa confluence. Later Eritrean submissions took slightly different positions for the southern end of this line, including the junction of the Setit with the Tomsa and with the Sittona, suggesting some uncertainty over the Treaty line on their part.

The Commission found convincing evidence for discounting the Ethiopian claim in the form of two reports of Major Ciccodicola, the Italian negotiator at the Treaty, dated in the immediate post-Treaty period. The first of these reports on the Treaty and refers to a map, the 'Mai Daro' map, as showing the points between which the boundary had been agreed, while the second includes what appears to be a copy of this map. Both reports specify the boundary as following the Maiteb (or Meeteb on the map) from its junction with the Setit. The map strongly suggests that the river it names Meeteb could not be the Maiteb near Om Hajer as claimed by Ethiopia, and this is confirmed by a comparison with the de Chaurand map which covers the same region and includes the same river named again as Meeteb. From these maps it is clear that the river being referred to in the 1902 Treaty is what in modern maps is called the Sittona (shown on Map 2). The reports make clear that details of the course of the boundary between the Setit and the Mareb would be left for later delimitation, but no formal delimitation was ever carried out.

The purpose of the Treaty and subsequent conduct: However, the Commission also gave particular weight to the single main purpose of the Treaty, stated in both of the Ciccodicola reports and in the Treaty itself as being to place the boundary in such a way as to include the Cunama people within Eritrea, though it is also apparent that the Treaty negotiators were uncertain as to the geographical limits to be attributed to the Cunama. In considering developments subsequent to the Treaty, the Commission painstakingly examined a large number of other documents of the succeeding three decades which confirm Italian interest in this objective, as well as British recognition of that interest. It also examined a large number of maps of the area produced up to 1935. Apart from three early maps which support the Ethiopia claim line, all show the angle of the Setit-Mareb link as being more consistent with the Eritrean claim line, and typically such that its southern end is where the Tomsa joins the Setit. There is also a consistent record
Briefing: The Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Arbitration

of Ethiopian maps of this period showing
the same boundary. These maps in the
Commission's view amount to subsequent conduct suggesting mutual accept-
ance by the Parties of such a boundary. The documents taken together provided
a clear rationale for this boundary in
terms of the extent of Cunama land use,
and since it found nothing in the post-
1935 chain of events to lead this view to
be modified, the Commission delimited
the boundary as shown on Map 2.

The Eastern Sector

The Treaty of 1908: In the case of the 1908
Treaty for the eastern sector, each Party
was satisfied that the English translation
accurately stated its content. There was
no confusion about names since no named
features were used to describe the route
of the boundary. The Treaty did not
actually delimit the border, but simply
provided (in Article I) a geometric for-

From the most easterly point of the
frontier established between the Colony
of Eritrea and the Tigre by the Treaty of
10 July, 1900, the boundary continues
southeast, parallel to and at a distance
of 60 kilometers from the coast, until it
joins the frontier of the French posses-
sions of Somalia.

Article II states that:

The two Governments undertake to fix
the above-mentioned frontier-line on
the ground by common accord and as
soon as possible, adapting it to the
nature and variation of the terrain.

However once again no such demarca-
tion ever took place.

Interpreting the Treaty and subsequent
conduct: The Commission recognised that
this left open a series of subsidiary
questions that would need to be ad-
dressed to determine the precise location
of the boundary, in particular its start and
end points, what was to be considered as
'the coast', and the method by which the
boundary line was to be drawn 60km
from the coast. Neither were there any
prior effectivités or statements of purpose
which could be used to determine the
intended location of the boundary. Subse-
quent Articles of the Treaty referred only
to the need to respect various trans-
boundary rights of peoples living in the
border area.

The starting point of the boundary could
be taken as the eastern terminus of the
central sector already established by the
Commission. There was also agreement
that 'the coast' could refer to the coastline
which was continuously part of the main-
land, rather than that of any islands
(though Ethiopia's initial conception in-
cluded islands). Both Parties proposed
methods of projecting a construct of the
coastline 60km inland. These would have
produced very similar results but in each
case would have involved a measure of
subjective choice in their implementa-
tion. The Commission judged the opti-

A straight line is drawn from this point to a
second point at which the Eritrea-Djibouti
border meets the coast. The satellite
image of the coastline is then moved
inland 60km in a direction perpendicular
to this line.

The boundary line so obtained is a
faithful reflection of Article I of the
Treaty, but needs to be 'smoothed' to
make it manageable and rational as an
interstate frontier. To this end the Com-
mission designated nine points as shown
in Map 3 (over), between each of which
the border is delimited as a straight line.

An exception is made in relation to Bure,
the historic checkpoint on the road be-
tween the port of Assab and Ethiopia and

another scene of wartime offensives. Bure is on the Ethiopian side of the 60km line as are both Ethiopian and Eritrean checkpoints there, but the evidence is that these checkpoints had been accepted by both parties as showing the limits of their respective territories. The Commission accordingly decreed that the boundary should pass equidistantly between the two checkpoints. No other effectivités relating to the post-Treaty period were deemed sufficient to give cause to adjust the boundary thus delimited. The result, as in the central sector, is an approximate equal splitting of the difference between the two claim lines.

The Response of the Parties

The release of the Decision document was met with an immediate, if brief, statement of acceptance by Eritrea which pledged that it would abide by the ruling which should be seen as a victory by both sides. On the Ethiopian side the official reaction, perhaps predictably given the need to placate hard-line domestic opposition, came little short of triumphalism, claiming that the ruling was a victory over the Eritreans which fully justified the war effort, and organising celebrations in Addis Ababa. The initial euphoria soon gave way to controversy over who had won the symbolically significant village of Badme in the western sector. The dispute over the position of the frontier in this area had been compounded by disagreement over exactly where Badme is, and some commentators had even suggested that there might be two villages of that name in the area. The Boundary Commission has avoided any reference to the location of Badme in relation to its delimitation line, in both the maps and the text of its report. This may reflect a calculation on its part that the implications of its ruling in this respect were best left unstated, at least until the two Parties had committed themselves politically to accepting the published Decision. Or it may be that like others the Commission has itself not located Badme precisely and therefore could not include it on a map or say on which side of the line it lies. One would expect that, had either side made a case in formal submissions to the Commission that its subsequent conduct in relation specifically to Badme was such that the boundary should include the village in its territory, the report would have been obliged to respond – so it seems likely that no such case was made, in which case there would have been no need for the Commission to address the issue for delimitation purposes.

While both sides have celebrated the success of their claim to Badme, Ethiopia presently administers it and on 27 April underlined its claim by closing its border to UN personnel after UNMEE had escorted journalists on a visit to Badme from Asmara without Ethiopian authorisation, and asking the UN to remove the military head of the peacekeeping mission, Major-General Patrick Cammaert, who was responsible for such ‘unprofessional’ conduct. The blockade was ‘suspended’ nine days later after a UN apology, but the issue of Cammaert remains unresolved as of the end of May and Ethiopia has reserved its right to reimpose the blockade. The Rules of Procedure allow the Parties 30 days to ask the Commission for clarifications, and the PCA has confirmed that on 13 May Ethiopia filed a ‘request for interpretation, correction and consultation’ on the border ruling which has been copied to the Eritrean government for comment but not made public. Meanwhile the Ethiopian Democratic Party has continued to mobilise opposition to the border ruling, organising another protest rally of over 10,000 people in Addis Ababa on 13 May and portraying Meles as an ‘agent of Eritrea’.

Conclusions

The Boundary Commission is to be congratulated on a report which is timely despite minor delays, based on sound legal principles which go beyond the
mere text of the relevant treaties, rigorous in its examination of detailed historical and other submitted evidence, and clearly and transparently argued and presented. The result is a Decision which is authoritative and – as far as can be ascertained by outsiders – completely objective and impartial. Though it was explicitly not the Commission’s job to be ‘fair’ in the sense of being even-handed, it does seem to have divided up the spoils in such a way that each Party gains territories and towns in more or less equal measure with respect both to the other’s claim and to the three Treaties, thereby maximising the chances of peaceful acceptance by both sides.

This does not, of course, mean that peace is assured. The position of both leaders remains challenged. While Eritrean opposition parties in exile appear committed to respect for the Decision, the same cannot be said for the Ethiopian opposition which as we have seen seems set to continue to put strains on that country’s compliance. Before demarcation can proceed mine clearance will have to be completed, and this will require the active cooperation of both sides. More detailed maps will also have to be prepared, based on acquisition of new satellite imagery and careful fieldwork. Throughout this process the peacekeepers will have to remain in position, hence Kofi Annan’s recent announcement that the UNMEE mandate is extended by six months to 15 September 2002. Further extensions may well be necessary. Nevertheless the Commission does seem, under the circumstances, so far to have done as good a job as could possibly have been expected.

Endnotes

1. ‘Delimitation’ of a boundary involves determination of its course, on maps and/or in the form of textual explanation in relation to known geographical features and map coordinates. ‘Demarcation’ is the process whereby a delimited boundary is physically marked on the ground.

2. The delay resulted in part from Ethiopia challenging one of Eritrea’s appointees to the
commission, necessitating an interim Rule of Procedure to deal with the challenge and subsequent replacement of the nominee.

3. In fact the 1900 Treaty also covered the Western Sector up to the Sudan border, but was here superseded by the Treaty of 1902.


6. This will be a single intersect only if the starting point is exactly 60km from the coast. The Commission report does not specify whether or not this is the case. If the starting point is more than 60km from the coast no corresponding coastal point will be found, while if less than 60km two, perhaps more, intersects will result leading to a need to find a method to combine these.

7. Again, the Commission does not specify how these nine points were arrived at, but the rationale seems to be that they should include all the points of convergence of the two claim lines and should otherwise be located so as to keep the boundary between the two claim lines at all other points.

Xeedho Dumar Wadaag
Aleel Lagu Xadhkeeyay
(Shells on a Woven Cord)

Hooyada Africada Bari (MAMA)
(East African Women’s Group)

The Way In

The world is a wondrous place and some would say each continent is a family, each country a person in its own right.

Africa is an assembly of wise women who clasp each other’s hands as they gaze the world confidently in the eye. There are moments of stillness, there are moments of swaying, moments of blazing dance and wild abandon, moments of knowing, moments of slow steps through mourning and counting loss, there are moments of giving thanks, and moments of prayers, stooping. One of the oldest wise women is Mother Somalia who rises from her long night’s meditation, strolls across blood red hills and plains and settles by the coast in the morning sun to savour the waves of the sea. All day long, as she counts the waves, her own scattered daughters draw near. Sometimes they have travelled from the four corners of the globe. It is as though wind and water have brought them together, all together, on this glorious morning.

Soon, as far as the eye can see, the sands are covered with women, sitting, looking, waiting. Women as numerous as the shells on the shore who sit and look and wait until the sun reaches its highest point, watch as it dips in a slow, low arc and slithers into the sea.

Finally, when the women are cloaked in the wrap of the night and moonlight sponges the shore, Mother Somalia rises once more and speaks to her daughters in clear, firm tones. She thanks them for journeying once again home and invites them to open their ears to their sisters’ stories. Then she beckons to the women from Sheffield who stand and share their words all through the night until dawn.

Mother Somalia listens to each story. One by one the shells are threaded and the stories released to the moonlight, the sea, the women on the shore, then out to the whole world. These are some of our stories – shells on a woven cord. It is dark but for the moon that catches the crest of the waves. The woman who has silently made her way to the front of the crowd seems old in her movements, young in her voice. She calls out a poem for all time, a poem which echoes on and on in everyone’s hearts and minds.

I remember who I am
I am a scattered daughter
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I remember who I am
I am a scattered daughter
Somalia my country
East Africa the broad place
I call home

I remember who I am
When I switch on
The television
In Sheffield

Image upon image
Of dying children
Of women with hungry
Eyes women with losing
Eyes holding out a
Beggar’s hand

I remember who I am

As I hear of more
Fighting, killing
Slaughtering
Machete murders
Petrol bombs
I remember who I am

When I learn of yet
Another epidemic
Another famine
Another flood
Of AIDS coming, of course
Out of Africa
Of another military coup
I remember exactly who

I am

It is easy to peddle photos
And diminishing words

Africa ... and dignity?

Why, we are the entertainers
Of the world!
Squirming insects
In the heat of the sun

I lie through long, grim nights
And remember

Sit through so many
Insulting conversations
And remember

So many shrunken pictures
Of our lives, of our living
And remember

Perhaps it is the guilt
That makes people in the west
Sub-humanize us still
Is our continued suffering
A deliberate western ploy?

I remember
I remember
I breathe out
And remember

I remember my long-strung history
My civilisation that stems back
Thousands and thousands of years
My medicines, my music, my
perfumes,
My stories, my soft walking on the face
Of the earth and the words of the
ancestors
Calling

Then I switch off the television
In Sheffield
Decide to stop paying the licence

And quickened and warmed
With memory celebrations
I remember who I am

Reprinted with permission from MAMA, 15
Paternoster Row, Sheffield S1 2BX, UK.
Easter sunshine tries to heat the pale concrete of the basketball court, and the rumble of a jet landing at nearby Sea-Tac Airport is just audible behind the loud, clean voice. Simon Mayen Deng, a slight young man in a red jersey and red-white-and-blue headband circles in and out of the 18 dancers kneeling on the court like a displaced town crier.

They have come from the north. And now smoke rises from the houses. First one house and the next and then another catches fire until the world has fallen down. My uncle comes to where we hide in the forest and tells me that my sister, my mother, my brother and father are dead. My uncle says, 'Come and see.' But what can we do? The smoke continues to rise.

It would be hard to guess that Deng had slept only four hours following his night shift as a Seattle Center janitor before coming to this rehearsal for a performance scheduled for 4 May at the Seattle Art Museum. Likewise, the exuberant steps of the dance troupe and the laughter and jostling that accompany the end of the song belie the fact that the song tells of the dancers' native villages in southern Sudan burning to the ground and the murder of their families at the hands of unknown soldiers.

'When we have the opportunity to sing, it is like seeing your parents, your brothers and sisters,' explains Deng of the song's importance. 'When we join together and dance, it is like seeing our parents again.'

The dancers are among the more than 130 Sudanese youths who have made their way to the Seattle/Tacoma area in the past year. The odyssey of the 'Lost Boys of Sudan', as they are called, captured the imagination of Americans as more than 3,600 Sudanese, mostly young men in their late teens and early 20s, have been resettled in this country (while a small number of Sudanese girls have been resettled during the process, many young women were either killed or abducted into slavery in the north at the time of the initial assaults). After surviving attacks by the Islamic northern army of Sudan, the loss of their families, a barefoot trek across the Sahara Desert, lion attacks, near starvation, and more than 12 harsh years in refugee camps, the Lost Boys of Sudan have ended one year in America, and the questions they continually asked themselves back in the camps remain more pressing than ever. Have we finally arrived? Will we ever return? Why are we here?

When International Red Cross workers rescued them in the desert almost 12 years ago and named them the Lost Boys, they were referring to Peter Pan's band of ragtag otherworldly orphans who refuse to grow up. Since then, the Lost Boys of Sudan have lived with the immense pressure that comes with being dubbed exceptional, even miraculous.

The Lost Boys have experienced a phenomenon familiar to other survivors of Third World atrocities - namely, the merging of varied experiences into one well-spun, easy-to-follow version of survival. Though they came from culturally distinct Dinka and Nuer tribes across southern Sudan, they are now lumped irrevocably together after spending years in the same refugee camps, first in Ethiopia and then in Kakuma, Kenya. The Lost Boys have, over the years, come to tell a shared version of their exodus in the fluent, if bookish, English they learned in the camps along with the four different dialects they speak.

Their unusual ability to explain themselves in English as well as their incredible journey made their arrival in the US anything but quiet. A barrage of media
coverage accompanied initial resettlement efforts by the State Department and continued into their first months here, as feature stories by 60 Minutes, Tom Brokaw, and various print media followed the Lost Boys experiencing the novelty of snow, eating fast food, and driving cars. Virtually all coverage characterized their story with a quick sketch of their trek, followed by a focus on their generous new lease on life in the land of opportunity.

So perhaps, given this high-profile media blitz, it is inevitable that Daniel Ariik Mawien and his roommate Bol Manyuat Arol, both members of the dance troupe, feel disappointment as they near resident alien status, which will limit their access to help from resettlement agencies. Their year living in the Rainier Valley has been far different from what they imagined after hearing the hype and promise of a new start. ‘It’s loud, like when a plane goes down,’ says Arol of the industrial laundry in Renton where he works. ‘We were told in Kakuma that we would go to the US and learn for free and study what are our interests. And we came and found ground zero,’ he says, referring to the dearth of educational opportunities that met them.

While life in Seattle is certainly better than in Kenya, where nightly armed raids on the refugee camp by the local Turkana tribe were a fact of life, Arol says that it is far from what they thought awaited them. ‘I save my extra money,’ he says, ‘Now I work 20 hours at McDonald’s, and they don’t have more hours,’ says Mawien. ‘I signed for full time in September, but the job is only part time and three hours commute from Rainier Beach to Lynnwood and back. When I compare my life, in my heart I don’t feel happy,’ he says. ‘I came to America, the land of freedom, and my life is like jail. I only have enough for rent. I make $500 each month. Job Corps sounds better. Jobs in America require a diploma and will not interview otherwise.’ Both Mawien and Arol plan to join Job Corps later this month. The irony of coming from a refugee camp only to wind up in a two-year residential program for ‘at-risk youth ages 16-24’ is irrelevant to these two young men looking for an opportunity to study. ‘At least in Job Corps we will have certificate and experience, and maybe our fate will be better,’ says Mawien.

The disparity between expectation and reality is not lost on Bob Johnson and Cindy Koser, directors of the International Rescue Committee and Catholic Community Services’ Refugee Assistance Program, respectively, two of four agencies that have resettled Lost Boys in Seattle. Both have worked with numerous refugees and agree that the Lost Boys have been particularly affected by high expectations.

‘For the most part, they’re doing quite well,’ says Johnson, who has resettled 16 Sudanese, ages 19 to 24, in Seattle (nearly 40 minors have been placed in foster families). ‘Their efforts to acclimate have been impressive. Still, the experience with the media did reinforce the myth of America and its excess,’ adds Johnson, who says the boys were repeatedly told they would have to work immediately upon arrival and obtain GEDs before undertaking any other courses of study.

The onus of education is a heavy one for nearly all the Lost Boys. They’re seen in the UN-sponsored refugee camp in
Kakuma, Kenya, as hope for the future and as potential liberators of southern Sudan. 'The elder people in the camp convince me it would be better to go the United States,' says Deng.

When the process started in the camp, the most important thing that brought a lot of us here was education. But we thought then we would come here and study freely. Now I know that you go to school for yourself when you have money.

'They definitely have a heightened sense of guilt for having survived and been chosen to come here,' says Koser, whose organization has resettled 36 of the young men in Seattle.

Many have been sending significant portions of their earnings back to the refugee camp on top of their own expenses, while others have had to change their phone numbers after calls from Kakuma requesting money grew unmanageable.

Similar to packages offered to other refugee groups, the Lost Boys received initial assistance from the federal government in the form of $300 each for their first 30 days, along with food stamps and medical coupons. They were then eligible to receive $349 a month in state public assistance for eight months. While most have found steady employment (some hold two or three jobs) and affordable apartments to share in outlying areas such as Tukwila, Burien, and Kent, education has been far more elusive. Courses in ESL and GED requirements have been made available at no cost at local community colleges three times a week, but many of the Sudanese find that conflicting work schedules and commuting difficulties have made going to school impossible. Abraham Akech Abei, Deng's roommate in Tukwila, says, 'Sure, I'm not going to school now. I was working at the Space Needle until 11 September, but when that happened, a lot of Lost Boys were laid off and worry about money first. What I'm doing now is applying for two jobs [to] make money. In the future I want to go to Canada, because I hear the school is good there.'

Soon after 11 September, nearly half of the Sudanese in Seattle were laid off due to cutbacks resulting from the recent economic recession.

Though the often painful assimilation of refugee groups is not a new story, the quiet dispersal gaining ground among the Lost Boys' ranks since 11 September is particularly acute to Santino Lual, as two of his roommates have left Seattle to find better work opportunities in other parts of the country. 'How can I feel if I have a job and my roommates don't,' says Lual, who works as an elevator attendant at the Smith Tower downtown. At least five Sudanese have relocated since 11 September while five more have joined Job Corps residency programs in Oregon and California and at least five more await Job Corps assignments.

'They have been promised so many things by so many different people as a result of the attention, including the head of the NAACP when he visited, and very little of it has happened,' says Koser.

But regardless of what else might be possible for them, they have to become self-sufficient first. While it is extremely important for their story to be told, so many people most touched by their story misinterpret the best plan of action for them and have actually made it more difficult for them in the long run.

Inside Deng and Abei's Tukwila apartment, there are three donated televisions, two VCRs, and four outdated computers. Abei and two Sudanese friends from the same apartment complex play an African card game in the living room, the BET network flashing behind them on the middle screen, while Deng works in the kitchen translating songs for the dance troupe's first appearance at an upcoming
Briefing: The Lost Boys of Sudan

celebration of Sudanese culture at the Seattle Art Museum.

When everything was quiet and nights were for dancing, Aweng and I were friends. But when the village burnt to the ground she ran back to her old home, her old boy. And I’m still here cheated out of home and sky. Aweng has left me for another.

Lual and the other members of the troupe say the struggle to adjust in the US has made gatherings like their Sunday dance rehearsals increasingly difficult. For each, juggling ever-changing work schedules, low-income wages, night classes, and complicated bus commutes is a new part of their journey to be traveled mostly alone. ‘It is strange, because in our culture you liked to see your neighbors every day,’ says Lual, who left Rainier Beach some months ago and now lives in Burien with two new roommates.

Here you have to stay inside. You don’t have to go through your neighborhood, just to the bus, to work, and back. That is why we need to dance, to remember, and to feel at home. You cannot change quick your culture for another culture.

The International Rescue Committee’s Johnson refers to the cultural gap as a catch-22. For example, he says, many of the young Sudanese men without scarification or tattoos feel the lack of not becoming a man by tribal customs, while others who had teeth knocked out or who bear scars from the first steps toward full initiation feel especially self-conscious here in America. ‘Some have even gone to dentists to get their teeth fixed,’ says Johnson. Mawien, easily the tallest member of the dance troupe, says he constantly fields questions and comments regarding his appearance. ‘I have problems sometimes with people here at the gate to my apartment or waiting for the bus,’ he explains.

They ask, ‘How are you doing, man?’ I say, ‘I’m fine.’ They say, ‘How tall are you?’ I say, ‘I’m 6 foot 9.’ They say, ‘Shit man, why you black like this?’ I say, ‘This is the skin God gave me, original.’ They say, ‘You are not human, you are monkey.’ But I say it doesn’t matter; abuse can’t change your skin,’ says Mawien.

Arol, too, has had ugly encounters with ignorance. ‘As I’m waiting with other ladies and gentlemen for the bus, I receive abuse from young men. ‘Where you fucking from, man?’ and I reply, ‘I’m from Seattle, and they say, ‘No, are you from Sudan? Are you fucking Lost Boys?’ ‘Are you the terrorists from New York?’ And I say, ‘No,’ and when I move away, they throw stones at me.’ Arol, whose parents were killed by Islamic fundamentalists, asks, ‘Why do people talk like this? We do not understand.’

Koser says it would take a kind of advocacy that doesn’t exist to meet the most basic health needs of arriving refugees. ‘Expectations all around are not true to what our system as it is can do,’ she says. ‘There was no money for a case-by-case evaluation of mental health when they arrived.’ And in most cases, the aftershocks that complicate refugee stories come well after their arrival. As Johnson says, ‘It’s usually a few months before symptoms of post-traumatic stress show up among war refugees. We’re trying to find extra funding to do more than our usual one-year support pattern allows, because it’s obvious a lot of these guys have mental health needs that haven’t been met in the resettlement process.’

‘I remember two things most from the time we ran away,’ says Arol. ‘I remember the first white people we meet in the desert who came with water, Bisquick, and some beans, where they found us.
They were from the Red Cross.' He then tells of an earlier meeting in the Sahara with a militia group from the northern army. 'We were stopped along the road, and some run. Then they make separate groups of us. They say to the small, young ones that don’t know anything, just come here, and they give them each a key, and then they put them down in the hole in the ground and cover it. The small ones, they say, ‘We will not waste our bullets. Tell Jesus to let you in at the gate,’ they say. Then they tell us older to run and shoot at us,’ says Arol. ‘We ran away to another road, and some of us survived.’ Like Deng, who has recently been revisited by memories of the initial attacks, Arol is often at a loss when dealing with the past. ‘It is hard to concentrate when sometimes thinking of brothers and sisters that are dead,’ he says.

As memories begin to resurface, and the ‘Lost Boys’ rings a little differently than it did a year ago, it is hard not to wonder how a group of refugees as functional in English as these young men are, coming from a political crisis as relevant as theirs to current issues, with such ready cultural gifts, have been so thoroughly characterized as naive. ‘Each time a new story appears, we get tons of calls from people that want to adopt their own Lost Boy,’ says Koser. ‘Unfortunately, a lot of people with good intentions want to save them from the pain of adjusting to their lives here and are really out to maybe resolve something that has more to do with themselves than these young men,’ says Koser.

Everything has died plants, animals, and people have gone. The vultures come and will come again.
‘So, if you still have strength, if you’re still alive, run towards a safe place.’
‘If you’re still alive, run towards the horizon.’
‘If you’re still alive, run away.’

‘When I compare Africa to the US,’ says Lual, ‘I think of how in Africa people use war as a job because they don’t have any other work. Maybe someday people will talk about no war in Africa. Though we don’t have an opportunity to go to school, maybe we will. And that is what people will talk about.’

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Globalization & Academic Ethics

The Editors of the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa

One of the consequences of economic globalization has been the internationalization of US higher education institutions and universities. International studies, study abroad programs, international cultural exchanges have become a ‘must’ on most American campuses. In the last decade, a number of major US educational organizations have asked that ‘provisions should be made to ensure that at least 10 percent of all students who receive baccalaureate degrees in this country will have had a ‘significant educational experience abroad during their undergraduate years’ (see Michael R. Laubscher, Encounters with Difference: Student Perceptions of the Role of Out-of-Class Experiences in Education Abroad (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, 1994)).

Equally momentous have been the efforts by US administrators and funding agencies to turn American academic institutions into ‘global universities,’ that is, global educational centers, recruiting from and catering to an international student body. We have also witnessed the growing engagement of US academicians and colleges in the restructuring of academic institutions in Africa, Asia, Latin America
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Equally momentous have been the efforts by US administrators and funding agencies to turn American academic institutions into ‘global universities,’ that is, global educational centers, recruiting from and catering to an international student body. We have also witnessed the growing engagement of US academicians and colleges in the restructuring of academic institutions in Africa, Asia, Latin America
and the former socialist countries, and the management in these same regions of private, generally English speaking universities, unaffordable for the majority of aspiring students. All these developments constitute the most substantial innovation in US academic life over the last decade. They have been promoted and hailed as a great contribution to the spread of ‘quality education’ and global citizenship. The reality, however, may be quite different. We call on our colleagues to ponder on the implications of these changes, especially for African universities, and to oppose the mercenary goals which often inspire them. Consider the following:

1. The internationalization of the curriculum and academic activities is often conceived within a framework of global economic competition that turns multicultural awareness into a means of neo-colonial exploitation rather than a means of understanding and valorizing other people’s histories and struggles.

2. As the National Security Education Program (NSEP) has demonstrated, the Pentagon and the CIA are the most prominent government agencies promoting and financing the internationalization of US academic education. This prominence is inevitable since they, more than ever, need a cosmopolitan personnel at a time when the US government is openly striving for economic and military hegemony in every region of the world.

3. The globalization of US universities has been facilitated by the underdevelopment of public education throughout the Third World, upon recommendations of the World Bank and IMF in the name of ‘rationalization’ and ‘structural adjustment.’

4. In some African countries where universities have been shut down, the idle facilities are often used by American study abroad programs. These programs benefit from the cheap cost of study, and the program directors can even hire at very low wages laid off teachers and former students as helpers/facilitators.

5. US teachers and college administrators are being financed by USAID to intervene in several third world and former socialist countries to (a) set up private universities; (b) restructure entire departments, schools, programs, curricula. In other words, US academics are being presently employed by the US government to carry on cultural/educational work abroad that suits its economic, political, ideological objectives.

Considering the above developments, we believe that the time has come for US academics to show our colleagues in Africa and other third world regions the same solidarity that would be expected of us by colleagues on our own campuses.

It is in this context that we are proposing the following ‘University Teachers Code of Ethics for Global Education in Africa.’ We urge you to circulate it among colleagues in the institutions where you work, at conferences, and other academic events and ask people to comment upon it. Please send your comments to one of the coordinators of CAFA as soon as possible. They will help us in the coming months to construct a final code of ethics that can be subscribed to by a substantial number of people involved in ‘global education in Africa.’ We intend to present the code to the organizations involved in financing or overseeing global education initiatives as well. Even more important, we want to use this declaration—amended as it might be—to promote solidarity with our African colleagues and campaign to reverse the recolonization of African universities. University Teachers’ Draft Code of Ethics for Global Education in Africa We are university teachers and we publicly declare our adherence to the following principles of academic ethics in our work in Africa:
• We will never, under any circumstance, work (as researchers, with a study abroad program, or in any other capacity) in an African university where students or the faculty are on strike or which has been shut down by students' or teachers' strikes and protests against police repression and structural adjustment cut backs;

• We will never take a position at or cooperate with the World Bank, the IMF, USAID, or any other organization whose policy is to expropriate Africans from the means of the production and distribution of knowledge and to devalue African people's contribution to world culture;

• We will never take advantage of the immiseration in which African colleagues and students have been reduced, and appropriate the educational facilities and resources from which African colleagues and students have been de facto excluded because of lack of means. Knowledge acquired under such conditions would be antagonistic to the spirit of multiculturalism and scholarly solidarity;

• We will consult with colleagues and activists in the countries where we carry on research, so as to ensure that our research answers the needs of the people it studies, and is shaped with the cooperation of people whose lives will be affected by it, rather being dictated by funding agencies' agendas.

If you and/or your organization wish to support the code, please notify one of the coordinators of the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa

Ousseina Alidou (oalidou@rci.rutgers.edu); George Caffentzis (caffentz@usm.maine.edu); Silvia Federici (nucszf@hofstra.edu).

Twilight on the Zambian Copperbelt?
John Craig

On 25 of January 2002 Anglo American Plc announced its intention to withdraw from its mining operations on the Zambian copperbelt. In recent years, KCM (which is controlled by Anglo via its majority holding in Zambia Copper Investment Limited) has been responsible for around two-thirds of Zambia's copper production, half of its foreign exchange earnings and currently directly employs 11,000 workers. The threat of closure, therefore, represents a potential crisis not just for the Zambian copper industry, but for the Zambian economy as a whole. The aim of this article is to provide a brief overview of the background and emergence of this crisis, and to outline some of the future prospects for the industry.

Background & Context

The current structure of corporate ownership and control on the Copperbelt is the result of the privatisation of Zambia's state mining enterprise, Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM), which was implemented between 1996 and 2000 (Endnote 1). This entailed the breaking up of ZCCM (then one of the five largest copper producing companies in the world), dividing its operating assets into packages and advertising them for sale on an individual basis. It was envisaged that such a strategy would offer a range of benefits to Zambia. First, it would open up the mining sector to a wide range of participants, maximising the flow of investment and expertise into the industry. Second, it would avoid any single company or consortium gaining a monopoly control of the industry and an undue influence over the national economy.

Although the process of privatisation proved to be long and difficult, by early
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Although the process of privatisation
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2000 the prospects for the Zambian mining sector looked brighter than they had for many years. Zambia had succeeded in attracting a range of international mining and metal companies who committed themselves to injecting over $1 billion of investment into the industry. This offered an opportunity to reverse a long term decline in levels of copper production, which had fallen from over 700 thousand tonnes per annum in the late 1960s to around 300 thousand tonnes per annum by the mid-1990s. With the new levels of investment, African Mining Magazine (May/June 2000) estimated that Zambian copper production could rise to somewhere in the region of 500 to 600 thousand tonnes per annum towards 2010. Indeed, if other deposits were to be developed, this could rise to anything up to 900 thousand tonnes per annum over the period.

However, to achieve these increases would require a period of transition in the industry. The Nchanga Open Pit and related operations, which in the late 1990s had contributed around half of Zambia's copper production, were heading for exhaustion between 2003 and 2010. For levels of copper production to remain stable, let alone rise, required the development of new mining projects, of which the development of the Konkola Deep Mine, with the potential to produce around 200 thousand tonnes of copper per annum for at least 20 years, was generally recognised as the most promising.

Despite the attempts to ensure a diversified post-privatisation ownership structure, however, both the existing operations at Nchanga and the rights to develop Konkola Deep were acquired by KCM and thus, both the current and future prospects of Zambian mining industry came to rely heavily upon the decisions of its effective controller, Anglo American.

The Crisis Emerges

The crisis which arose in the Zambian copper industry in January 2002 was precipitated by falls in the price of copper and in expectations for its future price. From an average of 88 cents per pound in September 2000, the price declined steadily to hit just under 60 cents per pound in November 2001, the lowest price in 15 years.

The first signs of its impact on the Zambian industry began to emerge in late September 2001 with the announcement by Metorex that it had suspended mining operations at the Chibuluma South mine until such time as there was a material improvement in the price of copper (Regulatory News Service, 1 October 2001). This was followed by Anglo’s announcement on 12 October 2001 that further progress on developing Konkola Deep would be deferred due to the ‘difficult market conditions’ and related problems in securing project finance (Mining Journal, 19 October 2001), and the subsequent statement by First Quantum that Mopani Copper Mines had embarked on a cost cutting programme to stem losses (Regulatory News Service, 30 October 2001).

At this stage, few alarm bells were ringing. Copper is a notoriously cyclical commodity and standard practice during periods when prices are low is to cut back production from higher cost facilities, defer capital expenditure to preserve cash resources, and await a recovery in market conditions. Copper producers across the world were cutting back on production during late 2001 and the behaviour of the Zambian producers was reflecting a general trend.

So why then did Anglo American decide on such a drastic course of action in January 2002? The key to unraveling this is the relationship between the existing assets of KCM and the potential for it to develop new mining operations. At the
heart of Anglo's strategy was the aim of developing Konkola Deep. The cost of the project was estimated at over $500 million and KCM would finance the project through commercial borrowing, revenues generated by existing operations and funding by shareholders. However, this strategy ran into problems in the context of falling copper prices, as the existing operations accumulated large losses and came to rely on the support of shareholders for their day-to-day funding. In this context, the external resources required for developing Konkola Deep increased substantially and undermined the commercial viability of the project. Without the prospect of this longer term project coming to fruition, KCM was left with a portfolio of loss making assets with a short-life. On this basis Anglo decided that it could not justify further financial support to KCM, a decision which held out the prospect for the closure of the operations within a matter of months.

While most observers recognise the business logic behind Anglo's decision, the question has been raised as to how Zambia became so reliant on Anglo. Some have suggested that the troubles that are now being faced by the Zambian copper industry are a result of the mismanagement of the process through which the mines were privatised (The Post, 8 February 2002 and 12 February 2002; and The Monitor, 22 February 2002). These criticisms are focused on the decision by the Zambian negotiators in 1998 to reject an offer made by the Kafue Consortium. It is argued, first, that the terms offered by the Kafue Consortium were superior to those that were agreed with Anglo American and second that the two year delay that this caused in the completion of the privatisation process undermined the potential for the recovery of the industry by allowing the further deterioration of plant and machinery and by failing to cash-in on a period when the copper price was relatively high.

There is certainly substantial merit to many of these points. The physical deterioration of the mining and processing assets was considerable and has adversely affected production efficiencies. The sooner new investment could be channeled towards these areas, the sooner production costs could be reduced and the more resilient the operations would have been to any downturn in the copper price. In this sense, at least some of the units currently under pressure would have been better able to withstand the current market conditions had they benefited from the flows of new investment at an earlier stage.

However, such perspectives do not provide the whole story and neglect a number of material points. First, a simple comparison between the two offers is misleading because the assets for which the Kafue Consortium bid were not the same ones that were included in the deal with Anglo. An estimate can be made, however, by piecing together information provided in a range of sales agreements. These suggest that on the issue of investment, which is the most relevant to the future prospects of the industry, the commitment by the Kafue Consortium of $400 million over five years was probably around the same level as the variety of commitments made by Anglo, Avmin, First Quantum and Glencore for the same
assets (author's calculations). Second, the price of copper also recorded a significant decline during the negotiations with the Kafue Consortium between mid-1997 and early 1998 and was an important factor in their failure. Indeed, the price continued in a downward trend for another year and in early 1999 reached levels not significantly greater than those of late 2001. In this context, any agreement that had been reached with the Kafue Consortium may well have run into similar problems to those subsequently experienced by Anglo American. Indeed, the vulnerability of Zambia to any such decision could have been greater as the Kafue Consortium would have acquired assets accounting for an even greater share of current production.

**What Happens Now?**

In the period since Anglo's announcement of its withdrawal from Zambia in January 2002, there has been a flurry of activity which is ongoing at the time of writing. The World Bank flew in a team in January to advise on the situation and both the Zambian government and Anglo have teams of advisers investigating the possible ways forward. At the moment, however, three main options appear to be available.

1) **Bail out:** KCM's current crisis is one of liquidity, and it is expected to require new funding within months if it is to avoid closure. Anglo has made it clear that it is not willing to supply the additional funds required and so the question is who will? The Zambian President, Levy Mwanawasa has suggested that the World Bank and Zambia's donor-creditors are likely to supply funding to tide over the company until a longer term solution can be found (Xinhua [China] General News Service, 12 February 2002). However, as yet, firm commitments are absent and while leaving the door open for the redirection of funds already committed to Zambia, the Bank has explicitly ruled out any additional concessional funding to assist KCM (*Business Day*, 4 February 2002). Indeed, some within Zambia have questioned the wisdom of taking on more debt to support the existing operations. Anderson Mazoka, the runner-up in the recent Presidential elections and a former Director of ZCCM, has suggested, for example, that the government should focus its attention on finding a new partner to develop Konkola Deep rather than expending more resources on mines such as Nchanga which will soon be due for closure anyway (*The Post*, 15 February 2002).

2) **Transfer of Ownership:** If funding can be made available to keep the mines going in the short-term, Anglo's intention to withdraw from the Copperbelt leaves open the longer term question of who will become the new controlling shareholder of KCM. President Mwanawasa and others have suggested that the assets could return to state ownership, but this has only been proposed as a short-term measure until a new private owner could be brought in (Xinhua General News Service, 8 March 2002). However, potential new investors may be hard to find.

Both First Quantum and Metorex have expressed an interest in acquiring some of KCM's assets but the capacity of either of these companies to take on the larger and more financially demanding undertakings would be limited (*American Metal Market*, 29 January 2002). In this context, questions may be raised over the future development of Konkola Deep. President Mwanawasa has indicated that the current thinking of the Zambian Government is to separate it from the other assets of KCM, but who would be interested in taking the project forward is open to question (Xinhua General News Service, 22 February 2002). During the last decade a range of international mining companies including CODELCO (Chile), Gencor (South Africa), Falconbridge (Canada) and WMC (Australia) were associated with the project as potential partners of Anglo, but each withdrew. Whether they,
or others, might take a renewed interest in the project is yet to be seen.

3) Closure: The closure of KCM’s assets is the nightmare scenario for Zambia. As noted, 11,000 workers are directly employed by the company, but the overall impact would be far greater, extending to an estimated 80,000 dependents, before taking into consideration the effects on local suppliers to the mines and the negative multiplier effect to the economy as a whole. For those who do lose their jobs the prospects of alternative employment are bleak. John Kangwa (2001:16) reported that among the more than 8,000 miners who were made redundant during the 1990s, the majority had been forced to return to subsistence agriculture for want of alternative employment. However, if no progress can be made towards securing new finance or ownership for KCM, then this option will become unavoidable.

At the time of writing (May 2002) it seems probable that any solution to the current situation will involve elements of each of these three options outlined above. Some funding is likely to be sourced in the short-term, while the closure of high cost operations and the postponement of capital expenditure will preserve cash resources. This could provide a period of time in which new owners could be sought for at least some of the more commercially viable of KCM’s assets.

Indeed, it is important to highlight that KCM is not the only mining company on the Copperbelt. Mopani Copper Mines, for example, is planning to steadily increase production, while its part-owner, First Quantum, is aiming to complete its feasibility of the Kansanshi deposit this year. However, much depends on future movements in the price of copper and it is possible that without a sustained recovery in the price, further mine closures will follow. Indeed the prospect of this was recently underlined by Metorex’s announcement that it would not be extend-

ing any further financial resources to support its Chibulumba Mines (Times of Zambia, 7 March 2002). Whether this will prove to be part of the twilight of the Copperbelt, or just darkness before a new dawn, remains to be seen.

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Endnote

1. For an account of the privatisation of ZCCM see Craig 2001. Since the privatisation transactions were completed there have been three material changes in the control and ownership of assets. These are: Phelps Dodge’s sale of Cyprus Amax Kansanshi PLC to First Quantum in 1999; the placing of Roan Antelope Mining Corporation of Zambia into receivership in November 2000; and an agreement between Glencore and First Quantum in April 2002, by which Glencore took an effective majority stake in Mopani Copper Mines.

Bibliographic Note


African Mining Magazine (South Africa); American Metal Market (US); Business Day (South Africa); Mining Journal (UK); The Monitor (Zambia); The Post (Zambia); Regulatory News Service (UK); The Times of Zambia (Zambia); Xinhua General News Service (China)

The theme of globalization, just as a term itself, became very popular or, rather, fashionable among academics on the threshold of the 21st century. However, it does not happen often when elaboration on this theme is intertwined with a deep analysis of specific cases of foreign policy-making in a new world environment. In this sense the book edited by Kowra Adar and Rok Ajulu, prominent Kenyan researchers of foreign policy, resident in South Africa, is almost unique. It is the first of an envisaged series on various regions of the African continent, and the editors managed to ‘mobilise’ 15 authors from Africa, America and Britain, who gave a comprehensive picture of the foreign policy of 11 countries of Southern Africa as well as an analysis of the decision-making in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the US and UK’s attitude to that region under the conditions of globalization. True, the depth of analysis varies from author to author, but it seems inevitable when a book is co-authored by such a big and versatile team.

The case studies are preceded by ‘an introductory contextualisation’, written by the editors. Its definitive feature is an attempt of the objective assessment of the role of both so-called ‘donors’ and of the local forces in bringing Africa to the verge of disaster:

... the African elite class', they write, 'sharing similar global socio-economic and political views with the elites of the donor countries continue to promote the neo-colonial core-periphery relations’ (p.2).

Adar and Ajulu rightly regard globalisation, or, rather, its ‘contemporary form’ as ‘a process which is propelled by contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, economic globalisation has unleashed productive forces throughout the world leading to the expansion of markets, the insertion of technology into the processes of production, and hence the improvement of productive capacities, and massive increases for profits multinational corporations. On the other, it has also manifested a tendency to fragment, differentiate and marginalise social forces and countries incapable of catching up with the processes. Uneven development, long associated with capitalist exploitation, is ‘probably the most visible trade mark of globalisation in its contemporary form’ (pp. 3-4).

Due to a shortage of space the reviewer is not in a position to discuss all the contributions in the book. What is common to most of them is an attempt to show the changing balance between the presidential dominance in foreign policy-making and the involvement of other actors, including non-state ones. Thus, Assis Malaquias argues that in the conditions of the protracted civil war in Angola the presidency still ‘exercises near-exclusive control over the foreign policy-making process’, even if this process ‘was affected by the transition to multi-party politics in the early 1990s’ (p.16). Whereas, the search for ‘the role of civil society’ brought Frank Matanga in his chapter on Namibia too far: he sees ‘the stiffest
challenge the civil society has provided to the [Namibian] government in the actions of the so-called Caprivi Liberation Army (p.149). Indeed, it is rather strange (to put it mildly) to see an armed secessionist grouping in which a bloody mutiny fortunately failed, as a part of civil society! In addition, one can hardly agree with the image of 'a fast emerging dictatorship' in Namibia (p.145), painted by this author, who refers to anonymous 'political observers' trying to prove his point.

A comprehensive review of Lesotho's foreign policy by Rok Ajulu is enhanced by his excellent analysis of 'the class character of the state and its ruling elite' (p.54) in the historical perspective. However it looks like he overestimates the effect of the forces of globalisation which, according to Ajulu 'have played havoc with the anatomy of the state of Lesotho' (p.68). In the reviewer's opinion, their effect was secondary in the case of Lesotho in comparison with the elimination of apartheid in South Africa. Besides, one can hardly agree with his assertion that Lesotho 'has been transformed into a small colony of the newly established SADC' (p.68), at least for the fact that SADC members do not see eye to eye on the situation in Lesotho and the decision to intervene there militarily, albeit on behalf of the SADC, was practically a unilateral South African action. Moreover, Ajulu himself singles out the role of South Africa when he sees the inclusion of Lesotho in the RSA as the tenth province as 'the most logical option' even if it is rejected so far by the majority in Lesotho (p.69).

The importance of South Africa as the strongest country of the region is symbolised by the fact that its foreign policy making is analysed in two chapters, one by Philip Nel and the other by Garth Le Pere and Anthoni van Niekerk. The two latter authors describe the 'driving forces' behind the current South African foreign policy as 'two-fold'. On one hand, 'domestic economic and security concerns' are placed 'at the top of the priority list', and on the other, 'President Thabo Mbeki has articulated a powerful commitment to assisting the African continent and its revival as well as championing the cause of the global South ...' (p.195). This chapter also contains a valuable set of recommendations to further develop the country's foreign policy (pp.204-206).

Paul-Henri Bishoff gives an all-round deep analysis of the decision-making process in the SADC. In his opinion, 'two tendencies dominate regional deliberation, that of state-centred realism and that of a nescient pluralism' and the differences in approach 'are driven by disparities in the region and differences of opinion how best to resolve them' (p.300). One can agree with him that the SADC so far has not realised itself as 'a potential model for a new form of South-South cooperation' (p.299), but his assessment of this organisation as 'one other avenue through which individual members can obtain donor funding for individual projects' (p.293) seems to be too critical.

Rita Abrahamson and Paul Williams skillfully scrutinise a so-called 'Third Way' approach of the New Labour leadership towards southern Africa and show that to a large extent it is rather 'business as usual'. They underline that the vision of democracy in its particular form promoted and advanced by the New Labour 'may well be endorsed by domestic elites in many countries in southern Africa' but 'is not necessarily the form of democracy sought by the majority of poor people in the region' (p.322). As to Peter Schraeder's chapter on the US policy, it is handicapped by the fact that a disproportional part of it is devoted Washington's relations with Botswana, hardly a pivotal country of the region.

The book under review unfortunately contains a number of inaccuracies and (probably) typing errors. Thus, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in Tanzania was
not just a new name for TANU (p.3), but a result of the merger of this mainland party with the Afro-Shirazi Party in Zanzibar. Frelimo is, of course, Front (and not 'Freedom') for the Liberation of Mozambique (p.118), besides its founding leader Eduardo Mondlane was assassinated in 1969 and not in 1968 (p.119); [Jackie] Selebi has never been a minister in South Africa (p.179) and the Soviet Union ‘collapsed’ in 1991 and not in 1989 (p.229). It is hardly correct to say that the merger of ZANU-PF and ZAPU took place in 1988 (p.265), because it was finalised at the joint party congress held in December 1989, while the agreement between the leadership of the two parties was reached in 1987, etc.

In spite of these flaws, the book edited by Adar and Ajulu has to be commended for highlighting the important issues of the correlation between globalisation and regional and national policy-making, and can serve as a useful manual for students of Southern Africa politics.

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**Book Notes**

The following section gives notes of books recently received which may be of interest to our readers; some may be reviewed in depth at a later date. If you would like to review books for ROAPE, please get in touch with the book reviews editors. The following has been compiled by Roy Love.


This is a book about the ‘management’ of structural adjustment by state elites in their own interests. The year 1979 was when the first structural adjustment loan to a sub-Saharan African country (Senegal) was granted and the author poses the question and offers reasons why the numerous instances that have followed have failed to achieve their intended objectives. His answer, in brief, is not so much that they were diverted off track by extra-governmental interest groups but that the elites in control of government ensured that their impact would be limited only to areas which did not threaten the status of the elites themselves. This process has been reinforced by the pervasive clientilism of African communities which differentiates the outcome from the populist methods often adopted in Latin America for dealing with same external pressures. The success with which this strategy has been pursued, when taken together with the powers conceded to the state by the IFIs to enable the implementation of structural adjustment, has also meant that international aid has actually reinforced the centralised authority of many African leaders. This, in turn, has scarcely been dented by the democratic reforms of the early 1990s which have been insufficient to reverse a tradition of low levels of political participation across most populations at large.

The central argument is cogently presented and systematically developed. Its conceptual roots rest on the pervasiveness of neopatrimonialism, which for the author is the basis of political authority in Africa. From this he develops an essentially political analysis, taking it as ‘axiomatic that better economic performance is associated with macroeconomic stability, including sustainable monetary and fiscal policies ...’ and believing that if this ‘consensus’ were to be adopted then ‘African economies would flourish within a couple of years’. Well ... maybe.
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Another book with the words 'crisis' and 'Africa' in its title. Undoubtedly across vast areas of the continent this correspondence of place and politico-economic status is correct, but we should be aware of how as academic commentators we perpetuate stereotypes (or allow our publishers to do so) through the need for catchy headings. In fact the collection in this volume reflects the more sober approach of the sub-title, seeking to analyse crisis often as external in its origins and suggesting means of addressing its various forms. It is one of those collections that is difficult to summarise, containing thirteen chapters covering predictable issues like globalisation and exclusion (Hoogvelt), African renaissance (Cliffe), the state (Baker, Dixon), democracy (Hearn), food security (Richards, Mamed), Sierra Leone (Kandeh) and peacekeeping (Clapham). An odd combination of authors in some respects, though one interesting variation is the inclusion of a chapter (by Asteris Huliaras) on French foreign policy towards Africa. Although it is difficult to see what the totality of the collection adds up to, each contribution, each from a different author, is readable and pertinent in itself, and as a collection it takes us a little forward in our understanding of the kaleidoscope of problems facing so many African states today. Does this sound like faint praise? Perhaps it is, but in an unqualified sense. Greater input from African scholars would have been welcome.

In the course of ten closely argued chapters the author traces the changes in official aid policy in France and Britain, as two of the most prominent aid donors from the West, that followed the end of the Cold War in 1989. From retaining a distinctiveness of their own during the earlier period he shows that they have both tended to converge towards an international norm marked by political conditionality. The process has been uneven and characterised by the different institutions, histories and motivations of France and Britain. After an initial period of rigorous insistence on conditionality the aid authorities in both countries began to water down their approach, as a period of policy learning and bargaining with recipient governments emerged.

Chapters range through the Cold War record, French and British contrasts in actors and institutions, dynamics of aid-policy making, aid practice in Togo and Kenya, and finally an assessment of the value of such models as 'advocacy coalition framework' and bargaining approaches in accounting for the divergent experiences. While some readers of ROAPE may prefer a more political economic approach, this book is exceedingly well researched with extensive notes and a useful bibliography. It presents a scholarly analysis of an area in need of
research and should at least be in every University Library, on reading lists and on many personal shelves.

**Saugestad, Sidsel, The Inconvenient Indigenous: Remote Area Development in Botswana, Donor Assistance, and the First People of the Kalahari, Nordic Afrika Institute, Uppsala, 2001.**

The outcome of a doctoral thesis, this book is a timely addition to a growing literature on the San people of the Kalahari, particularly those living in Botswana. The Botswana government has been under considerable international criticism in recent years for forcibly preventing the San from continuing to lead their traditional lifestyle as hunter-gatherers in the Central Kalahari.

This study by Sidsel Saugestad provides a welcome comprehensive approach to the problems, though inevitably coloured by the academic needs of his original project. Nevertheless, in taking us through the definitional problems of ethnicity, indigenous peoples, culture, nation-building, acknowledging, without submerging the reader, in discourse analysis, the author provides a valuable background conceptual foundation for our understanding of the history, current problems and future prospects of the Basarwa in Botswana. The book falls naturally into four sections: the first, termed ‘The Problem’ deals with the definitions, concepts and problematic origins, the second, on ‘The Indigenous World’, reflects the author’s anthropological background in its focus on territoriality, diversity over time and space, codification of land rights, and the construction of the Bushman ‘other’ (to give a flavour). This is followed by a lengthy section on government action, which includes NORAD involvement, and the implications, practically and conceptually, of the introduction of the Remote Areas Development Programme (RAD). A final section, appropriately headed as ‘Events Unfolding’ takes us from a seminal workshop in Gaborone in 1992 up to 1998 and is where the book, in some respects, comes alive. Here we have the formation of interest groups such as the Kuru Development Trust and First People of the Kalahari traced and their fractious relationship with the Botswana government explored. In some respects a book for the specialist, but in others a useful addition to the lexicon of struggles of marginalised peoples around the world.


The rather bland title belies the contents of this book which reviews and analyses South African society and political economy from the immediate pre-colonial period to the present. This is an ambitious endeavour when constrained to just over three hundred pages, but the joint authors have successfully brought together a mass of recent and contemporary social, political and historical research, summarising, condensing and reinterpreting using the tools of contemporary political geography. The result is a coverage of what for many of us is familiar material, but in interesting and provocative form, thus appealing to the academic on the one hand, while providing a useful introduction to radical discourse on South African political evolution for specialist undergraduate and even graduate courses. The book is well produced and has numerous black and white photographs, maps and tables, which again, at first sight, give the impression of being a standard introductory text, but which in fact provide a valid complement to the textual arguments. Although an account of historical progression, the authors define their ap-
proach with more conceptual introductory sections on the state, space and power, and economic and social boundaries, and conclude with an examination of the transitions from liberal to industrial to late capitalism in South Africa during the past three hundred years. Inevitably, one can criticise their selection and ordering. For instance, the nature, changing form and instances of black African resistance and struggle, while frequently recognised, tend to be scattered through the historical narrative. Although this helps to keep them in context, an appreciation of their persistence and cumulative impact is diminished as a result. Although in most respects the book succeeds in reflecting 'the material and ideological mechanisms through which privilege and exclusion have been sustained, legitimated and resisted' (back cover), it remains in subtle ways the product of white authors.


One of a six volume set devoted to collections of readings covering the fields of economic, technological, social, political, international and legal policy, this volume contains thirty chapters on political policy. Four are on Africa but many of the others are also of interest and have wide relevance. The book is divided into five sections: general political policy, Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin and North America in that order. Although only four, the African chapters make interesting reading. Eve Sandberg critically explores the relatively under-researched field of donor-assisted democratisation with reference to Namibia, Mike Meiring evaluates local and national government inter-relationships in South Africa, James Wunsch, more contentiously, asks 'what strategy international donors might pursue to facilitate an improvement in Africa's governance', and Said Adejumobi examines electoral theory and practice with examples from Gambia and Ghana. Amongst his conclusions is an awareness of deeper issues in expressing the need to address 'the crisis of accumulation in Africa which makes the capture of state power a priceless political project'. Of the introductory chapters those by Nurmi on the mathematics of majority rule, Erzioni-Haley on elites and classes, and Barber on federalism all cover topics relevant to what is happening on the African continent. Erik Komarov in an interesting comparative study analyses differences between the Soviet Union, Russia and India. The remainder of the book covers the rest of the globe and can be dipped into according to interest.

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