Oct. - Dec. 1998

Vol. 3 No. 1
ISSN 1391 - 2380

Nēthrā

Special Issue

AFRO-ASIAN CONSULTATION ON ETHNICITY AND POLITICS

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES, COLOMBO

Nēthrā

Journal of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo

Nēthrā will appear quarterly. Subscription rates are:

Sri Lanka: Rs.350 per year

SAARC countries: U.S. $15 per year

Other countries: U.S. $20 per year

All rates are inclusive of mailing costs (by air in the case of foreign readers).

ISSN 1391 - 2380

All correspondence to:
International Centre for Ethnic Studies
2, Kynsey Terrace, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka

Printed by
Unie Arts (Pvt) Ltd. No.48 B, Bloemendhal Road, Colombo 13.

Oct. - Dec. 1998 Vol. 3 No. 1

Nēthrā

Quarterly Journal

Special Issue

Editor
Regi Siriwardena

International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo

Nēthrā welcomes contributions from scholars and writers. Since the journal's interests are omnivorous, there is no restriction on subject-matter. Ideally, however, Nēthrā looks for material that is serious without being ponderous, readable and interesting without being superficial, and comprehensible even to readers who are not specialists in the intellectual field in which the subject is situated.

In addition to papers and essays, we shall be glad to receive shorter critical comments and letters in response to any material that has already appeared in the journal.

Nēthrā also invites creative writing - poems or stories - from both Sri Lankan and foreign writers.

Editorial correspondence, including submissions to the journal, should be sent to:

The Editor,
Nēthrā
Tnternational Centre for Ethnic Studies,
2, Kynsey Terrace,
Colombo 8,
Sri Lanka.

Notes on Contributers

Jibrin Ibrahim is attached to the Department of Political Science at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria.

Charmaine Pereira is attached to the Department of Sociology at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria.

Yolanda Foster is a Ph.D student in the Department of Political Science at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. She is currently conducting field research in Sri Lanka.

Mithran Tiruchelvam graduated in the social sciences from Reed College, Oregon, USA, and is currently doing an undergraduate degree in Law at the University of Cambridge, UK.

The name Nēthrā derived from a Sanskrit root, literally means 'eyes', but the word is associated with the concepts of perception and vision in more than physical senses, and in particular with the spiritual force attributed to eyesight in South Asian cultures. The word, in varying forms, occurs in several Asian languages, including Sinhala and Tamil.

Contents

Consultation on Ethnicity and the Politics of Identity in South Asia and Africa: Filtered Recollections and Reflections

Jibrin Ibrahim

Introduction

The consultation was organised by the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), Colombo, Sri Lanka and the Council for the Development of the Social Sciences in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal; the local host was the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, India. The Ford Foundation funded the meeting.

The consultation took place in India, at Cochin in Kerala state on 16 and 17 May 1998. Cochin was described by Ashis Nandy as a salad, rather than a melting pot, model of integration. The distinguishing feature of the salad model is that after thousands of years of cohabitation between various Indian and immigrant ethno-religious groups, including Black and White Jews, Arabs, five Christian sects and numerous local communities and religious orders, the constitutive ingredients remain identifiable. They seem to dislike/distrust each other, but grant each other that same right. A multicultural society that accepts their differences and lives with them through the generations without violence. Ashis concludes that Cochin is perfectly normal in Indian society: after

all, the Indian epic is about a cosmos in which the demons are as necessary as the gods. The St. Francis Church (where Vasco da Gama was first buried), the synagogue and the Hindu temple have no problem co-existing.

The theme of the consultation was ethnicity and the politics of identity. Ethnic identity is only one expression of the myriad of identities (exploding in Africa and South Asia.) Identities, ethnic, religious, clan, caste, etc. are multiple and are located in memories that are deeply entrenched in a rich blend of history and myth.

I The Dynamics of the Politics of Identity

A. Key Words

1. Rupture

At some point, a threshold, a turning point: a moment arrives when complex, multi-textured identities are reduced to two and the politics of identity is directed at the elimination of the other. For Rwanda, it was 1959; for Sri Lanka, 1983 was the turning point; for Bombay, it was the 1992 threshold. The binary categories that emerged include Sikh/Hindu and Muslim/Hindu in India, Pathan/Muhaji in Pakistan, Tutsi/Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi, Christian/Muslim in Nigeria and Sudan, Sinhala/Tamil in Sri Lanka, Hausa/Igbo in Nigeria and, in numerous cases, the "nationalists" versus the "terrorists", whatever that means. What it does mean seems to be that whatever the issue might be, each group constructs a discursive practice that is antagonistic to that of the other.

2. Signifiers

What are the indices, the constitutive elements, and the logic of the politics of identity? In identifying what was often elegantly called the repertoire of practices, cultural factors may not play a major role. Pradeep Jeganathan describes it in relation to the definition of "Tamilness" in Sri Lanka; after the threshold has

been crossed, the tactics of the anticipation of violence, could in itself become the major determining element. There are, of course, many and complex signifiers of the politics of identity formation which research could reveal.

3. Violence

The most significant output of the rupture is violence, a specific form of violence in which, as Mithran Tiruchelvam puts it, the aggressors are civilian urban mobs acting in urban environments who return to their everyday life and neighbourly existence after a spate of spasmodic bloodletting and annihilatory violence. The output of the turmoil is very high, and increasing, from dozens, to hundreds, to hundreds of thousands and now the competition for the million mark as in Rwanda.

4. Victims

Most of the violence is not random or gender-neutral. It is planned and directed at women and its moving spirit was appropriately labelled "toxic testosterone". As Radhika Coomaraswamy, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women emphasised, women are sought for and subjected to the worst and most brutal forms of violence. They include rape in front of family members, enforced impregnation, parading women naked and mutilation of the female body. She added that it is striking that rape, mutilation and cruelty to women in India/Pakistan, and at the time of partition, Bosnia and Rwanda were virtually identical: the male identity superseding the others. The female victims are often caught in a male-dominated discourse that counterpoises ethnic cleansing to ethnic pollution. A lot of the violence in which women are killed, poisoned, thrown into wells etc. is perpetrated by their own men - fathers and/or brothers of husbands who are allegedly trying to save their honour and prevent the pollution of the stock. Some women have internalised this discourse of shame and commit suicide to escape anticipated violence.

5. Site

The city is the major site of most of the violence produced in South Asia and Africa. Ashis Nandy, for example, contends that over 97% of the violence in India is concentrated in the big cities. This means that most communities do not participate in the vicious circle of violence. In the city itself, what is in question is cosmopolitan culture. The logic of the violence is the destruction of cosmopolitanism: refusing to mix the ingredients of the salad. One cannot but recollect the recent war in Brazzaville (capital of the Congo), where each of the war lords reconstituted his tribal domain in the city, and fought out a war that led to the uprooting of one of the tribes from the site of political struggle.

B. Summarising and Extending a Provocative Schema from Ashis Nandy et al:

South Asia	*Africa*
Strong state	Collapsed state
Obedient society	Alienated (marginal) society
Hero-centric polity	Tyrannic polity
Mob-centric action	Lumpen-centric action
City-centric location	City-centric location

The cities play the central role in both societies but is there a difference between the Asian mobs and the African lumpens? Both polities tend to be focused on an individual or family. What is the difference between the tyrant and the benevolent dictator/ demagogue? How do they relate to their societies? The dominant narratives on the Asian and African states are radically opposed; how strong is the Asian state and what is the level of decomposition/ recomposition of the African state?

II State Trajectories and their Negation[1]

The state, its projects, its crisis, and sometimes, its collapse are at the centre of much of the dynamics of identity politics. At the same time, the forces of globalisation and those of civil society challenge, contest and redraw the social trajectories set out by the state. Understanding this process needs a historical vision, *une longue duree*, but also the role of the *moment*, the threshold, the turning point.

1. State

With independence, the state in South Asia and Africa tried to invent and impose a single national identity and to negate the other "really existing" multiple identities. Various policies for recomposing identities were invented shortly after independence. Valentine Daniel told us a story, for example, about how one million Ceylonese lost their citizenship by administrative fiat after independence; they were declared foreigners with no right to Ceylonese national identity which they had always assumed they had. In Rwanda, shortly after independence, the Hutu-led administration decided that the Hutu/Tutsi identity should be spelled out on identity cards, and by implication, should supersede the national identity. From that moment, being Tutsi meant less rights, persecution, exile etc. In 1994, it was the identity card that determined those who were to be victims of genocide. Today, the Tutsi are in power and they have banned the two words -- Tutsi and Hutu -- from public discourse, but since only one group is in power, nothing has changed: only the identity of the victim. In essence, the state cannot provide security for members of the community and it cannot provide public goods. Other actors cannot but step in.

[1] Luc Sindjoun seriously warned us to beware of believing state discourses relative to the assumption that they have functions to perform in society.

2. Globalisation

In spite of pretensions to the contrary, and in spite of the persistence of the ideology of the nation state, the role and place of the state in contemporary society is diminishing.[2] Globalisation has become the master narrative of our time. Globalisation, as Arjun Appadurai explained, is not just a new word: it is a new process. Previous modernisation processes were about replicating production processes in other locations. Globalisation is about the integration of everybody into the game. It's a two tier game.

On the one hand, as Okwudiba Nnoli emphasised, globalisation is the highest stage in the development of imperialism. Capitalism has, as it were, defeated the nation-state and all other fetters to the march of the capital and profit motive. This means that all the players are in the game but they are not equal: the weaker are being dictated rules that are not in their interests.

On the other hand, globalisation is also about the operation of social movements that are not bound by the state, or by capital. Religious movements, for example, are creating their global spaces and operating in total disregard to the interests of states, capital and imperialism. The information super- highway is creating possibilities of the invention of meaning and action that are not controlled or pre-determined.

III Political Reconfigurations

How then has political community been imagined and how can it be re-imagined? How necessary is the state and how can its necessity be reconciled with other forms of political organisation?

---

[2] India exploded some nuclear devises just before the Cochin consultation and the country was in a frenzy of nationalist fervour. All the taxi drivers I spoke to were so proud that their nation has shown its enemies what it can achieve; all the intellectuals whom I spoke to were furious at the stupidity of the nationalist provocation of the Indian Government

How can those with political responsibility be accountable to those they allegedly represent? As Imtiaz Ahmed asked, When will the Indian parliamentarian know the 600,000 voters and 1.3 million peoples he represents in Delhi? And as Nivedita Menon asked, How can we integrate local community struggles over rights and citizenship into political engineering projects?

A possible point of departure is that political reconfigurations must be thought out in ways that prevent long historical processes of identity transformation that have produced amicable multi-ingredient salad bowl or melting pot models being arrested and reduced to the antagonistic binary model of the "nationalist" trying to kill all the "terrorists" and vice versa.

What are the possibilities - federalism, regionalism, subsidiarity?

IV Research themes

1. The colonial order: How has it structured contemporary identity dynamics? How has it produced losers and winners?

2. Signifiers of identity: What are we looking for when we try to study identity dynamics?

3. What are the threshold, rupture, turning points that define this moment of identity dynamics?

4. Why and how is the city such an important site of identity dynamics and what identity model is it creating?

5. Why has violence, especially violence against women, become the principal output of identity dynamics and what can we do about it?

6. Since we can only compare things that are similar, how can we compare Asians and Africans?

7. Can comparative South Asia-Africa studies lead to the development of transfomatory discourses on and models of the state, or do we just do it for fun?

Report of the Consultation on Ethnicity and The Politics of Identity in Asia and Africa (16 & 17 May, 1998)

Introduction

This consultation was the first leg in a collaborative project between the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, (ICES), Colombo, and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal. The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), New Delhi, India, was the local sponsor of the consultation.

Saturday, 16 May, 1998

Introductory Session

After all the participants had introduced themselves, Ngone Diop Tine welcomed the participants on behalf of CODESRIA and briefly outlined the research interests and activities of CODESRIA. Neelan Tiruchelvam welcomed the participants on behalf of ICES and briefly outlined the research interests and activities of ICES, in particular its three discrete areas of primary focus: Research, Policy Intervention and Value Formation.

The consultation began with a brief account by Ashis Nandy on the significance of the city of Cochin for a meeting on ethnicity and the politics of identity. Referring to the community

orientations of its populations, he indicated the 'salad' nature of the version of multiculturalism witnessed here, in contradistinction to the 'melting pot' metaphor of cultural harmony. Undoubtedly, there were tensions among these different communities as well, but these were subsumed in the recognition of the necessity of evil in every community's cosmos. These communities allowed one another the privilege of dislike, and even hatred, and still managed to co-exist in harmony.

Session I

Jayadeva Uyangoda presented an overview of the nature of critical political science preoccupations in South Asia and, more specifically, in Sri Lanka. The events of 1983 marked a turning point not only for Sri Lankan political society but also for social science research. There was a move away from an ethnicised understanding of state formation etc. He emphasised the critical importance of intervention, or in liberal phraseology, of 'conflict resolution'. This intervention should come about both in research and also in the corpus of social science knowledge generated. In Sri Lanka, for instance, even constitutional discourse in traditional Austinian terms has been indigenised and is now part of the majoritarian Sinhala discourse; hence the critical importance of transforming political discourse. There is a need to think of new categories, - to "de-ethnicise ethnicities".

Imtiaz Ahmed made the second presentation in which he sought to outline a few general features relating to politics in South Asia. He suggested that in the post-colonial situation the ramifications and implications of South Asia's relationship with colonialism are perhaps insufficiently understood. Civil society here has developed differently from that in the west and is more violent and polarised. Politics in South Asia has now acquired new characteristics viz., (a) politics has become 'hartalitics' ('hartals' = strikes) and leader - centric, and most political parties have neo-fascist characteristics; (b) it has become 'mastan centric' - the intermediaries and the bureaiocracy have become

crucial power managers (this is in contrast to the situation in the west, which has a more vibrant civil society); (c) it has become street-centric: cities (and the political culture there) have become critical. Politics in South Asia is government-centric and not civil society-centric. In this context it is important to recognise the constructedness of identity and to de-ethnicise ethnic identity.

Jibrin Ibrahim in his presentation began with the observation that the issues were similar for Africa. He sought to look at some of the problematic conceptual categories in political science discourse. Notions of 'tribe' and 'tribalism' have been tied from the very beginning to the idea of political development. The notion of 'tribe' was colonialism's entry point in its 'civilising' mission, particularly via anthropology. In one stream of social science research, questions of 'ethnicity' and 'tribalism' are seen as part of the 'modernisation' project. From this perspective, conflicts are seen as constituting an integral aspect of the normal tensions obtaining in such a locus of the 'forces of progress' process. From the point of view of the Africans themselves, the nationalist movement required the taking of a very clear position on these questions. One of the major elements in the African context is the difference between the francophone and anglophone African situations. The francophone situation was distinguished by the notion of a Jacobin belief in the republic being the sole and legitimate political form of association. However, in practice this difference did not amount to much.

Session II

Valentine Daniel, through the presentation of a story, emphasised the fluidity of identities and noted that insufficient attention is paid to those identities that are formed at the interstices of other more readily recognised identities. The story noted the different agencies that modulated and channelled these identities. In particular, it reflected the role of the state in their formation and treatment by, inter alia, the agency of 'judicial violence'.

Pradeep Jeganathan presented a story through which he identified a mode of formation/construction of identity which he labelled 'tactics of anticipation'. In this particular story, 'Tamilness' as a constructed identity in the aftermath of the 1983 riots was highlighted. One crucial determinant of the formative context of that identity was the newly emergent refugee-asylum dynamics and, in particular, their global dimensions. These new dynamics resulted in the opening up of opportunities based on an identification or construction of 'Tamilness'.

Radhika Coomaraswamy in her presentation sought to focus attention on the gendered nature of collective violence and, in particular, ethnic violence. Referring to recently published studies on the nature of violence during the Partition in the Punjab, she indicated the way in which women's bodies were construed as 'belonging' to the nation. Relying on her own findings in Rwanda, and on other studies of Bosnia and the Punjab partition, she identified a common pattern in the type of violence: women suffer collective rape; they are mutilated; women are forced to perform degrading acts. She also indicated that the effects of violence on women have seemingly contradictory outcomes: sometimes the experience of violence produces a rupture in the status quo enabling women to be empowered: for example, the emergence of female-headed households (studies by Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake)'. On the other hand, the militarisation that accompanies violence may also draw women into new and often problematic roles: for example, the women's wing of the LTTE.

Sunday, 17 May, 1998

Session III

Luc Sindjoun's presentation focused on the role of the state in the formation and structuring of ethnicity. He noted that ethnicity was itself a statist category and that one of the modes by which the state perpetuates these categories is by 'rhetorical violence'

(hinting at the discursive practices of the state). Refuting the assumptions of those who focused on the state as failure in Africa, he pointed out that the notion of the state as failure was premised on a notion of the state as success. The focus in political science discourse needs to be on how 'ethnicity' is constructed as a problem. In particular, public law in most African countries, which are unitary in character, contributed to the reification of ethnic categories. He characterised these processes as the institutionalisation of ethno-politics. Notions that play an important role in these dynamics include 'scientific ethnicism' and the 'ethic of identity'. He also highlighted the importance of the ways in which elites organise and use access (to resources, opportunities) for ethnic groups as political instruments.

In her presentation, Nivedita Menon posed the question of how to relate politics with 'vexed communities'. As an interpretative tool, she suggested that we supplant the 'constructed-real' binary with a 'constructed-natural' binary. There are two main challenges to the idea of citizenship in India. The first challenge, heard most often from the Hindu Right quarter, is the contention that citizenship in India has not been abstract enough. Under the Indian Constitution, for instance, Article 370 implies a notion of citizenship flexible and malleable enough to account for contested dimensions. The second and real challenge comes from organised community-based movements like the Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Chattisgarh movement. The latter is not just 'an addition to democracy' but fundamentally challenges the notion of the 'nation'. She also additionally reflected on the 'sexual' nature of violence and suggested the need to look into what discourses constitute the 'sexual' nature of violence.

Arjun Appadurai in his presentation focused on the processes and implications of globalisation. Relying on his own studies on the Bombay 'riots' following the demolition of the Babri Masjid, he indicated the ways in which national politics, the dynamic of the 'predatory identity', inscribes itself on urban public space; the streets and chawls of Bombay *become* the national space.

In the context of globalisation, there is a contradiction between the market and cultural authenticity. The question is: how to denationalise or relocalise? Under processes of globalisation, the global does not necessarily go through the national to reach the local. By reaching the local directly, the global contributes to the disruption of the national inscription on the local. One fundamental difference between modernisation and globalisation that needs to be noted is that whereas the former is a process of replication, the latter is a process of integration.

Session IV

Themes for Institutional Collaboration

Valentine Daniel opened the session suggesting that globalisation offers a good context for paying attention to the particular. This could be the first area of focus. The particular can be of two types, viz., (a) the particular that does not assimilate into larger theories and (b) the particulars that change habits of thought and discussion. The second important area of focus could be the demystification of constructions, and the third, imagining new political formations. Jayadeva Uyangoda suggested the following themes: (a) looking for state alternatives; (b) civil society political movements; (c) forms of political association; and (d) violence. Arjun Appadurai emphasised the need for "de-cosmopolitising" our interventions. Jibrin Ibrahim suggested that (a) the central theme of the project could be broadened beyond 'ethnicity' to take it into the conceptual plane; (b) ethnic violence needs to be studied as a pathologically newer version of violence; (c) challenges to globalisation from different directions (religious-institutional, for instance) also need to be studied; and (d) the possibilities that federalism offers can be looked into.

Neelan Tiruchelvam suggested that comparative policy studies and exchanges of research personnel could be some of the possible programmes in this project. Julius Ihonvbere, commenting

on the outreach of this project, emphasised the need for challenging existing power relations.

Participants

The following people participated in the deliberations at the Consultation:

Imtiaz Ahmed
Arjun Appadurai
Radhika Coomaraswamy
Dattathreya C.S.
E. Valentine Daniel
Yolanda Foster
Jibrin Ibrahim
Julius Ihonvbere
Pradeep Jeganathan
Nivedita Menon
Ashis Nandy
Okwudiba Nnoli
Luc Sindjoun
Ngone Diop Tine
Mithran Tiruchelvam
Neelan Tiruchelvam
Jayadeva Uyangoda

Ayesha Jalal, Farida Shaheed, Abbas Rashid and Eghosa E. Osaghae were also scheduled to participate, but due to difficulties in obtaining visas, they were unable to attend the meeting.

Follow-up programmes planned for the project

The first leg of the present consultation is to be followed by the following programmes:

1. ICES will be sending a panel consisting of four or five people for a panel discussion that will be organised by CODESRIA during its General Assembly meeting sometime in December 1998. The tentative topic for the panel discussion is *Ethnicity and the Management of Diversity.* The ICES panel will comprise representatives from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

2. ICES will invite CODESRIA to nominate two or three African scholars/researchers as Visiting Fellows at ICES. These Visiting Fellows will be expected to spend three to six months at ICES. In addition to pursuing their own research interests at ICES, they will also be expected to take part and contribute to ICES's projects, and research and policy implementation activities.

3. ICES will try to develop the papers that were presented at the Cochin consultation and any other additional papers and these will be published, either as a special issue of *Nēthrā*, (the ICES journal), or as a special compilation volume. This will be prepared before December and will be circulated at the CODESRIA General Assembly meeting.

4. The second leg of the consultation scheduled to take place in January 1999 will be hosted by CODESRIA in Senegal. The second leg, in addition to pursuing the themes of the Cochin meeting, will lay special emphasis on institutional collaboration between ICES and CODESRIA. The outcome of this meeting will be expected to strategise and strengthen long-term institutional collaboration (going beyond the specific aims of the present project) between ICES and CODESRIA in areas of mutual interest.

Some Issues Relating to Ethnicity in South Asia

Mithran Tiruchelvam

A Collective Violence

For several decades now, the South Asian subcontinent has witnessed recurrent and explosive outbursts of collective violence, often sparked by the fumes of ethnic and religious animosity. To cite a few stark instances in an expanding tableau: Sikh-Hindu and Muslim-Hindu confrontations in India and Kashmir, the Pathan-Muhajir clashes in Pakistan, the Sinhala-Tamil war in Sri Lanka, and the Chackma-Muslim violence in Bangladesh. The fervor of such collective actions and movements typically finds substance in the form of civilian riots -- those most frequent and dramatic expressions of ethnic conflict. These riots are understood as a moment of violence, a particular instance of concreteness and specificity, within a larger system of communal and ethnic violence. The aggressors are themselves members of civilian crowds and mobs acting in urban environments, who seemingly return to the humdrum of everyday life and neighborly existence after their spasmodic bloodletting and annihilatory violence. Much of the violence alluded to here confines itself to confrontations involving neighbors, friends and kinsmen--generally persons with some degree of social familiarity, if not intimacy. The fluid, expansive and sweeping structure of the subject of collective violence has also characterized its scholarship. The general nature of the subject transverses the

interstices between modernization, ethnicity, history, myth and cosmologies of the nation-state. In reviewing and re-examining the issues raised by the vast and varying literature on collective violence, it will serve economy to chart a few broad areas of thematic concern.

First and perhaps formatively, is the question of the disposition towards collective violence and the structural conditions that underlie modalities of ethnic and religious riots. This dimension of collective violence implicates the role of myth and historical consciousness in provoking a *raison d'être* for ethnic and communal hatred. Valentine Daniel, picking up the threads of this line of thought, draws a distinction between 'epistemic' and 'ontic' realities, between a way of seeing the world and a way of being in the world.[1] Daniel believes that the conditions for collective violence in Sri Lanka are to be found in the discordance between these two discursive practices. While the mythic inhabits an ontic reality, history is naturally oriented towards an epistemic reality. While the former is distinguished by its 'participatoriness' (in 'performative' ritual and stories) and describes fundamental modes of being, the latter is essentially theoretical and concerns the 'aboutness' of existence.[2] Daniel characterizes epistemic realities as being emergent of the ontic and the discursive practices of the mythic as genealogically prior to that of history. There are two points of relevance here: (a) the intrusion of history's theoretical certainty is antithetical to mythic ways of being and results in a grave sense of 'anxiety', leading to the dislodging of myth and the conflagration of violence, and, (b) the impingement of history (in particular an Anglo-Saxon colonial historiography), leads to the creation of a simplex narrative out of the multiplex record of the past, and, in this reduction of the manifold to the single, communal violence finds its fodder.[3]

---

1 Daniel 1996:50

2 Daniel 1996: 52

3 Daniel 1996: 53

The work by Daniel is suggestive of the manner by which certain forms of knowledge create modalities of opposition and violence by reducing a previous social heterogeneity and multiplicity into essential ethnic labels and categories. The sociological essentialism of such ethnic labels and categories has increasingly been seen as products of colonial and post-colonial state practices and policies (in the creation of censuses, surveys, dictionaries, histories and maps).[4] This transformation of discursive formations into a finite epistemological space and the conversion of South Asian experiences into European objects are particularly well documented for the nineteenth-century British colonial endeavor in India. The effect this has had on the politics of communal violence has also been noted. Gyanendra Pandey, for example, charges that British administrators reduced a variety of protest movements to the single master-principle of an enduring communal divide between Hindus and Muslims in India, and justified the use of deadly force to suppress them by defining them as 'riots' threatening law and order.[5] Complex issues and the diverse interests of multiple groups are involved in movements of collective violence that are retrospectively labeled and perceived as collisions between two monolithic population segments and thus the events summarized by 'riots' are reduced to a master principle of ethnic or religious allegiance.6

A second issue, one of descriptive over analytical emphasis, is the form and trajectory of collective aggression and the web of signifiers through which such ideologies as communalism and ethnicity are organized and communicated. Have these symbols remained constant through history, or, if they have changed, what does the change signify? The organization and dynamics of crowds and groups, their strategies and techniques of violence, and so on, is central to this line of inquiry. The stress here has been on a culturally semiotic understanding of collective violence.

---

4 see Cohn 1985

5 Pandey 1990

6 Pandey 1990

As Veena Das points out, symbolic structures operate in multiple ways in times of ethnic and communal conflict: (a) through the organization of symbolic space (as in places of sacred attachment: as pilgrimage centers, mosques, temples); (b) in the temporal structure of the riots (different kinds of riots relating to ritual or political calendars in different ways); and (c) in the repertoire of symbolic actions that are called forth in ethnic and communal conflict: not only is such a repertoire available to the crowd, the mob or procession, it is also available to the state in the management of collective behavior.[7]

In the first instance, the organization of symbolic space assumes some critical focus in relation to the structure of modern cities in South Asia and its particular contribution to collective violence. The large influx of migrants who reside on the margins of cities has created a floating population who frequently become potential recruits for various underworld activities, and by easy co-extension, a vast reservoir for the thug instruments of political parties.[8] The use of this slum-dwelling underclass as a tool in the mobilization of mobs by politicians is evidence of what Stanley Tambiah dubs the 'routinization of violence.'[9] Tambiah argues that the spiraling cycle of agnostic collective violence reaches some uneasy threshold where it actually becomes 'efficacious in the construction, production, maintenance, and reproduction of ethnic solidarity itself.'[10] The rationality of collective aggression becomes self-perpetuating, routine, and thus, '[v]iolence shapes the urban space of ethnic enclaves, barriers, shatter zones, liminal areas, barricades; it becomes a mode of gaining or losing urban space, and of displacing and moving, and resettling populations.'[11]

---

7 Das 1990:9
8 Das 1990:12
9 Tambiah 1996: 230
10 Tambiah 1996: 223
11 Tambiah 1996: 223

The second perspective of temporal structure relates both to the event structure of the riot and its narrative sequence, as well as the unfolding sequence of violence and its relation to the 'objectified calendars' of society.[12] The chronology of the riot is a site of deep contestation, since the issue of precipitating causes or 'triggering events'[13] often marks the symbolic divide between aggressor and victim and harks back to the potent interiorized metaphor of identity and difference (as well as, parenthetically, questioning the 'accountability' of the past). A further complexity is the proclivity of 'rumors' in fanning the flames of collective aggression -- causing panic and 'anxiety', creating stereotypes and serving as justification for brutalities. Such distorted information and knowledge reduces the availability of a clear or 'perfected' narrative sequence of the riot.

The third sense of a cultural repertoire of symbolic actions dwells on whether ethnic riots as collective behavior may be related to the wider context of political and moral norms, cultural practices and conventions and traditions of public assemblies and public enactments, such as festivals, ceremonies, protests and rebellions. The protagonists of collective violence draw on the public culture's repertoire of presentational forms and practices. Some of the components of the repertoire may be drawn from the everyday forms of ritualized life or from the ritual calendar of festivities. They may be imitated, inverted, or parodied, according to their dramatic and communicative possibilities.[14] It should be noted that in unfolding conflicts various kinds of collective action can be used, and as Das points out, the movement between different forms is one way in which contemporary violent conflicts between religious or ethnic groups may be distinguished from similar violence in earlier times.[15] Moreover, if the community has a repertoire for the organization

---

12 Das 1990:15

13 Tambiah 1996:234

14 Tambiah 1996: 230

15 Das 1990:22

of collective episodes of violence, then so does the state for the management of these collective actions (such as in the use of curfews, the deployment of limited force, preventive arrests, etc).[16] Mobilizing crowd action, managing mobs, manipulating the media, politicians, faction leaders, and the professional thugs who are frequently hired for the purpose requires specific recipes, techniques, and stratagems that are also parcel of the repertoire of symbolic action. The frenzied sentiments unleashed by collective violence often find 'scripts' that both subscribe to and underlie a clear sort of order -- and the repertoire of symbols is indicative of how rarely violence as such is entirely chaotic or wanton.

A fourth and final issue raised prominently in the literature of collective violence is one of locution and the challenge of writing about violence. This raises the painful questions that the representational form poses for the task of writing on violence. Appadurai writes says, '[w]hen rape, torture, cannibalism, and the brutal use of blood, feces and body parts enter the scenario of ethnic cleansing, we are faced with the limits not just of social science but of language itself'.[17] A crucial issue here is whether the form evolved in writing about survivor experience is simply used to titillate. Does the author play the part of a voyeur of the narratives of suffering and thus face the liability of producing a 'pornography of violence'? Most of the work on survivors done in this context tends to suggest that the distinction between the author and his/her object dissolves in the study of violence.[18] There appear to be unwieldy and refractory problems in attempting to find an objective, neutral vocabulary and analytical framework for the writing of violence. Much of this stems from the rhetorical and political implications of such writing, or as,

16 Das 1990: 23
17 Appadurai 1996: 154
18 Das 1990: 33

Veena Das characterizes it: [t]o be the scribe of the human experience of suffering creates a special responsibility towards those who suffer.[19]

B Globalization and Political Identity

The recent accent of the socio-economic formation known as globalization finds its precedents and inspirations of form in a course of history spanning several centuries.[20] A "world-systems" view understands the contemporary world in the context of the history of a capitalist world economy developing since the sixteenth century. This account of the capitalist world system rests on the distinctions between central, semiperipheral, and peripheral areas of world-political and economic development, and on the historical conditions for the shifts in the relationships of these areas. But in the last few decades, many commentators and scholars have argued that there is something essentially novel about the recent transregional processes and systems of globalization. This new global cultural economy has come to be seen as a 'complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (and even those that account for multiple centers and peripheries).'[21] The new formation of globalization marks a transition in the global political economy since the 1970s, in which multi-national forms of capitalist organization began to be replaced by transnational modes of organization, and, as the fountainhead of technology, commerce and labor, began to assemble in ways that no longer paid heed to, or warranted, national boundaries.[22] The strains and challenges this process has wrought on the sovereignty, territorial and political integrity of the nation-state is one that is the focus of this discussion.

---

19 Das 1990: 32

20 see Wallerstein 1974

21 Appadurai 1996: 32

22 Appadurai 1996: 16

The elements of fluidity, porosity and irregularity that have characterized the onslaught of globalization have created pressures on cultural and political identity. The loyalties and aspirations of the nation-state have likewise been seen as under threat. The tenuous connection between 'nation' and 'state' has been stretched to such an extent that the nation is frequently neither congruent nor co-extensive with the territorial state. The evidence of widespread interethnic conflict and internecine civil strife is symbol of nations without states and of how rarely states exhaust nations. Much of this flux has been traced to the coupling effect of two forces: (a) the technological explosion in electronic media and the resultant modalities of sense and being that it arouses, and (b) the mass-migration of people across space, creating a series of unprecedented interactions that are both intense and rarefied.[23] Appadurai argues that the cumulative impact of these two phenomena is found in the widening of horizons in the construction of imagined selves and 'imagined worlds' and, '[t]ogether, they create specific irregularities because both viewers and images are in simultaneous circulation.'[24] Both images and viewers no longer fit into circuits or audiences that are easily bound within the confines of local, national, or regional spaces. The argument as such is parallel and relational to that made by Benedict Anderson on the power of the print-media in the nineteenth-century construction of nationalism. These are 'imagined communities' in the sense that face-to-face relations between members are circumscribed by finite boundaries of space and time, members do not know each other in their concrete existence, and yet, in each member, there exists an image of a larger communion.[25] These imagined communities are the precursors to the technologically mediated explosion and communicative avenues of what Appadurai calls 'imagined worlds' - "that is, the multiple worlds that are constituted by the

23 Appadurai 1996
24 Appadurai 1996: 4
25 Anderson 1983

historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the world."[26]

These large-scale diasporic movements affected by globalization and the deterritorialization of persons, images and ideas that it entails has not been considered an emancipatory or happy process. Rather, the system of globalization and the powers it unleashes have been regarded with deep anxiety and hostility from those quarters that charge it for its homogenizing and dehumanizing impact. Some of this anxiety stems from the encounter between localized and relatively stable tropes of community and more protean, trans-regional formations and imaginations. The large-scale mobility of populations (as tourists, refugees, migrant-workers, students and so on) and the transnational instabilities it renders to the nation-state, is also productive of what Appadurai calls 'virtual neighborhoods.'[27] The forces and forms of electronic mediation (television, cinema, video-production and computer-generative modes of communication) have begun to establish virtual neighborhoods that are no longer rooted and circumscribed by the face-to-face links, contiguity and dense social interactions of spatial neighborhoods.[28] They are dependent on the connectivity available through vast networks of computer hardware and software. These virtual neighborhoods harness new technology to create networks of interest and discourse in political projects that they are spatially displaced (but not ontologically dislocated) from. That is, issues, sentiments and developments of localized interest - Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka for instance - become areas of concern and mobilization in far-away places like Toronto and London. The diaspora of people has created this new electronically mediated form of 'delocalized political communications' and 'revitalized political commitments' amongt people otherwise estranged from their homelands.[29]

[26] Appadurai 1996:33
[27] Appadurai 1996:193
[28] Appadurai 1996: 195
[29] Appadurai 1996:196

On Dividing and Uniting: Ethnicity, Racism and Nationalism in Africa

Jibrin Ibrahim
Charmaine Pereira
Centre for Research and Documentation
Kano, Nigeria

Revised paper originally prepared for the International Development Information Network (IDIN), CLACSO, Buenos Aires.

Introduction

Imperialist forces that conquered, carved up and divided the continent among themselves played a major role in fabricating contemporary Africa in the 19th century. Different peoples, civilisations, political and religious orders etc. were haphazardly placed in the newly constituted colonies. The partition of Africa by European colonial powers was formalised at the Berlin Conference of 1884/5. Since then, the issues relating to the division and the unity of African societies became more complicated because the divisive tactics of imperialist forces were superimposed on the internal dynamics of unity and division of African societies. Colonialism also introduced and left the legacy of the nation-state as the 'normal' form of political community on the continent. At the same time, the colonial powers evolved divide-and-rule policies in their territories, aimed at justifying and facilitating their rule.

The nationalist movement provided the political framework for the constitution of contemporary African states. The movement to liberate Africa from colonialism built up after the Second World War, and, by 1965, most African countries had attained independence. In the immediate pre- and post-independence period, there was both a combination of nationalist euphoria, with the expectation that the African nation-state would be consolidated; and genuine fears that the evils of `tribalism` could develop into a permanent threat to the march towards a modern nation-state:

> The general paradigm of 'modernisation' then appealed to almost every political viewpoint. For almost every observer, nationalism seemed progressive and laudable, while ethnicity -- or, as it was usually termed, 'tribalism' -- was retrogressive and divisive. (Vail, 1989:2)

Most observers believed that the forces of modernisation -- western education, political parties, trade unions, communications, commerce, urbanisation etc. -- would wipe out ethnicity and build the nation-state.

In this paper, we examine the shifting conceptions of political community and the associated ideologies deployed in support of as well as in resistance to the forces of colonialism and imperialism in Africa. We explore the changing and contested boundaries between 'tribes', 'races', 'nations', and the ideologies used - ethnicity, racism and some variants of nationalism - to legitimate the construction of such collectivities for material ends. We point to the ways in which divisions evident in a given polity are a product of the history and geography of colonial rule and the balance of forces in play at the time. Our discussion highlights the ways in which authoritarian forces, colonial and postcolonial, in their desire to achieve as well as hold on to state power, have often mobilised rigid and divisive notions of group identity to serve their interests, with debilitating consequences for state and society. At the same time, ideologies of resistance, such as the varying forms of nationalism and Pan-Africanism, have at times ignored and/or concealed the existence of divisions within African

societies, in their bid to present a united front against the forces of colonialism and imperialism. In the postcolonial period, authoritarianism continues to bedevil Africa, and divisive collective identities are continuously mobilised. Be that as it may, communities continually construct and reconstruct themselves in ways that are linked to material conditions and needs. We conclude that there is a compelling need to promote more inclusive and less antagonistic forms of co-existence -- in short, more democratic relations -- within and between communities that constitute state and society in Africa.

(A) Ethnicity and Tribalism

The two notions of ethnicity and tribalism have been in competition as relevant concepts for the analysis of different levels of primordial solidarities, cultural identities and divisive inter-group politics in Africa. In general, 'If one disapproves of the phenomenon, "it" is "tribalism", if one is less judgmental, '"it" is "ethnicity"' (Vail, 1989:1). Forces with interest in the derogation and control of African societies, such as imperialist powers, the Western press, rightwing academia and the White Rhodesian and South African intelligentsia, pontificated on the innate `tribal` nature of African politics. The progressive intellectual establishment, on the other hand, castigated the racist bias of this approach. For example, Nnoli states:

> Tribalism provided the necessary myth. It created the image of pre-colonial African society as characterised by primitive savagery and primordial instincts. In such a state of backwardness it was part of the "White man's burden" for the coloniser to control the local apparatus of the state in order to propel the society into the modern world. (1989a)

The concept of 'tribe' was first used by the Romans to describe non-Roman peoples. It has a positivist usage pertaining to a description of societies at a low level of development, but its contemporary use has given it an acquired meaning that makes

it objectionable to most social scientists. In most cases, it is used only to refer to populations in the Third World who already suffer from racist stereotypes. It is not very useful because its use has departed from the original Roman meaning and is now used almost exclusively in reference to Third World countries (Okita, 1982:35).

Some francophone authors, however, still use it in its sociologically positivist evolutionary sense. Ghaliouh for example proposes an evolutionary rank order of tribe, ethnic group, people and nation, depending on relative levels of social development. He defines an ethnic group as a form of solidarity based essentially on kinship ties and cultural identity, including the notion of belonging to the same lineage or tribe. (Ghaliouh, 1992:6)

The lower orders of Ghaliouh's ranking are characterised by kinship and cultural forms of solidarity and the higher ones are based on legal-rational and universalist norms. A return par excellence to the suppositions of the modernisation school of the early 1960's. In another example, a study of 'Tribal Conflicts in Morocco', by Abdelghani ((192:25), the concept of 'tribe' is used to refer to largely autochthonous and socially underdeveloped Berber communities who have had to confront and often be absorbed by better organised Arabs. He formally defines tribe as a federation of cantons; cantons in turn are constituted by a group of fractions, and fractions are a combination of hamlets.

Colonial French anthropologists and ethnographers played a major role in popularising tribalism as the central principle in African social and political life. Contemporary French social scientists, conscious of that tradition, have tended to shy away from the discussion of ethnicity.[1] When they talk about it, it is often to castigate ignorant and racist journalists and politicians

[1] We are aware of only two major works on ethnicity in Africa in pre-1990 French academic writing - Chretien, J-P & Prunier G. (eds) *Les Ethnies ont une histoire*, Karthala, Paris, 1989 and Amselle, J.L. & M'bokolo, E. *Au Coeur de l'ethnie*, La Decouvert, Paris, 1985.

for fanning the 'tribal explanation of African politics' (see Denis Martin, 1986:107). The major French Africanist journal, *Politique Africaine*, established in 1981 did not treat the ethnic theme in its first two decades of existence. The journal however organised a conference in Bordeaux in November 1992 on <State, Nation and Ethnicity> after events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had re-imposed ethnicity as a 'serious' contemporary problem that needed academic attention.

There is a new pro-tribalist and neo-racist school developing in France. Its protagonists, Jean Copans and Michel Cahen (1992) argue that ethnicity must be re-conceptualised as a potentially positive, subversive and democratic political factor in Africa in a new scientific approach that puts aside ethical considerations of whether it is good or bad.

They argue that a whole generation of researchers have accepted the equation 'tribalism = reactionary,' thereby pushing the phenomenon of popular identities into the hands of the reactionaries and manipulators they think they are attacking. They are therefore incapable of harnessing 'the potentially liberating power of tribalism'. In an earlier article, Michel Cahen (1991:101) traces the genesis of the crises of the African state to the 'national project' of Africanist Marxists and the African elite. He laments that rather than trying to build legitimate states, they tried to build nation-states in a context in which nations could not be constructed. They proffer no arguments to justify the impossibility of nation-building except repeating the original line of colonial anthropology -- that Africans cannot go beyond the tribal dimension of politics and should therefore accept it as a natural framework. Racist anthropology went no further.

An anglophone author, Misipula Sithole (1992) has also justified the use of the notion of tribe on the grounds that it has already acquired common usage and it describes a real sociological phenomenon in Africa that we must come to terms with:

> My overall purpose in this contribution is to legitimise ethnicity. The suggestion is that if ethnicity is legitimised then it can be diffused, controlled and managed better than approaching it as if it were an illegitimate social phenomenon. I have given up the idea that ethnicity can be eliminated altogether, in Africa or anywhere else. As long as politics is about power, advantage and disadvantage, ethnicity will be one of the resources political gladiators utilise to gain it. (1992:1)

Sithole's views, which are more reasoned, suggest therefore that we should consider ethnicity and tribalism as normal social phenomena that occur in all societies.

(i) Conceptualisation and Periodisation

There are two main schools in the literature on ethnic groups. The first school stresses the existence of cultural factors. Ethnic groups have for example been defined as

> social formations distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries. The relevant communal factor may be language, culture or both (Nnoli, 1989a:9).

He adds that within each ethnic group, there are minor linguistic and cultural differences. Some scholars however disagree that ethnic groups exist as cultural entities. Cynthia Mahmoud for instance proposes that cognition rather than cultural traits are the major elements to look for:

> Ethnicity had the advantage of depending more on in-and-out-group identification than on lists of traits or features, and was therefore appealing in a world in which clusters of traits did not seem to be distributed as discretely or as permanently as was thought. (1992:6)

Her study of the Frisian ethnic group in the Netherlands shows that despite the absence of shared common cultural traits, the Frisian ethnic identity persists. The reality of most ethnic groups is that they define themselves and are defined by third parties on the basis of certain common cultural traits they possess and a minimum level of in-and-out-group cognition that has emerged. Since cognition plays an important role in 'determining' the existence of ethnic groups, it follows that ethnic groups could emerge or disappear as popular cognition and social constructions change. An excellent example is the study by Salamone (1976) on the disappearance of the Gungawa ethnic group of the Yauri area in northern Nigeria. In the 1970s, this group ceased to exist as an identifiable ethnic group after they were displaced in 1968 as a result of the construction of the Kainji dam. The displaced group changed their religion from the traditional African one to Islam, learnt the Hausa language, changed their traditional means of livelihood, abandoned some of their cultural practices and started identifying themselves and being identified as members of the Hausa ethnic group.

The dynamic nature of ethnic identification makes it difficult to discern the number of ethnic groups in large pluralist countries. Both self- and third-party ethnic identification change over time. The study by Otite (1990:35) on Nigeria shows that the number of ethnic groups estimated by different researchers varies between 62 and 619. His own estimate, which is one of the most recent, puts the number at 374 ethnic groups (1990:40-57). He concludes:

> There is no fixed number of ethnic groups in Nigeria. Ethnicity and ethnic processes produce two main consequences, that is, the absorption and/or extinction of some ethnic groups, on the one hand, and the more common phenomenon of ethnic proliferation on the other hand. (1990:58)

He gives an interesting example of four ethnic groups in the states of Cross Rivers and Akwa Ibom that have multiplied into thirty-six distinct ethnic groups today.

Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch (1983) suggests that it is useful to approach the definition of ethnicity and tribalism from a historical perspective, using a three-tier periodisation: precolonial, colonial and postcolonial. She argues that in the precolonial period, there was a close correspondence between political, lineage and social structures in Africa. Ethnic groups existed because social organisation corresponded to a certain level of forces of production, regrouping a series of family units in a historically situated cultural system. The combination of a common patrimony and the sentiment of interdependence justifies the use of the notion of ethnic nationalism because ethnic structures play their role of assuring a relative equilibrium between the socio-political system, the organisation of production and exchange and the ideological and cultural model of the society.

In the colonial period, especially in the inter-war years, ethnic politics evolved as a form of cultural affirmation in resistance to colonial acculturation. Colonialism, however, took it over and succeeded in promoting it as an instrument of conservative politics placed in the hands of chiefs that they had propped up. Coquery-Vidrovitch argues that 'tribalism' is a relatively recent phenomenon invented in postcolonial Africa through the manipulation of ethnic sentiments that had already been reinforced by colonialism. 'Tribalism' is built into the patronage system of the postcolonial state and becomes rooted both in the state apparatus and in the masses. From that moment, it becomes part of the sociological reality of the continent.

(ii) Precolonial Period

Even in the precolonial period, ethnic boundaries are often difficult to decipher. Ethnic identities are amorphous, and they are constantly re-worked and transformed by historical processes

of migration, conquest and trade. This results in assimilation and integration or differentiation of hitherto homogeneous groups. There is an interesting example from Niger. The most politically visible ethnic distinction in that country is that between the Zarma in the West and the Hausa in the East. Although they speak different languages and they have followed fairly distinct historical trajectories, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them. The study by Mahamane Karimou of what he calls the 'Mawri Zarmaphones' is a salient example. The group in question calls itself Arawa (singular: Ba'are) and most of them speak the Hausa language. They are, however, called Mawri by the Zarma, in reference to the two parallel ethnic marks they carry from ear to mouth. Karimou's study of their oral traditions shows that they believe that they descended from the Kanuri, another 'distinct' ethnic group. His study, however, focuses on the part of the Arawa community that migrated West and settled among the Zarma:

> During the second half of the 19th century, the Arawa that settled in the three regions we have described abandoned the Hausa language for Zarma as well as the identification Arawa for Mawri. (1977:173)

The impetus for their change of identity was material: they sought protection from attacks by Tuareg and Zarma groups through integration into their neighbouring communities. They however maintained their Arawa institutions and traditions. A subgroup within them, the Zarmaphone Mawri, also call and consider themselves Mauri, while the Hausaphone Arawa, both in Niger and Nigeria, increasingly consider themselves to be a part of the Hausa people. Ethnic identities are indeed complex phenomena.

(iii) Colonial Period

One of the leading African experts on ethnic politics, Nnoli (1989a) argues convincingly that tribalism was formulated as part of the colonial project. The portrayal of Africans as barbaric and primitive was carried out so as to draw a link between backward African culture and the white man's burden of the colonial order. Social or linguistic groups were categorised as `tribes` and the differences between them were over-emphasised. A good example of this process is that of the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi.

Indeed, the conflicts between the Hutus and the Tutsis in Burundi and Rwanda have become some of the most notorious examples of 'inter-tribal' politics in Africa. Massacres have been recurring in a repetitive manner: 1969, 1972, 1988 and since 1990. In 1994, there was a genocidal attempt to wipe out the Tutsi in Rwanda in which at least half a million people (mostly Tutsi) were killed and two million (mainly Hutu) forced into exile, in a country of eight million people. Power had been in the hands of the majority Hutu since the independence of Rwanda, when a significant Tutsi population was displaced from exile and forced into exile. A single-party military autocracy developed under the Habyarimana regime which completely lost its legitimacy even among the Hutu majority. In 1994, following the assassination of Habyarimana, the massacre of the Tutsi population started, and it was only halted when Tutsi exiles from Uganda invaded the country and took over power. They in turn, have been involved in revenge massacre of the Hutu. In Burundi, the Tutsi-dominated military regime of Pierre Buyoya agreed to multi-party elections in 1992, in which he lost. The Hutu-dominated regime of Melchior Ndadaye took over power. In 1993, however, Tutsi officers who dominate the army assassinated Ndadaye and other Hutu leaders, and since then, the cycle of massacres has gradually developed into civil war. Major Buyoya came back to power through a coup d'etat in 1996. The two groups, Hutu and Tutsi, cannot however be distinguished on cultural or linguistic grounds:

> In Burundi tradition, the society is composed of four elements (amoko), the Ganwa, Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. For a long time, and especially since the establishment of the monarchy in the end of the 17th century, they share the same language (Kirundi), the same culture, adore the same God (Imana), obey the same King (Nwami), and occupy the same geographical space. (Putake & Gahama, 1992:2)

Much of the ethnic differences that exist in Burundi and Rwanda were created by colonial historiography and policy. They categorised the Tutsi as hamitic pastoralists who came from the north and were endowed with intelligence and leadership qualities. The Hutu were described as Bantu cultivators who were timid, gay and lazy and had to be ruled by the superior Tutsi. The Twa were dismissed as autochthonous people of Pygmy stock. According to Putake and Gahama (1992:11), in 1929, 20% of the paramount chiefs in Burundi were Hutus, but by 1945, all Hutus had been removed from chieftaincy positions and replaced by Tutsis, thus entrenching a serious divide between the two groups.

Much of the popular perceptions of ethnic categories in Africa are quite recent, and colonial in their origins. In Nigeria for example, most historians are of the view that the history of contemporary ethnic groups does not go beyond the colonial period. In the North for example, the process of state formation which took place between the 15th and 19th centuries did not follow ethnic and cultural lines.

> Racial and linguistic factors played no significant roles. For example in Hausaland - the land where the Hausa language and customs prevailed - there did not develop a single mighty Hausa nation. Instead, several separate independent and largely mononational State systems developed. (Mahadi and Mangvat, 1986:7)

> Movements for protecting or identifying Igbo, Ibibio and Ijo groups came into being along with unions or associations of members of village groups resident in the new colonial cities of Port Harcourt, Enugu, Calabar and outside the region in Lagos, Kano etc. ... Movements such as those leading to the creation of "Biafra" cannot be traced to a pre-colonial development. (Alagoa, 1986:12-13)

Falola makes the same point with respect to the Yorubas in Western Nigeria:

(a) States which operated within the Yoruba-speaking region constituted socio-political units which were sovereign;

(b) The Yoruba-speaking people did not constitute a single, socio-political unit during the long pre-colonial era;

(c) The consciousness of and manipulation of a pan-Yoruba identity began in the 19th century and was intensified in the 20th century.

(d) This process of intensification can be attributed to British policies and the politicisation of ethnicity since independence. (Falola, 1986:25-26)

African ethnic identities therefore have to be considered and analysed in the context of contemporary economic and socio-political changes rather than the oft-repeated issue of cultural differences.

The study by Abdelghani (1992) on Morocco focuses on the process colonialism used to try to fabricate tribal conflict between Berbers and Arabs and argues that they did not achieve their objective. He questions the attempt by colonial anthropology and historiography to read 'tribal dissidence' in the attempts by Berber communities to maintain a level of autonomy from the

Moroccan monarchy, and shows that Berbers never had a political project of seceding from the state. The French however had a 'tribal political project'. On the one hand, they tried to create dissensions between Arabs and Berbers as a divide-and-rule strategy, and, on the other hand, set up a highly centralised administrative structure which effectively eroded Berber tribal solidarities so as to destroy all resistance to colonial penetration. In so doing, they tried to reverse the process of arabisation of Berbers, while at the same time, they attempted to firmly integrate the Berbers into the Moroccan state. He quotes a colonial jurist with a clear idea of his mission:

> It will be dangerous to allow a compact bloc of indigenes who have a common language and institutions to form. We have to use the formula <divide and rule>. The existence of Berber elements is a useful counterweight to use against Arab elements. (Abdelghani, 1992:46)

This divisive politics of French colonialism, however, backfired. The French tried to portray Islamisation and Arabisation of the Berbers as superficial and made efforts to 'de-Islamise' them. Christian missionaries were sent into Berber areas in the 1930s and they established Franco-Berber schools to replace Qu'ranic schools. The colonial authorities also set up a separate judicial system for the Berbers. The result was that the Berbers were forced to identify more closely with fellow Arab Muslims to counteract the politics of Christianisation. Rather than widening the divide between Arabs and Berbers, colonial policy ended up uniting the two groups because Islam was strengthened as an ideology of resistance.

The Niger example is also interesting. We find an ethnically heterogeneous country where the Hausa, who compose about 50% of the population, are the numerical majority and the Zarma/ Songhai, who compose about 20%, control political power. One

of the specificities of the French colonisation of Niger was that, from the very beginning, the French seemed to have a preferred choice among the various ethnic groups:

> The French decided to turn their backs on the East and the North to some extent, and to focus their attention on the West and on the Zerma/Songhay, whom the French probably considered more malleable than the traditionalist Hausa ... The Hausa were also suspect in the eyes of the French because of their Northern Nigerian, i.e. British, "connection". This shift of emphasis is in a way symbolised by the transfer of the capital from Zinder to Niamey in 1927. (Fuglestad, 1983: 125)

The result of this choice was that most educational facilities and development projects established during the colonial era were located in the Zarma/Songhai zone in the far western part of the country. It was thus not surprising that the vast majority of the educated elite that established political parties in the 1946-1960 era were of the Zarma/Songhai ethnic stock, and the same category remained in power until the National Conference in 1991. Even in the army, the Zarma/Songhai had at least 70% of the officer corps. This ethnic control had repercussions in terms of the distribution of national resources. The survey carried out by Adji in 1990 revealed that 62.7% of development projects were in Zarma/Songhai areas and only 22.7% in Hausa areas (Adji, 1991:296), thereby creating a feeling of deprivation among other groups. The result was a gradual build-up of ethnic tension in the country.

In the Tanzanian case, Mpangola (1992:57) argues that during the pre-colonial era, ethnicity and inter-ethnic relations were amorphous and were characterised by continuous tendencies of assimilation and integration. The situation changed under the conditions of colonial economic activity:

> The expansion of peasant production facilitated the development of ethnicity. As was the case under

> German rule, specialisation in various aspects of production on the basis of ethnic groups continued to raise ethnic consciousness. A good example can be taken, that of the Sangea District in 1926 and 1930... Coffee production became a speciality of the Matongo ethnic group, tobacco became a speciality of the Ndendeule ethnic group while the Ngoni 'proper' mainly continued to produce migrant labour. Consequently, both the Matonge and Ndendeule ethnic groups began to grow special ethnic consciousness of identity although prior to that, they appeared to have been incorporated within the Ngoni ethnic group (1992:39)

Under colonialism, therefore, stronger and more rigid ethnic identities evolved and antagonistic ethnic relations became possible.

The evidence is clear that most of the current forms of ethnicity in Africa have their origins in colonial policy. In the words of Vail, postcolonial Africa has inherited a colonial legacy of the invention of tribalism. Sithole, however, challenges this dominant view with the argument that even if tribalism was invented, the reality is that all inventions are real.

> Assume for a moment that the missionaries, migrants, or the colonialists had not invented or created the Shona, the Ndebele, the Karanga, the Zezuru, the Manyika, and 'the rest of them'; what will we have in their place? Perhaps a homogenous, non-tribalised and non-clanish mass of people living side by side without conflict. (1992:3)

He correctly warns, therefore, against the romantic view that reduces ethnicity to a colonial artefact and overlooks the causes of ethnic mobilisation in African societies themselves. In the same vein, A. R. Mustapha argues that in the Nigerian case:

> While the colonial situation gave rise to contradictory tendencies of integration and segmentation, the post-colonial situation has been much more dis-integrative in terms of the evolution of identities. (1992:22)

His study of integration in Rogo, a village in Northern Nigeria, reveals that there is a long historical tradition of receiving and integrating outsiders into the community, but that this system assumes a certain cultural and religious commonality. Thus Fulani, Beriberi and Wangarawa immigrants, who are from the same cultural and religious zones, are easily integrated through the provision of food, land and seed as well as intermarriage, while Igbo, Yoruba and other Southern Christians cannot buy land or intermarry within the community. In addition, the legal system does not confer rights to people on the basis of residence, so indigeneity remains the defining principle, thereby excluding people who exhibit visible ethnic differences from integration.

(iv) Postcolonial Period

Postcolonial Africa has been characterised by the authoritarian exclusion of large segments of society from participation in the political process. According to Nelson Kasfir (1976:227), departicipation is the most striking feature of political change since independence. The political arena shrank as African states actively promoted departicipation by 'strengthening the central administration' and assuring the 'desuetude of participatory structures'. The process of democratisation that accompanied independence was, therefore, halted and reversed. At the structural level, the development of authoritarianism was rooted in a process Anyong Nyong'o (1988:72) characterised as the `disintegration of the national coalitions that brought African countries to independence`. Sociologically, this process involved the incorporation of 'kith and kin' into ruling oligarchies and the exclusion of other groups from enjoying the prerogatives of power. This generated problems of ethnicity, clanism, regionalism,

religious bigotry, etc. Elaborate programmes of successive political exclusion (Ibrahim, 1993) were implemented, and the vast majority of Africans lost their individual and collective rights to full participation in the political, civil, and economic lives of their countries. African political systems became increasingly characterised by the narrowing of the social and national base of the 'President's men' and an expansion of the groups and segments of society that were excluded from the political process or significantly marginalised. The most affected groups have been women, the youth, ethnic and religious minorities (which could include marginalised ethnic and religious numerical majorities), and lumpen elements, products of ever deepening economic and ecological crises.

Postcolonial Africa has suffered greatly from ethnically motivated violence. In the civil wars of Nigeria, Liberia, Sudan, Congo Brazzaville, Congo Kinshasa, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola and Mozambique, in Marcias Nguema's Equatorial Guinea, Amin's Uganda, Bokassa's Central African Republic and so on, millions of people have been killed in the most atrocious manner. The corporate existence of numerous African countries has been threatened over ethnic conflicts, and the survival of much of the continent is in jeopardy. Ethnicity has proved itself to be a devastating and destructive force sweeping across the continent. In multi-ethnic states, ethnic communities have significant potential for the political mobilisation of their members. When this potential is realised, the stability of the state could be threatened. There is a strong link between the democratic or authoritarian nature of regimes and the capacity of [illegible] of society to increase their political participation through ethnic mobilisation:

> In a democratic multinational state, stability is usually maintained by means of political bargaining and compromise between ethnic subgroups, whereas in authoritarian systems it is maintained principally through the elimination of subsystem political mobilisation by

> coercion and by the regime's appeals to supraethnic issues and policies. (Prazauskas, 1991:581-2)

One-party rule has been a major impetus for the promotion of ethnicity. Agyemen's (1992:2-4) study of Ghana shows that ethnic conflicts in national politics began in opposition to the domination of Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP). The Ashanti and Brong Ahafo, who constituted an ethnic group, felt that the CPP was against them and therefore started ethnic mobilisation of their members to protect themselves from perceived threats. He argues that the threat was difficult to ascertain on the empirical level but, since it existed in the perception of the actors, it developed into a strong ethnic dimension in Ghanaian politics.

In Niger, as we have said, the country lived through a series of long, severely repressive regimes that made it very difficult for ethnic perceptions of differences to manifest themselves politically. The transition from authoritarian to more democratic systems provokes the decomposition and/or dis-articulation of the coercive apparatus of the state and opens the possibility for ethnic mobilisation and even conflagration. Niger has a problem of ethnicity because an association has been made in the public mind between the Zarma/Songhai ethnic group and the monopoly of political power, on the one hand, and, on the other, the Hausa ethnic group and the control of commerce. The problem deepened after independence because the group that came to power developed a highly authoritarian system that excluded all other groups from joining the power elite. Since the National Conference, the Hausa elite have taken over power and there are fears that they will become too powerful and impose their will on the rest of the population.

It has been suggested that we should be more realistic about the sociology of power when we attack the elite for fanning ethnic sentiments.

> Certainly the elite should be expected to be the ones who invoke tribal ideology and whatever other ideology for that matter (including class ideology), because it is leaders principally who are engaged in and who precipitate politics or power struggles. As such, they, and not the masses, must staff the forefront of tribalism. (Sithole, 1992:43)

It should not be assumed, however, that the masses have no stake in ethnic politics. They often make calculations similar to those of their leaders, as has been put succinctly in the Somalian case:

> Generally, no clan wants a disproportionate share of domestics and unemployed members while others monopolise the business, civil service and professional sectors of society. (Adam, 1992:14)

There are, therefore, general problems of equity and social justice posed in such societies which often go beyond the issue of narrow elite manipulation and interests.

(B) Race and Racism

Defining `race` is not a straightforward matter. Gilroy (1987) points out that the meaning of `race` is embedded in the specific form of racism manifested in a given society at a particular historical time. Physical anthropologists used to speak of human `races` in the sense of subspecies, the most common scheme being the great tripartite division of humankind into Negroid, Mongoloid and Caucasoid. Over the last forty to fifty years, however, it has become increasingly clear that no meaningful taxonomy of human races was possible. Not only were numerous

groups not classifiable as belonging to any of the three main groups, but physical anthropologists could not agree with each other over where the boundaries between human groups were to be drawn, or even on how many such groups there were.

The literature on `race` and on societies stratified by `race`, is immense and varied. Hall (1980) divides the varied tendencies represented within this literature into two broad types: the `economic` and the `sociological`. Biological conceptions of `race` have largely diminished in importance, though they have not completely disappeared. The `economic` tendency is characterised as such because economic relations and structures are viewed as having the determining effect on the social structures of a society. In other words, social divisions which assume a distinctly racial character are attributed or explained primarily in terms of economic structures and processes. The tendency here is to lean towards economic reductionism. Hall's `sociological` tendency puts the stress on `race` as a specifically social or cultural feature of the society concerned. Analysts in this tendency agree on the autonomy and non-reductiveness of `race` as a social feature. Social formations are viewed as complex ensembles, made up of several different structures, none of which is reducible to the other.

Hall's `economic` and `sociological` tendencies have each generated a great variety of different studies and approaches. In many ways, they have come to be understood as opposed to one another. As often happens with such theoretical oppositions, they can also be understood as inverted mirror images of one another. Each emphasises the weakness of the opposing paradigm by stressing the apparently `neglected element`. In doing so, each points to real conceptual weaknesses and indicates important points of departure for more adequate theorising. The difficulty lies primarily in trying to reconcile the study of structures with the study of meaning and action. There is as yet no adequate theory of racism which is capable of dealing with both the economic and superstructural features of such societies, while at the same time giving a historically concrete and sociologically

specific account of distinctive racial aspects. The debate is not exclusively a theoretical one. Differences of theoretical analysis and approach have real effects for the ensuing strategies of political transformation in such societies. As Hall puts it:

> The question is not whether men-in-general (sic) make perceptual distinctions between groups with different racial or ethnic characteristics, but rather, what are the specific conditions which make this form of distinction socially pertinent, historically active. What gives this abstract human potentiality its effectivity, as a concrete material force? ... One must start then from the concrete historical `work` which racism accomplishes under specific historical conditions -- as a set of economic, political and ideological practices, of a distinctive kind, concretely articulated with other practices in a social formation. (Hall, 1980:338)

(i) Colour Lines in Africa

There is a major colour line that cuts across Africa and separates the Black from the Arab population. In spite of the efforts of Pan-Africanist Arab leaders such as Nasser, many Arabs are reluctant to consider themselves as Africans. Although the line between Arabs and Blacks is blurred in many places, it exists. Over the past millennium, there has always been contact between the two groups. One contact route is by sea, from the Arabian Peninsula to the East African Coast. The other is across the Sahara Desert to the Western and Central Sudan. The major activity that brought the two together was trade, both general trade and the slave trade. The Arabs were also the harbingers of Islam to the Blacks. Following from the nature of the contact between the two groups, the Arabs have leaned towards a feeling of superiority over Blacks, whom they have tended to regard as their slaves and as populations whose level of spirituality they have raised through Islamisation. The tendency is to be

paternalistic, as shown by the former president of Algeria, Chadli, who once declared, 'In all honesty, we the Arabs have a great responsibility towards Africa' (Blin, 1988:31). It is therefore too easy to raise the often repeated bogy that differences are due to imperialism, as Ben Bella tried to do in a speech in Ghana in 1963: 'It was imperialists that tried to create differences between White and Black Africans' (Blin, 1988:30). The differences have deeper historical roots. The study by Blin (1988, 25-30) on the 'Black' population in Algeria, who constitute about five percent of the population, shows that despite strong anti-racist laws, the Blacks are generally considered to be slaves and foreigners although they are all free born, Algerian and in fact, culturally Arabs. Black Algerians also have problems finding marriage partners from lighter coloured Arabs.

Mauritania represents the borderline between Arab and Black Africa and it reflects some of the complexities of the colour lines internal to the continent. There is a shock of cultural and civilisational difference between nomadic Arabo-Berber populations and sedentary Negro-Africans (Marchesin, 1992). There are multiple conflicts -- Black slaves and ex-slaves against Arabo-Berber masters; Berbers against Arab assimilation, and nomads and sedentary cultivators fighting over access to land and water. Most of the conflicts are currently being resolved against the interests of the Black communities. It has been argued, for example, that under the First Republic of Moktar ould Daddah, Blacks, who are a majority of the population, had only one quarter of top jobs. This proportion had declined to one eighth by 1991 (Ba, 1991). Although population censuses were carried out in 1977 and 1988, the state has refused to release figures on the relative strength of the two groups so as not to accede to Black demands for improved representation. In 1989, a major conflict arose between the two groups and there was mass killing of members of the Black community (Parker, 1991). The conflict of civilisation between nomadic populations and sedentary ones is reflected also in other parts of the Sahel and Sahara. In Niger, two nomadic groups, the Toubou and the

Tuaregs, have for long been accused of terrorising and raiding their neighbours for camels and cattle. There is a racial dimension to the problem, linked to the history of the region. The Toubou and the Tuareg are warrior groups that have raided their more dark-skinned and sedentary neighbours for slaves and booty through the ages. They have destroyed states and political communities and left deep scars of resentment among many peoples. They were the 'resident' terrorists of the Sahel and the Sahara until they were 'pacified' by French colonialism. At independence, the temptation for 'revenge', conscious or not, by the new ruling class was quite strong. The major issue, however, has been the refusal of these two groups to be subjected to the authority of the state, and the inability of managers of the state to accept that the Toubou and the Tuareg have nothing against the state, and that they are simply asserting their cultural commitment to autonomy.

Another major colour line in Africa separates Whites from Blacks; between Black and White are the people of mixed race, products of inter-racial relationships. Countries with sizeable 'coloured' communities such as South Africa, Angola and Mozambique are countries in which racism has been a major element in socio-economic and political life. In racist ideology, so-called 'half-castes' are looked down upon and not fully accepted by the two communities from which they have originated. In South Africa, for example, they were considered to be products of sin. The Afrikaans word for 'Coloured', *Kleurling,* has a pejorative connotation. The emergence of a sizeable so-called Coloured community in the South African Cape area was a real problem for apartheid, as it was a flagrant and visible contradiction of the notion of purity inherent in their racial ideology. White South Africa, therefore, kept the `Coloured` community at bay; the 'Coloured' community itself has been ambivalent in its own consciousness of its identity. Initially, with the discovery of minerals and the increased exploitation of and cruelty towards Blacks, Coloureds tried to show that they were different from the Blacks. They used the 'White Blood' argument

to place themselves on a higher level. Those among them who could pass for White tried to do so. In more recent times, many 'Coloureds' have chosen the colour Brown, *Bruinmense*, to assert their own identity. They have also started identifying themselves more with the Black community, especially since the 1970s when the Black Consciousness movement succeeded in instilling pride and self-esteem in non-White communities (Unterhalter, 1975; Watson, 1970; Western, 1981). South Africa is a good example of the similarities between ethnic and racial tensions between 'invented' groups. The politics of the Black Inkatha Freedom Party, established in 1975, and the Afrikaner Weerstands Beweging, a White neo-fascist party established in 1974, are very similar. The mainly White South African intellectual community, however, assumes that the new forms of ethnicity apply only to the Black community at a time in which Whites too are being forced into narrow forms of ethnic identification (Faure, 1992:7).

(ii) Apartheid and Afrikaner nationalism

The two fundamental features of apartheid, the strict geographical and social segregation of Whites from non-Whites and the rigid pattern of inequality in which the vast majority of Blacks are excluded from positions of power and wealth, are grounded in the Afrikaner belief in White racial purity and *baasscap*, or White supremacy. Unity among Afrikaners is also premised on these beliefs and on a divisive understanding of the 'nation'. In this section, we examine some of the main structures and practices of apartheid, as well as the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism in which these structures and practices are embedded. The debate on the structure of political conflict in South Africa during the apartheid era revolves primarily around the question of whether it is a manifestation of 'class conflict' (e.g. Johnstone, 1976; Molteno, 1977; Legassick and Innes, 1977 and O'Meara, 1983) or 'race conflict' (e.g. Welsh, 1978; Slabbert et al., 1979). The theoretical debate is reviewed by Adam (1971), Adam and

Giliomee (1979), Hugo (1975) and Schlemmer (1977). Academic interpretations of the policy of apartheid also vary. Some argue, incredibly, that apartheid represents a system of social control which provides for efficient conflict-resolution within a deeply divided society and a framework for achieving the twin goals of development -- nation-building and socio-economic progress (e.g. Vosloo, 1976). Some of the classic arguments for and against apartheid are presented by Lever (1978); Randall (1973) and Thompson and Prior (1983).

`Race` has been central to the conception of nation in Afrikaner nationalism. The concept of nation has, at times, been totally exclusive to White people. Thus, in 1972 a National Party Minister, Connie Mulder, could declare, `Soon there will be no Black South Africans` (Gaitskell and Unterhalter, 1989:58). He anticipated apartheid refined to such a point that 85 per cent of the population would be excluded from South African nationality on account of their `race`. It was in 1948 that the Afrikaner National Party first came to power, forming the first wholly Afrikaner nationalist government and remaining the ruling party since. Verwoerd's mission was to reinvent South Africa as a constellation of separate independent African `nations`, scattered around the central white `nation`. Each `nation` would have its own distinct culture and language, each its own set of traditions and customs, and each `nation` would be assigned a separate territory and political system. Such a move conferred on the Bantustans the status of `proto-nations` at the same time as it falsely termed `nation` building, what was in fact the division of the land.

Social division has also been passed off as pluralism. In 1981, Prime Minister Botha claimed triumphantly, `The acceptance of multinationalism (sic), the recognition of minorities, the existence of various cultures, ideas and traditions is not an ideology, it is a reality. We did not create it, we experience it` (McClintock, 1991:111). The borders of the Bantustans and the tortuous categories that used to pass for racial classification tell another story. The Bantustan borders are drawn clumsily over immense

social variation. Contradictions abound. The Xhosas, for example, are supposedly one nation but are allocated to two distinct 'nation states,' the Ciskei and the Transkei. According to the Promotion of Black Self-government Act (46 of 1959): 'the Black peoples of the Union of South Africa do not constitute a homogeneous people, but form separate national units on the basis of language and culture.'

The Population Registration Act (No. 30 of 1950) was one of the linchpins of apartheid. This compelled the South African population to be categorised in terms of racial and ethnic `group membership` of three `population groups`: `whites`, `blacks` and `coloureds`. According to the Act, a `white person` is one who:

> [first,] in appearance obviously is a white person and who is not generally accepted as a coloured person; or [second], is generally accepted as a white person and is not in appearance obviously not a white person.

A 'black' is any person who 'is, or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa'. And a 'coloured person' is any person 'who is not a white person or a "black."' The `coloured` population was subdivided into seven categories: the Cape Coloured, the Malay, the Griqua, Chinese and Indian subgroups and two residual subgroups, the `other Asiatic group` and the `other coloured group`. The subgroups were distinguished from one another on the grounds of classification of the natural father, referred to as descent, and/or social acceptance, being people who `are generally accepted as members` of that particular subgroup (South Africa, Republic of, 1967).

Much social science literature has concerned itself with the accuracy or otherwise of the categories used in population registration. It has been pointed out that the `racial groups` identified by the Act are not those accepted by scientists (Lever, 1978) but rather `socially supposed races` (van der Ross, 1979). Du Toit and Theron (1988) point out that the social nature of the population categories is highlighted by the acknowledgement

of social acceptance as a qualifying factor. In addition, a person's habits, education, speech and behaviour are taken into consideration. These are characteristics that can be acquired and are not transferred through birth. Finally, it is assumed that officials implementing the provisions of the Act have an idea of what a White, `Coloured` or Black person is, or is supposed to be. The dilemma of arbitrary standards and differing criteria of social acceptance is illustrated by the number of reclassifications over the years. As an example, from July 1981 to June 1982 a total of 997 persons were reclassified. The majority of these (772) were members of the `Cape Coloured` subcategory, who were reclassified as `White` (du Toit and Theron, ibid).

The debate acquired a new dimension in 1983 when a revamped constitution for South Africa was enacted by Parliament. This made provision for a new tricameral Parliament with separate chambers for elected representatives of the White population category; the Indian sub-category within the Coloured population category; and all the other sub-categories of the Coloured population category. Members of the Black population were excluded from parliamentary representation, continuing to be politically accommodated in territorially based political sub-systems called `national states`. Inconsistency was the order of the day when it came to translating population categories into electorates. All the three population categories were characterised by internal divisions of language, religion and custom, yet such divisions were held to apply to Blacks but not to Whites. The even more culturally heterogeneous `Coloured` population category was arbitrarily divided into two politically relevant units -- the Indian sub-category on the one hand, and all the other sub-categories lumped together, on the other. The Black population category was viewed as consisting of ten different ethnic groups and, correspondingly, ten separate nations. This kind of logic enabled Breytenbach (1971) to entitle an article, `The Multi-National Population Structure of South Africa`, when he was in fact only describing the multitude of ethnic criteria in South African society.

Counterpoised to this is the legend of a homogeneous and monolithic `Afrikaner volk`, whose Afrikanerdom emanates timelessly from the depths of history. But this is not the case. The major themes of Afrikaner nationalism -- racial distinction and cultural brotherhood, divine sanction and manifest destiny, patriarchal power, entitlement to the lands and a single, unifying language -- are invented traditions (McClintock, 1991). Afrikaner nationalism itself was forged only recently, in the heat of colonial conflict when the struggle with the British for control over African land and labour exploded in the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902. Afrikaner nationalism was a doctrine of crisis created in the aftermath of this war. After their defeat by the British, the scattered Boer communities had to forge a new counter-culture if they were to survive in the emergent capitalist state. The invention of this counter-culture had a clear class dimension. `Poor Whites` -- clerks and shopkeepers, small farmers and teachers, intellectuals and petits bourgeoisie -- who were all precarious in the new state, began to identify themselves as the vanguard of the national 'volk'.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, women played a crucial role in the construction of a distinctive Afrikaner culture. The family was held to be the last bastion beyond British control, and it was the cultural power of Afrikaner motherhood that was mobilised in the service of white nation-building. The home was focused on as women's appropriate arena for fostering national identity through their child-rearing and domestic responsibilities. Creating and defending the Afrikaner home continued to be the Afrikaner woman's prime service to the volk into the 1960s. Only in that decade was there a marked shift to a more inclusive conception of the white nation, a consequence of the fact that an Afrikaner capitalist class had come into being. The home was therefore no longer in the forefront of ethnic struggle. Instead of being a key base from which to reconstruct the Afrikaner nation, it became a focus for the display of the new-found prosperity that ethnic mobilisation had made possible (Hofmeyr, 1987).

The broadening of nationalist support among the white population at large from the mid-1960s was accompanied by a new sharp division within Afrikanerdom from the late 1960s. This was the first serious fracturing of their ethnic unity in two decades and the split deepened further in the early 1980s. Much of the bitter in-fighting has been implicitly about the blurring of the boundaries of the nation: first to accommodate English speakers within a wider white nation, and more recently, even appearing to expand the white nation to effect the alignment of two marginally positioned groups, the `Coloureds` and the Indians. Afrikaner mothers have been mobilised in this in-fighting in at least two ways. The first way has been to help defend the nation against `total onslaught` portrayed as coming simultaneously from beyond its borders and from within the local black population. Secondly, Afrikaner mothers have been mobilised to try and establish contact with co-optable members of other racial groups. The emphasis has been on the common experience of motherhood across race divides, apparently attempting to pre-empt the ANC's efforts in this direction (Gaitskell and Unterhalter, 1989).

The literature on the struggle against apartheid is immense. The heightened mass struggle since 1976 resulted in concerted challenges on a number of fronts -- by trade unions (Machlalela, 1985; Lewis and Randall, 1986; Webster, 1987), churches (Mdlalose, 1986), black students (Dube, 1985) and a number of other less publicised forms of resistance. The battle of ideas in South Africa has been particularly sharp. Nyawuza (1985) discusses the programme of the South African Communist Party which advances the thesis of `Colonialism of a Special Type` and the two-stage revolution, from national to class struggle. This is in contrast to those who viewed the struggle as essentially one of civil rights. In this context, questions concerning the strategy and tactics of the liberation struggle have been keenly debated (e.g. Trevor, 1984; Wolpe, 1985).

The 1990s have been a period of radical political transformation in South Africa. Nelson Mandela, historic leader of the anti-apartheid movement was released from prison in 1990,

and in 1991, the South African Parliament repealed residential and land segregation in the country. They also dropped the system of mandatory race classification. By March 1993, Government moves were made to desegregate education, and in November, an interim constitution granting political rights to blacks was agreed upon by De Klerk and anti-apartheid groups, including the African National Congress. On April the 27th, 1994, the first all-race elections took place and Nelson Mandela of the ANC was sworn in as the first Black President of post-apartheid South Africa. The formal dismantling of apartheid was completed, but it was inevitable that tensions and divisions within South Africa on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity and so on continue. The lines of fracture within the society that had been developed under apartheid are in many instances deepening as the struggle over state power and access to state resources intensifies in a context in which political actors need to accentuate social divisions in the attempt to mobilise constituencies.

(C) Nations and Nationalisms

(i) Perspectives on 'Nation' and 'Nationalism'

A central motif of the various accounts of `the nation` that are debated today is that the nation is neither natural nor immemorial, nor is it self-generating. On the contrary, `the nation` is a relatively modern phenomenon arising out of specific historical conditions. Nationalism, in Gellner's terms, `invents nations where they do not exist`. He was referring to nationalism in the West, linking its emergence to the modernising and industrialising drives of growth-oriented societies in which intelligentsia emerge who demand the creation of mass co-cultural nations (Gellner, 1983). A similar emphasis on the modernity of nations can be found in other accounts. Benedict Anderson views the nationalist demand for a sovereign but limited political community as arising out of peculiarly modern processes and developments from the sixteenth

century onwards in Europe. Nations, according to Anderson (1983:15), are best understood as 'imagined communities', systems of representation whereby people come to imagine a shared experience of identification with an extended community. Nations, however, are not solely phenomena of the mind. McClintock (1991) uses the phrase the 'invented community' to avoid the connotation of make-believe that is implicit in the use of 'imagined' and to convey the sense in which 'nations' are constructed entities.

> Nations are elaborate social *practices* enacted through time, laboriously fabricated through the media and the printing press, in schools, churches, the myriad forms of popular culture, in trade unions and funerals, protest marches and uprisings. Nationalism both invents and performs social difference, enacting it ritualistically in ... mass rallies and military displays, and flag waving ... and becoming thereby constitutive of people's identities. (McClintock, 1991; p.104)

McClintock fuses material and non-material aspects of `nation` and `nationalism`, and in the process, connects identity and social difference, culture and politics.

Conceptions of `nation` and `nationalism` may vary but one element that is common to the diverse accounts, according to Smith (1988), is that of mythical interpretation. Myths, in his view, are neither illusions nor simply legitimations but are exaggerations, dramatisations and reinterpretations of facts. In effect,

> nationalism`s peculiar myth of the nation may be seen as a particularly potent and appealing dramatic narrative, which links past, present and future through the character and role of the national community. (Smith, 1988; p.2)

The French Revolution is often taken as the starting point for discussions of nations and nationalism, for the French Revolution was first and foremost a revolution of the French people. Radically new ideas, such as those of citizenship and popular sovereignty, were its hallmark. In their revolutionary dismantling of the existing social and political order, the French people were said to have created the French nation, the result of a `social contract`. The nation signified a political category of freely associating individuals.

Kohn (1944) traces two contradictory conceptions of nationalism in the ideological struggles that laid the groundwork for the French Revolution and in the conservative reaction to it. In contrast to the broadly democratic conception of nationalism inherent in the French Revolution, there is an oppositional tradition derived from the German Romantics, among others, and Edmund Burke and the reaction in England. This tradition denies the rational and implicitly contractual basis of nationalism, asserting instead that national identity has an inherited and a traditional character. Nations, in this view, are not created but awakened or brought to life. Within the Marxist tradition, Stalin's writings on the `national question` set the dominant trend. Stalin's major contribution was to highlight the historical character of the development of national movements. He argued that nationalism cannot be understood except in the context of the development of capitalism. It is the development of capitalism which generalises commodity production, creates national markets, fragments communities based on `natural` affinities and so creates the need for a national state to consolidate the market in the interests of the national bourgeoisie (Stalin, in Franklin, 1973). The writings of Gramsci (1971) and Mao (1967) on nations and nationalism provide fundamentally different analyses, within the Marxist tradition, from those of Stalin. Gramsci weaves together the analysis of nationalism as ideology and as social movement in his discussion of the failure of the Italian bourgeoisie to

construct an Italian nation. He brings together what are often treated as separate strands of nationalism, on the basis of his conception of power as the fusion of domination and moral-intellectual leadership. Gramsci highlights the potential role of intellectuals, whom he views as `organic` to particular classes, in providing such leadership. Their historical significance will depend on whether or not intellectuals were `organic` to the class with the capacity for social and national transformation. Mao, in his general theses on nationalism in semi-colonies and colonies, argues that nation-formation and national liberation are two interrelated aspects of the same process. The nation does not necessarily exist first and then become the basis of a national movement.

Disputes over the identification of the rise of nations with the rise of capitalism have arisen in other quarters too. Amin (1980) argues that while the rise of nations coincided with the rise of capitalism in Western Europe, the same does not apply for areas such as China or Egypt where ancient civilisations had prospered long before the rise of capitalist Europe. For Amin, the defining characteristic of a nation is the high degree of centralisation of the economic surplus of that society in a state structure. Mamdani (1988) points out that Stalin's preoccupation with defining a nation -- as `a historically evolved, stable community of language, manifested in a community of culture` -- raises two issues. The first is the assumption that the nation exists before coming to life, and the second is the tendency to provide a `checklist` of what constituted or did not constitute a nation on the basis of a given historical experience.

The tendency to subsume discussion of nations and nationalism under the overall umbrella of the 'national question' is perpetuated by a number of authors. According to Nnoli (1989a:9), for example:

> The national question in the colonies and erstwhile colonies concerns the anti-imperialist struggles for political and economic emancipation from foreign domination.

This usage reduces the `national question` to the struggle against foreign rule rather than to internal historical evolution of the societies in question. Shivji (1991) states that the `national question` can be considered at two inter-related levels. The first represents imperial domination and oppression, whereas the second refers to national and nationality oppression within the juridical boundaries of independent states. These are contradictory usages that refer to completely different phenomena. Imperial domination does not have to result in the oppression of nationalities, and foreign rule could end while the oppression of nationalities continues. Many authors, Mahadi and Mangvat (1986), Falola (1986) and Mustapha (1986), use 'the national question' to refer to ethnicity. Wamba dia Wamba`s (1991:57) discussion of 'the national question` is markedly more inclusive:

> The National Question refers to how the global form of the social existence, characterising the internal multiplicity and the relationship of the society to its environments, is historically arrived at.

The author goes on to include issues of the `orderly exercise of nation-wide, public authority`, membership of the society, rights and obligations, the mediation of competing claims, uneven development, whether there is an `interest` that can be claimed to be common to all, and finally, the country's borderlines, all of which he states are issues connected with the `national question`. All the same, as is the tradition in Marxist discourses on the national question, Wamba dia Wamba (1991:64) reduces national and nationality oppression to imperialism and sees an easy solution in the adoption of socialism.

Overlapping Marxist discourses on nationalism is the rich set of diverse and contested ideas that constitute African nationalism. The history of African nationalism is well documented. The philosophy of Pan-Africanism articulated this change in orientation in anglophone Africa. Mama (1995) points out that this upsurge in nationalist consciousness also entailed

profound psychological changes, including the expression of what it meant to be African by Africans (see Padmore, 1955; Nkrumah, 1965; Senghor, 1971; Makonnen, 1973; Garvey, 1983; Fanon, 1970; Cabral, 1980). African nationalism sought to redress the humiliations endured by Africans during the centuries of racism and colonialism. This it did by both articulating a new African-centred understanding and vision of the continent and her peoples, and by engaging in the political struggle for the liberation of all the nations in the continent from Western domination and exploitation.

Several writers have attempted to bring together the common characteristics of the different nationalist movements in Africa and Asia (see Hodgkin, 1956; Kilson, 1958; Emerson, 1960; Wallerstein, 1961). Hodgkin (1956:23) uses the term `nationalist` in a broad sense, to include any organisation or group that explicitly asserts the rights, claims and aspirations of a given African society, in opposition to colonial rule. Coleman's (1970) use of the term `nationalist` is more restricted. He uses it to describe only those types of organisation that are primarily political, as opposed to religious, economic or educational in character, and whose objectives are the realisation of self-government or independence for a recognisable African nation or nation-to-be. Rosberg and Nottingham (1966) point out that, despite the qualitative differences in definition, most analysts have come to similar conclusions, for they were using the concept of nationalism not so much as a conceptual tool but as a means of describing common processes of political and social mobilisation and the search for power and dignity by Africans within `highly structured` colonial frameworks.

A theoretical issue that has generated some controversy in African historiography concerns the debate over whether the nationalist movement preceded the complete establishment of colonialism. The central question here is whether the very early resistance against European colonial aggressors should be construed as nationalist. Coleman (1970) makes the distinction between `primary resistance` or `traditional nationalism` and

`modern nationalism`, arguing that the latter did not manifest itself until the twentieth century. This kind of view conflicts with that advanced by the radical Dar es Salaam school, which gained prominence after the Arusha Declaration of 1967 (e.g. Pegushev, 1980). Members of this school include, within a given nationalist movement, the early resistance against European colonial invaders. Later phases of mass struggle in the nationalist movement are understood as a continuation of the same process (e.g. Saul, 1977).

In his critique of mainstream studies o: ɔnalism in colonial Africa, Edun-Adebiyi (1990) points out th: uch of the work is rooted in the dominant school of thought, . Africanist school, influenced by assumptions of the modernis. ɔn school. Studies have tended to interpret the political activism of the period as nationalist, focusing mainly on nationalist politics and on the activities of the African educated and commercial elites. Edun-Adebiyi (ibid, 8-9) observes that:

> social protest movements among emerging groups of workers, professionals, youths, women or farmers were not self-professed nationalist (movements) but were extra-governmental means to make the political system more responsive to their perceived interests and their aspirations. Nationalist discourses in the post-World War Two period were superimposed on these struggles that issued from conflicts in the economic, political and social realms and whose objectives were not based initially on the dismantling of the colonial system.

This point refers just as much to mainstream studies of nationalism as it does to more radical ones (see Mamdani, 1988). Social struggles in colonial Africa were rarely unitary `nationalist` movements; more often than not, there were multiple social movements sometimes located in contrary positions relative to one another, at certain levels mutually inclusive and at others

mutually exclusive (Edun-Adebiyi, ibid). It is perhaps in recognition of the complexity of these social struggles in the colonies that Atieno Odhiambo (1985) seeks to apply the Swahili term *siasa* to his study of politics and nationalism in East Africa between 1919 and 1935. Siasa combines the meanings of the two key words `politics` and `nationalism`; it is supposed to embrace opposition, complaint, agitation and activism.

Modernisation theory, and its critique in the dependency school, are also criticised for their shared premise of state nationalism (Mamdani, op cit). In Uganda, the popular nationalism of the 1940s gave way to the statist nationalism of the 1960s and 1970s. Nationalism was not a derivative of the process of state formation but of the growing democratic struggle against state repression. Mamdani (1988:7) observes that:

> the crisis of nationalism today is the crisis of one particular anti-democratic variant of it. But the formulation of an alternate perspective on nationalism, based on a popular and democratic orientation, is not possible unless we move away from a state-centred approach to one which puts emphasis on the autonomy of popular organisations, and in the context of such a shift, raises the question of social transformation from below.

Tamarkin (1992) makes a similar point. In this connection, Samir Amin's (1990:84) comment on the role of the state vis-à-vis the nation is pertinent:

> Actual history has therefore led us ... to challenge the ideology of the nation, whether in its bourgeois version (the nation is a pre-existing reality, the ideal state ...) or its vulgar Marxist version (capitalism creates nations and generates the nation-state form to the entire world). Actual history suggests rather that the state is the active subject that sometimes creates the nation, sometimes `regenerates` it, but often fails to do either.

A significant feature that is common to the differing forms of nationalism becomes evident when we examine who it is that articulates their content. Nationalist movements have rarely taken women's experiences as the starting point for an understanding of how a people becomes colonised or how it liberates itself from the bonds of material and psychological domination. Instead, `nationalism typically has sprung from masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope` (Enloe, 1990; p.44). The needs of the nation are identified with the needs, frustrations and aspirations of men.

> Not only are we prevented from speaking for women but also (not allowed) to think, and even to dream about a different fate. We are deprived of our dreams, because we are made to believe that leading the life we lead is the only way to be a good Algerian ... (Helie-Lucas, in Enloe ibid, p.44)

In the same moment as men are free to speak for women, they are free to `dream a different fate`. The assumption here is that political agency can only be male. Nationalism is thus constituted from the very beginning as a gendered discourse and has to be understood as such.

Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989) have suggested that women's relation to national and ethnic processes has taken at least five major forms. Women serve as:

- biological reproducers of ethnic and national groups (the biological mothers of the people)
- as producers of the cultural discourses of the group (mothers, teachers, writers)
- signifiers of national and ethnic groups (as symbolic 'bearers of the nation')
- active participants in national movements: in armies, trade unions, community organisations

- reproducers of the boundaries of national and ethnic groups (by accepting or refusing sexual relations or marriage with prescribed groups of men)

Given that nationalism does not exist in a unitary form, and that power differentials between women exist on the basis of class, race, ethnicity and so on, women's relations to competing national discourses and struggles will take on differing historical shapes at any given time, with differing implications for social change.

African women have, for many decades, been reluctant to speak about women's emancipation outside the terms of national liberation movements. In South Africa, for example, radical changes in the discourse on feminism have come about in recent years, stemming largely from the greater visibility of women within the Mass Democratic Movement. Black women are demanding the right to mould the terms of feminism to meet their own needs and situations. When the women leaders of the ANC Women's Section returned home from exile on June 17, 1990, they insisted on the strategic validity of the term 'feminism':

> Feminism has been misinterpreted in most Third World countries ...there is nothing wrong with feminism. It is as progressive or reactionary as nationalism. Nationalism can be progressive or reactionary. We have not got rid of the term nationalism. And with feminism it is the same. (McClintock, 1991:119)

Feminism is often condemned by male nationalists as divisive, women being pressurised to remain quiet until the revolution is over. Feminism, however, is not the cause of gender conflict but its political refusal. To ask women to wait until after the revolution serves merely as a delaying tactic. The lessons of national liberation movements all over the world only serve to emphasise the point that 'women who are not empowered to organise during the struggle will not be empowered to organise after the struggle' (McClintock, 1991:122). When feminism is not condemned as

divisive, it tends to be denounced as imperialist. For women in national liberation movements, this erases their long history of resistance to local and imperialist patriarchies. As Jayawardena (1986:3) points out, `movements for women's emancipation and feminism flourished in several non-European countries` long before Western feminism emerged. Women resist not because feminism has been secretly imported from abroad, but because the contradictions in their own historical circumstances compel them to do so. Moreover, the insistence on relating the feminist struggle to other liberation movements has been a primary contribution of nationalist feminism.

Nationalists often argue that colonialism or capitalism has been the real cause of women's inequality, with patriarchy merely a side-show destined to end when the real culprit finally expires. Urdang (1984:10) summarises Samora Machel's statement of this position: 'socialist transformation is the only basis for the liberation of women.' Nio Ong (1986) asks, however, whether this is a *sufficient* basis, and Roberts (1984:183) questions Machel's claim that 'the antagonistic contradiction is not found between man and woman, but rather between women and the social order, between all exploited women and men and the social order.' Nowhere has a national or socialist revolution brought a full feminist revolution in its wake. Women may have taken on men's work, but men have not come to share women's work. Most forms of nationalism have been extremely reluctant to grant gender conflict as fundamental a role in history as class or race conflict. Frantz Fanon's (1967:163) warning about the dangers of national consciousness is relevant here:

> ... nationalism, that magnificent song that made people rise against their oppressors, stops short, falters and dies away on the day that independence is proclaimed. Nationalism is not a political doctrine nor a programme. If you really wish your country to avoid regression, or

> at best halts and uncertainties, a rapid step must be taken from national consciousness to political and social consciousness.

Fanon was aware of the vital expression that nationalism gives to a popular memory of shared suffering and shared refusal. At the same time, he points to the risks of concealing, and thereby worsening, the very real contradictions inherent within the phenomenon of nationalism -- conflicts of class, gender, ethnicity, regional and generational differences. Nationalism embodies the risk of a denial of difference at the same time as it espouses a conveniently abstract 'collective will'.

The various kinds of nationalist struggles and liberation movements, the periods in which they occurred, and the nature of the colonial experience, provide the contexts within which nationalism in Africa is situated. The earliest struggles in West Africa -- Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, former French West Africa -- were relatively non-violent and were non-Marxist. They were followed by similar movements in East and Central Africa. A second set of nationalist struggles occurred in the entrenched `settler` economies of Kenya, Algeria and Zimbabwe, where violent struggle was necessary. A later wave of more self-consciously socialist and Marxist-Leninist movements led to intense fighting in the Portuguese colonies of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. Finally, there was the exceptional case of South Africa, where nationalist activity continued until recently in the face of brutal repression.

(ii) Nationalist Struggles: 1945 to 1965

> The birth of the United Nations Organisation with its Declaration of Human Rights and the struggle for freedom as a result of the last two world wars brought new hope to the oppressed and colonised peoples of the world. The granting of independence to India ... Burma and a large part of South East Asia produced a

> ferment and an upsurge in Africa. The period after the Second World War was therefore one of intensified political activity in the liberation movement in Africa. (Nkrumah, 1967:xiii)

It was during this period that a number of the first crop of nationalist leaders returned to Africa, mainly from studies abroad in Britain and the United States. The spirit of their return was informed by the Fifth Pan-African Congress which took place in Manchester in 1945. The participants returned determined to organise and lead their people in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism.

Nkrumah (1967) points out that in spite of the national enthusiasm everywhere, there was no centre to co-ordinate the movements for all of Africa. Centres for nationalist struggle were set up in each territory with very little effective co-ordination between them. French-speaking Africa had a forum for contact and organising via the Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA). No such political organisation existed among British colonial territories. Hence the struggle for colonial freedom in Africa was fragmented and confined to individual colonies. This domestic factor was significant in its relation to the later development of the African liberation movement as a whole.

It is not until the late 1940s that we find a popular rebellion which embodied a nationalist consciousness and had links to a secular, nationalist political organisation (Tronchon, 1974). The Madagascar revolt of 1947 was large-scale but burned intensely for only three months, leaving some 60,000 dead in its wake. Tronchon locates the roots of this revolt firmly in the development of Malagasy nationalism, arguing that the rebels were engaged in a war of national liberation. While the movement was overwhelmingly peasant in membership, it also drew on urban elements. The Malagasy rebellion has received little serious scholarly attention, Tronchon being one of the few analysts of this uprising.

In Cameroon in December 1956, the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) launched a rebellion against French colonial rule (Joseph, 1977). The UPC under the leadership of Ruben Um Nyobe was a nationalist party, which had developed through conflict with the French. Its insurrection was crushed by the combined forces of French colonialism and conservative Africans. This was an unequivocally nationalist rebellion, one in which the initiative was taken by the leadership of a political party. As such, the Cameroon rising was unique in both French and British colonial territories in Africa. It was not until 1961 that a similar revolt by the Uniao das Poblacoes do Norte de Angola occurred in Northern Angola. Similar insurrections were sparked by the PAIGC in Guinea, by FRELIMO in Mozambique and in Zimbabwe at the end of the 1960s.

Black Africa's entry into the era of political independence was spearheaded by Ghana in 1957 and Nigeria in 1960. In the two years from 1958 to 1960, the number of independent African states rose from eight to fifteen. By 1965, this figure had risen to thirty-six. In the former Gold Coast (Ghana), the first signs of unrest came early in 1948 when riots violently erupted, startling the colonial officials who were unaware of the dangers beneath the surface of political life. Austin (1964) points out that the disturbances of the post-war years need to be seen not only in nationalist terms -- as part of the general stirring of political consciousness throughout Africa -- but as marking a major shift of power within Ghanaian society. Whilst the grievances which sparked off the riots against the colonial government were local ones, the riots themselves were the herald of a struggle for power soon to be conducted by new leaders who drew their support from a much broader, more popular level than had previously been active in national politics. The demands shortly to be raised by Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP) implied a far greater upheaval in local society than the earlier struggle between the chiefs and the intelligentsia. They embodied a protest not only against colonial rule but against the existing structure of authority in the colony and Ashanti chiefdoms.

Nationalism in Nigeria was characterised by electoral and constitutional struggles with the pursuit of two main goals: self-government and national unity. Northern Nigeria had become the showpiece for the policy of indirect rule, which envisaged a gradual adaptation of traditional African communities to the requirements of a modern state. Coleman (1958) points out how the vigorous southern drive to achieve self-government at times seemed to destroy the possibility of attaining national unity. On the other hand, many southern nationalists desiring self-government in their own day found unacceptable the delay demanded by the north as a condition for the agreement to be part of `one Nigeria`. They were not at all sure that they should pay the price, but the vision of the prestige and power to be commanded by a united Nigeria was highly attractive, and therefore sobering. As a consequence, self-government was postponed for a few years, the north drastically revised its timetable and territorial unity was achieved.

Organisations of market women were key supporters of the political parties during the elections. Market women's support became the leading factor in a party's control of an area. The women themselves were active in endorsing and financing candidates, extracting promises and generally participating in the political process (Johnson, 1981; Mba, 1982). However, they limited their political activities to demands related to market activities and continually underestimated their own more general political strength. Consequently, as time went on, the political clout which they had once exercised tended to decline. Women in other West African countries, such as Sierra Leone, were able to institutionalise their participation both during and after the nationalist period (Hafkin and Bay, 1976; Steady, 1983).

The revolt of Mau Mau has received a great deal of attention and has given rise to a large literature (e.g. Rosberg and Nottingham, 1966; Barnett and Njama, 1966; Furley, 1972; Boganko, 1980; Likimani, 1985). Mau Mau was a peasant insurrection with some radical petit bourgeois leaders and links to an urban trade union movement. A foundation for the revolt

lay in the violent actions of defiance which the radical wing of the movement had already embarked upon, in both rural and urban areas, before the colonial administration, acting under pressure from the settler community, inflamed the unrest. Peasant rebellion in Kenya drew considerable urban support. A strong current of Kikuyu religious concepts and practices, such as oathing, inspired the movement and bound it together. The revolt focused on access to land and a more equitable distribution of the colony's resources for the poorer African sections of society. Mau Mau confirmed the emerging African nationalist consensus by not challenging the capitalist basis of property relations in Kenya.

Mainstream accounts of women's participation in Mau Mau point to the double standard that is revealed in most accounts of women's involvement in national emergencies. That is, Kenyan women's bravery and support -- as freedom fighters, couriers and mainstays of their communities -- is praised as a significant contribution to the struggle. The form of these contributions, however, was essentially traditional, and the innovative behaviours, attitudes and ideas which women contributed are noted but were generally not built upon, either before or after Mau Mau. So for example, women like Field-Marshal Muthoni occupy a prominent place in Kenyan memories of Mau Mau. The leadership she provided along with Dedan Kimathi and General Mathenge in the fighting in the Aberdare Mountains is generally cited to exemplify women's participation in the struggle. But not many Kenyan women followed the example of Wanjiru, the woman who led one of the protest movements during the struggles of the early nationalist leader Harry Thuku in the 1920s and who was one of the first Kenyans to be killed fighting for independence. And while women were involved in political leadership during the struggle, they did not achieve leadership positions in corresponding numbers afterwards. Women clearly struggled during Mau Mau for their families -- as did men -- but they also struggled for their land and their livelihood -- as did men. Women's non-familial aspirations, however, were not

recognised during or after Mau Mau, whereas men's aspirations were seen as a combination of familial, ethnic and national loyalties (O'Barr, 1985).

(iii) National Liberation Movements: 1965 to 1975

Of the numerous conflicts in Africa after World War II, few have been as bloody and long-lasting as those in the colonies of Portugal. Partly because Portugal's colonial presence in Africa has been one of the oldest as well as the most brutal and least amenable to change, the territories of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau remained colonised for longer than might otherwise have been the case. Appeals for decolonisation or improved conditions were rejected by the fascist regime of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar. From an economic point of view, Angola was the most important of Portugal's colonies (Henderson, 1979). By the early 1960s, two main liberation movements (and a variety of others) had developed. The Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (M.P.L.A.), founded in 1956 and headed by Dr Agostinho Neto, espoused an ideology that was Marxist in character. It received some diplomatic and military support from Cuba, the Soviet Union and Algeria (Marcum, 1978; Rubinstein, 1988). The other main liberation movement, the Frente Nacional de Libertacao (F.N.L.A.), formed by the consolidation of two other groups in 1962 and led by Holden Roberto, was more pro-Western, and vied with the M.P.L.A. for internal and external support. In 1966, Jonas Savimbi, disaffected with the F.N.L.A., founded the Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA). Its ideology was socialist, and it received some support from the People's Republic of China (Gavshon, 1981). The three movements were always bitter rivals and none of them was ever in a position to defeat the colonial regime.

The national liberation struggle in Mozambique was initiated as a complete negation of the established Portuguese colonial system. FRELIMO, the Mozambique Liberation Front, was formed in 1962. Frustrated in their attempts to negotiate for

national independence, they took up arms in 1964. By 1969, the number of guerrillas in FRELIMO had increased a hundredfold, from 100 to 10,000, and vast areas of three northern provinces had been liberated (Meyns, 1981). The Portuguese settlers withdrew into the towns, and the Portuguese army was increased. Mondlane (1969) describes the problems faced by the Portuguese army fighting in hostile territory against a people overwhelmingly hostile towards them.

The advance of the liberation struggle was not purely related to military achievements. It was fundamentally related to the establishment and consolidation of liberated zones in which political control had largely passed out of the hands of the colonial administration. In these zones, FRELIMO proceeded to lay the foundations for new forms of economic production, social services, political administration and self-defence. In the words of Samora Machel:

> It was here that was posed, not as a technical question but as a demand arising from the development of the struggle itself, the decisive question: what type of reconstruction to have in these regions, and what type of society to build? (Wilmot, 1979:177)

The crucial elements of Frelimo's liberation ideology which emerged during this period were the close association with the people in every situation, the principle of independent self-reliance and the priority of politics over technical solutions (Meyns, op. cit.).

An issue of considerable importance is the analysis of the changes that the people involved in the liberation of Mozambique and in Frelimo, as an organisation, underwent in the course of the struggle, and in particular, the dynamic of such changes. This issue is discussed in a number of writings relating the importance of revolutionary violence to the social development of Mozambique, an approach influenced by the ideas of Frantz Fanon. Explicitly referring to Fanon, Museveni (1971) says that

through revolutionary violence the new man emerges `cleansed of all former imperfections`. Saul (1973) discovered in the armed liberation struggle in Mozambique `a completely different world` from the rest of Africa. In a further contribution to the subject, this time relating to the liberation struggle in all former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Saul (1974) introduces the concept of `radicalisation`. Through increasing radicalisation, he argues, the leading forces of the liberation movements, the revolutionary sections of the petits bourgeoisie, as Saul refers to them, put themselves in a position to lead the popular masses to complete liberation, and even to socialism.

Campbell (1977) generalises Saul's thesis still further. She sees the basis of Saul's `different world` in the very `needs of armed struggle`. She describes the liberation struggle as `a cumulative process` which `produces its own dynamic`. Following the logic of this process, according to Campbell, a growing section of the petits bourgeoisie undergoes a transformation and, `after its end as a class`, turns out to be the vanguard of the interests of the workers and peasants. Saul, Campbell and other writers quote Amilcar Cabral (1969, 1980), the leader of the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau and a major African theoretician of the liberation struggle, as the main source of their views. However, though Cabral did coin a misleading phrase when he spoke of the petits bourgeoisie `committing suicide` as a class, he analysed the petits bourgeoisie essentially in terms of its ambivalence as an intermediary stratum. He underlined the important role which it has to play in the national liberation struggle and also after independence because of the specific characteristics of colonial class structure. But he points out that `it is precisely these specific, disadvantageous circumstances which represent one of the weaknesses of the national liberation movement`. In their analysis of the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Saul and Campbell disregard this essential part of Cabral's analysis because they believe that the objective logic of armed struggle, as the necessary reply to the particularly backward character of the Portuguese colonial system,

increasingly transcends the ambivalence of the petits bourgeoisie. In practice, such a straightforward transition from the struggle against colonial rule to national liberation and then to the construction of socialism has not occurred anywhere. Those African countries which achieved independence through armed struggle are by no means `a completely different world` compared to the rest of Africa. Algeria and Kenya, countries which have experienced armed struggles against colonial rule, have not developed in a way fundamentally different from the rest of Africa. Algeria's development has features which we find in a number of countries where the indigenous bourgeoisie is still weak. In these countries, the petit bourgeois forces which took over state power as leaders of the independence movement frequently develop into a state bourgeoisie in a principally state capitalist system. What was common to the majority of African states, whether they gained independence through armed or other forms of liberation struggle, was the petit bourgeois character of the leadership of their independence movements which took over power at independence.

(iv) Pan-Africanism

The African scramble for independence led to two major political trends which held the possibility of being complimentary but have turned out to be contradictory. One was the consolidation of states within the national boundaries drawn by the colonial powers. The other was the attempt to secure some kind of African unity that would bring together the African peoples within a common framework. Pan-Africanism is generally taken to mean that set of political ideas asserting that Africa is a single entity which must unite. Around this general theme, there are contested conceptions of Pan-Africanism which have to be placed in their socio-historical contexts in order to be understood. Surprisingly, some academics have attempted to carry out comparative analyses of Pan-Africanism without addressing the historical dimension (e.g. Neuberger, 1979). The significance of

Pan-Africanism lies in its political force as a philosophy aimed at uniting Africa. Analysts differ, however, on the purposes of such unity, the sources of division within and beyond Africa, and on the struggles required to achieve the goals of Pan-Africanism. George Padmore, one of the main historians of Pan-Africanism, points out, 'The idea of Pan-Africanism first arose as a manifestation of fraternal solidarity among Africans and peoples of African descent.' (Padmore, 1955:117) It was originally conceived by a Trinidadian barrister, Henry Sylvester-Williams, practising at the English bar at the end of the nineteenth century. He convened the very first Pan-African Congress in 1900, in an attempt to combat the aggressive policies of British imperialists. Early Pan-Africanism was grounded in the experience of the African Diaspora created by the slave trade, and in the discrimination and exploitation experienced by Blacks in the U.S.A.

Padmore's own view of Pan-Africanism was that

> (it) is becoming part and parcel of emergent African nationalism, serving as a beacon light in the struggle for self-determination, the pre-requisite to regional federations of self-governing African communities which may one day evolve into a Pan-African Federation of United States. (Padmore, 1955:118)

Already, the notions of self-determination and African unity are inseparable from Pan-Africanism here. A very different version of Pan-Africanism was manifested in Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa Movement, a movement calling for a mass return of Black people to Africa (see Garvey, 1967). Although Garvey was a fierce opponent of imperialist domination over Africa, he detested it particularly because it was domination by Whites. Furthermore, he believed that capitalism was necessary to progress and that those who opposed it opposed progress. Although Garvey's ideas were initially received with enthusiasm in some quarters, his

endeavour to get diasporean Blacks to return to Africa on a mass scale was never very successful and the movement eventually died.

Garvey's Pan-Africanism was eventually superseded by a more lasting conception. The first careful systematisation of Pan-Africanist ideas, notably excluding the racialised aspects of Garvey's thinking, is due to Dr. William E.B. DuBois, usually cast as the `Father of Pan-Africanism`. Padmore gives the following account of DuBois' conception:

> Pan-Africanism differed from Garveyism in that it was never conceived as a Back to Africa movement, but rather as a dynamic political philosophy and guide to action for Africans in Africa who were laying the foundations of national liberation organisations ... Pan-Africanism was intended as a stimulant to anti-colonialism ... Dr. Dubois was ... a staunch advocate of complete self-government for Africans in Africa organised on a basis of socialism and co-operative economy which would leave no room for millionaires, black or white. National self-determination, individual liberty and democratic socialism constituted the essential elements of Pan-Africanism as expounded by Dubois. (Padmore, 1955:105-6)

It was only when the emphasis shifted away from the exaltation of a Black collectivity, whether in racial or in cultural terms, that Pan-Africanism asserted itself as a theory of revolution in Africa, designed to serve Africans. The African revolution was then understood as the struggle of the African people for liberation, national independence and African unity. African unity itself came to mean political unity, the constitution of a political grouping of African states which would gradually form themselves into a United States of Africa.

In the pursuit of these aims, Dr. Dubois called four Pan-African Congresses between the First and Second World Wars.

The political content of the Pan-Africanist demands emerged with increasing clarity during the course of these congresses so that by the Third Pan-African Congress, held in London in 1923, delegates demanded that Africans should have a voice in their own governments and that Africa should be developed for the benefit of Africans. Africans themselves were in the minority at these early Pan-African conferences. Then, in 1944, representatives of various Black people's organisations in England met in Manchester, to set up a United Pan-African Front. The result was the Pan-African Federation, which subsequently functioned as the British section of the Pan-African Congress Movement. The Federation adopted a programme which extended the principles of the earlier congresses and stated them more precisely. Its declared aims were:

(1) To promote the well-being and unity of African peoples and peoples of African descent throughout the world.

(2) To demand self-determination and independence for African peoples and other subject races from the domination of powers claiming sovereignty and trusteeship over them.

(3) To secure equality of civil rights for African peoples and the total abolition of all forms of racial discrimination.

(4) To strive to co-operate between African peoples and others who share our aspirations. (M'buyinga, 1982:33)

The Pan-African Federation marked the end of Pan-Africanism's infancy. The Fifth Pan-African Congress, held in Manchester during March and October 1945, put the finishing touches to Pan-Africanism's evolution into a set of theoretical and practical political conceptions elaborate enough to meet the needs of the contemporary anti-colonialist struggle. Nkrumah gives us this account of the Fifth Pan-African Congress:

> While the four previous conferences were both promoted and supported mainly by middle-class intellectuals and bourgeois Negro reformists, this Fifth Pan-African Congress was attended by workers, trade unionists, farmers, co-operative societies and by African and other coloured students. As the preponderance of members attending the Congress were African, its ideology became African nationalism -- a revolt by African nationalism against colonialism, racialism and imperialism in Africa -- and it adopted Marxist socialism as its philosophy ... Garvey's ideology was concerned with black nationalism as opposed to African nationalism. And it was this Fifth Pan-African Congress that provided an outlet for African nationalism and brought about the awakening of African political consciousness. It became, in fact, a mass movement of Africa for the Africans. (Nkrumah, 1956:53)

The Fifth Congress was a turning point for Pan-Africanism. It was only after this point that Pan-Africanist ideas began to take root in Africa itself, usually in close association with struggles for independence. Hence the link between Africa's independence and its unity was made clearly evident.

During the period from 1945 to 1961, there were two distinct currents within Pan-Africanism. On the one hand, there was the anti-imperialist revolutionary stance of leaders such as Nkrumah, for whom

> African nationalism was not confined to the Gold Coast -- the new Ghana. From now on it must be Pan-African nationalism and the ideology of African political consciousness and African political emancipation must spread throughout the whole continent.(Nkrumah, 1956:290)

This position contrasts sharply with that of Houphouet-Boigny who, from 1946 to 1957, was already against independence and wanted to retain membership of the French Communauté (M'buyinga, 1982).

The alliance between revolutionaries such as Nkrumah and reformists such as Houphouet-Boigny, Leopold Senghor, Lamine Gueye and Sourous Apithy in the R.D.A. was, on the face of it, unexpected. M'buyinga (op. cit.) concludes that it was simply the specific historical conditions of the anti-imperialist struggle in Africa between 1940 and 1950 that made such an alliance possible. He sums up these conditions as a still embryonic class differentiation and the absence of a working class with a clear consciousness of its own interests. The first consequence of these conditions was the possibility of bringing all the social strata together in a vast anti-colonialist United Front. Such a front seemed not only possible but also essential. However, the movement was a failure, as is clear from the R.D.A.'s attempted suppression in 1955 of the demands by the Cameroon People's Union (U.P.C.) in Cameroon for independence and immediate reunification.

From 1957 to 1958, after independence had been achieved in Ghana, the Pan-African struggle entered a new phase. This was marked by the Conferences of Independent African States and, from 1958 onwards, the Conferences of African Peoples, in which representatives of peoples who had not as yet gained independence also participated. The Conferences of Independent States were always very different from the African Peoples Conferences. For example, when the first Conference of Independent States met in Accra, in 1958, wars of liberation were raging in Cameroon and Algeria. Yet it was only after strenuous debate and several formal amendments that a resolution of support was passed. By contrast, when the first Conference of African Peoples was held in Accra in 1958, it was attended by all the popular anti-colonialist African organisations, and Algeria and Cameroon were the subject of special resolutions. The delegates were clearly conscious of the anti-colonialist armed

struggle being waged in those countries. The conference also took several practical decisions, notably to set up a permanent secretariat in Accra.

Months before the convening of the first Conference of African Peoples in Accra, its preparation and publicity created favourable conditions for the mushrooming of regional Pan-African mass movements on the continent. In East Africa there emerged the Pan-African Movement for East and Central Africa (PAFMECA), which, for the first time in East African politics, brought all political movements in the region under one umbrella. East Africans went to the Accra meeting as one movement and consequently exerted considerable influence on the proceedings. Being the first Pan-Africanist movement on a mass scale, they effectively helped to usher in the era of Pan-Africanism in practice (Babu, 1992/3).

The differing currents evident within Pan-Africanism up to this time culminated in 1961 in the emergence of the so-called Casablanca and Monrovia Groups. In January 1961, a conference held in Casablanca was attended by Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Tunisia and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (G.P.R.A.). The participants, members of the Casablanca Group, proved consistent in their support for African revolutionary anti-imperialist movements, especially in Algeria and Cameroon. Five months later, in May 1961, another conference was held in Monrovia. The participants at the Casablanca Conference did not attend this second conference. The delegates in Monrovia adopted one fundamental resolution, insisting on 'non-interference in the internal affairs of other states,' and expressed 'unreserved condemnation of any subversive action conducted from outside by adjoining states.' Finally, they concluded that

> the unity we must achieve at the moment is not the political integration of sovereign African states, but a unity of aspiration and action, to promote African social solidarity and political identity. (M'buyinga, 1982:41)

This fundamental resolution adopted at Monrovia was crucially important: two years later, in 1963, the O.A.U. charter reasserted the same point.

Since that time, Pan-Africanism has been virtually silenced. The continent has been largely balkanised, despite Nkrumah's warning that 'small units are not viable in the modern world, either politically or economically' (Nkrumah, 1964). The great weakness of revolutionary Pan-Africanism was its lack of clarity -- the absence of any coherent overall conception of how to achieve African unity. The first major attempt to address this gap, Nkrumah's book, *Africa Must Unite*, was only published in 1963. Equally serious was the misplaced attempt to achieve unity through the efforts of heads of state instead of those who had most to gain, African workers and peasants. Walter Rodney's address to the Sixth Pan-African Congress in 1974 was a scathing indictment of those African heads of state who, on assuming power after independence, subordinated the development of their people to the interests of imperialism. The resulting perpetuation and deepening of divisions among African people shows clearly that the interests of such leaders are diametrically opposed to those of their people and of African unity. Recently, however, Pan-Africanism is undergoing something of a revival. The Seventh Pan-African Congress was organised in Kampala in 1994 with the active encouragement of Yoweri Museveni, the Ugandan President. Following the Congress, a permanent secretariat was established in Kampala and a full-time General Secretary appointed. The current ongoing struggle for the Pan-African ideal is being carried out in a different world setting. The movement concerns itself not only with Africans on the continent but also with those of the Diaspora. But, as Ondoga ori Amaza puts it:

> Pan-Africanism is not just a club to which anybody with a black skin or having ancestral links with Africa may join. It is a political movement that emerged as a reaction to the oppression and exploitation of the African people

> by imperialism, and its aim is to bring an end to this oppression and exploitation. It is the fact of our oppression and exploitation by imperialism, rather than the fact of our 'blackness' -- of our common racial origin -- that must serve as a basis for the re-definition of Pan-Africanism today. (Amaza, 1993:6)

(D) Concluding Remarks: on the Nature of Boundaries and the Possibilities of Democracy

Human society is organised on the basis of the continuous construction and reconstruction of collectivities and ideologies. The question of which groups are included and which ones excluded according to shifting ideologies of racism, ethnicity as well as nationalism, demonstrate that the boundaries within collectivities are not very clear, and ascription of membership to groups is multiple and problematic. Colonial boundaries were, therefore, superimposed over existing groups of people; ethnic/ racial/ national, that have been very dynamic and plastic. In this paper, we have seen that there are problems and difficulties in determining the `boundaries` that are supposed to separate racial, national and ethnic groups (Asiwaju, 1984; p.vi). Defining ethnic groups, nations, cultural identities, and races is problematic because, in the processes of their formation, effective ways of promoting in-group solidarity are evolved at the same time as ways of excluding those considered exterior. The political boundary of the nation-state contrasts sharply with preceding types with regard to its exclusivist character. Rather than resist or negate the processes and ideologies of group definition, it is more useful to recognise the changing nature of group construction and reconstruction and to evolve less antagonistic ways of promoting co-existence within and among collectivities. Democracy is fundamental in this regard.

Somalia is a good example of how an apparently tribeless and non-ethnicised nation could build its own antagonistic identities and produce the devastating result that is today common knowledge. The Somalis constitute a unified ethnic, religious and cultural group which speaks the same language. They have a common sense of community which

> rests on belief in their common descent from a founding father, the mythical Samaale and, with a few exceptions, every Somali is able to trace his/her descent to this common ancestor. (Samatar, 1984:161)

The Somali people appeared as the idyllic nation, being a single vast genealogical tree, composed of decentralised clans, operating a polity of 'pastoral democracy'. After independence, the Somalis thought their only misfortune as a people was that colonial boundaries had cut out their kinsmen and allocated them to other states -- Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. The destruction of the Somali people is a clear result of the authoritarian policies set in place since the coup d'etat of 1969. The former dictator, Siyad Barre, who had usurped all powers in the country, used it to terrorise the population, with widespread detention and execution of opponents. The only option that was left for the people was armed resistance, and both the dictator and the people decided to use their most basic division -- the clan -- for mobilisation. Clanism developed as the Somali version of tribalism:

> Former dictator Mohammed Siyaad Barre used every opportunity to poison clan relations in order to prolong his rule. The armed opposition groups adopted the short-run policy of utilising clan recruited volunteers to combat Siyaad's state. (Adam, 1992:11)

Gradually, repression and resistance was converted to warlordism as the state institutions broke down and the law of the jungle (or the law of the desert) took over. The murderous and destructive

logic of warlordism is seen in the Mooryan phenomenon, the culture of armed young Somali setting up territories they control and pillage through terrorism (Marchal, 1992). The country has been in the hands of various warlords who use the Somali people as cannon fodder to establish their respective authorities. All clans have now perpetrated and suffered from mass murder and torture. Terrible memories that link clan identities to collective suffering have been ingrained in peoples' consciousness, and it will take a very long time for the Somali nation to be reconstituted or recreated. Ten years ago, Said Samatar spoke of Somalia as a nation in search of a state. Today, there is no nation and no state.

It has been argued by Salamone that identities are masks which change often in reaction to different situations. He gives a Nigerian example:

> Nigerians today are simultaneously engaged in manoeuvring between local, national and international politics. In their villages, they must present themselves and be accepted as sons (sic) of the soil. In competition with other ethnic groups, they must be Yoruba, Igbo or Hausa at times. At other times, they represent their regions as Northerners, Easterners, Westerners or Midwesterners. On the national scene, they get to be Nigerians and may even be sensitive when someone asks them their "tribal" affiliation. (Salamone, 1992:70)

Nigerian citizens therefore employ multiple identities which, at various moments, are translated as tribalism, ethnic chauvinism, regionalism, statism, religious bigotry, nationalism and so on.

This has been the tendency in the various African countries that we have discussed. This tendency for divisive ethnic mobilisation has been used as an argument against multiparty democracy, which, it is often repeated, is bound to degenerate into inter-ethnic strife. This position is questionable:

> The argument that multiparty democracy exacerbates ethnic tension links the worst situation of ethnicity with the worst practice of multiparty democracy. On the other hand, the belief in the positive impact of democracy on ethnicity links the least tense ethnic situation with the most successful form of democracy. (Nnoli, 1992:51)

It has been argued by, for example, Nnoli that the persistence of the ethnic problem in Africa is linked to the failure of democracy:

> There is a democratic side to the ethnic question in Africa. It concerns the right of each ethnic group to be treated equally with all the others, for their members to be secure in their lives and property, from arbitrary arrest and punishment, and for them to enjoy equal opportunity in trade, business, employment, schooling and enjoyment of social amenities (Nnoli, 1989a:206).

Nations, nationalities, tribes, clans and ethnic groups may have cultural components but they are not culturally determined. They are social constructions which are acted upon, with material consequences. Ethnic pluralism is in itself not a dangerous feature in multi-ethnic states. It becomes problematic when it becomes an object around which discrimination is perceived and interpreted in the consciousness and cognition of groups. Ethnicity, after all has been defined by Otite as 'the contextual discrimination by members of one group against others on the basis of differentiated systems of socio-economic symbols' (Otite, 1990). The cultural symbols could vary according to the level of cognition of 'ethnic' identity -- clan, village, language, region, nationality, religion and so on. Inter-ethnic conflicts tend to emerge at moments when groups perceive that they are being excluded from access to what they consider to be their rights;

be they linguistic, economic, administrative, commercial, religious etc. The most important question is therefore the perception of domination by a group:

> Violent ethnic conflicts usually erupt in places where the government is an instrument of a group domination and where the channels for articulating demands are closed.... We see dangerous and debilitating ethnic conflicts as those emanating from competition for State power. (Osaghae, 1992:219)

The same could be said for nationalism and racism. State power is the central instrument used for exclusion and for domination. The democratisation of the state and society is the key to harmonious, or rather, civilised inter-group relations.

Bibliography

Abdelghani, A. "La Gestion des Conflits Tribaux au Maroc: Le Cas de l'Anti-Atlas" CODESRIA Research Network on Ethnic Conflict in Africa, Nairobi Workshop, 1992.

Adam, H. and Giliomee, H. *The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1979.

Adam, H. M. "Somalia: Militarism, Warlordism or Democracy" in *Review of African Political Economy,* no 54, 1992.

Adam, H. *Modernizing Racial Domination: The Dynamics of South African Politics,* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1971.

Adji, *Souley Logiques soico-communautaire et loyautés politiques en Afrique: Essai d'analyse de la construction de l'Etat au Niger.* PhD Thesis, Bordeaux, 1991.

Agyeman, D. K. "Overt and Covert Ethnic Conflicts in the Distribution of Economic and Political Power in Ghana" CODESRIA Research Network on Ethnic Conflict in Africa, Nairobi Workshop, 1992.

Ake, Claude *The Political Economy of Nigeria*, Longman, London, 1985.

Alagua, E. J. "Historical Origins of the National Question in Pre-colonial Eastern Nigeria" Paper for National Seminar on the National Question in Nigeria, Abuja, 1986.

Amaza, O. 'Pan-Africanism and Imperialism,' *Pan-African Congress News*, Information Bulletin of the Secretariat for the 7th Pan-African Congress, July/August 1993.

Amin, Samir *Class and Nation, Historically and in the Current Crisis,* Heinemann, London, 1980.

Amin, Samir *Maldevelopment*, Zed Books, London, 1990.

Amselle, J. L. & M'bokolo (eds) *Au Coeur de l'ethnie*, La Decouverte, Paris, 1985.

Anderson, Benedict *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1983.

Anyang', Nyongo, Peter "Political Instability and the Prospects for Democracy in Africa" in *Africa Development* No.13.1 and 13.3, 1988.

Atieno-Odhiambo, E.S. `Politics and Nationalism in East Africa, 1919-35`, in UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. VII, *Africa Under Colonial Domination,* 1880-1935, (ed. A.A. Boahen) Heinemann, California, 1985.

Austin, D. *Politics in Ghana*, Oxford University Press, London, 1964.

Ba, Oumar Moussa "Conflits Ethniques en Afrique: Le Cas de la Mauritanie" Proposition de Recherche pour le CODESRIA, 1991.

Babu, A.M. "Pan-Africanism and the New World Order", *Africa World Review,* November 1992-April 1993, 15-16.

Bangura, Yusuf, "Authoritarian Rule and Democracy in Africa: A Theoretical Discourse", UNRISD discussion paper no. 18, Génève, 1991.

Barnett, D. and Njama, K. *Mau Mau From Within: Autobiography and Analysis of Kenya's Peasant Revolt*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1966.

Baroun, Catherine *Anarchie et cohesion sociale chez les Toubou,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985.

Baulin, Jacques *Conseiller du Président Diori.* Eurofor Press, Paris, 1986.

Beblawi, Hazem et Luciani, Giacomo (eds), *The Rentier State*, Londres: Croom Helm, 1987.

Biaya, T. K. "Ethnicity au coeur de l'ideologie nationaliste" in K. Mbaya (ed) *Le Zaire:Vers quelles destinees*, CODESRIA, Dakar, 1992.

Blin, Louis "Les Noirs dans l'Algerie contemporain" *Politique Africaine*, No.30, 1988.

Boganko, S. Kenya 1945-1963: *A Study in African National Movements*, Kenya Literature Bureau, Nairobi, 1980.

Breytenbach, W.J. "The Multi-National Population Structure of South Africa", in *Plural Societies*, vol.2, no.1, 1971.

Cabral, Amilcar *Revolution in Guinea*, London 1969.

Cabral, Amilcar *Unity and Struggle*, HEB, 1980.

Cahen, M and Copans, J "Sciences Sociales, politique et ethnicite" Politique Africaine Conference on "State, Nation and Ethnicity", Bordeaux, 1992.

Cahen, M. "Le socialism: c'est les Soviets plus l'ethnicite" Politique Africaine, no 42, 1991.

Campbell, B.K. *Liberation Nationale et Construction du Socialisme en Afrique,* Montreal 1977.

Charlick, R. B. *Niger: Personal Rule and Survival in the Sahel,* Westview Press, Dartmouth, 1991.

Chretien, J-P & Prunier, G. (eds) *Les ethnies ont une histoire*, Karthala, Paris, 1989.

Coleman, J.S. 'Nationalism in Tropical Africa,' in I.L. Markovitz (ed.) *African Politics and Society,* The Free Press, New York, 1970.

Coleman, J.S. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, University of California, Berkeley, 1958.

Compagnon, Daniel "Somalie: De l'Etat en formation a l'Etat en pointille" in J-F Medard (ed) *Etats d'Afrique Noire,* Karthala, Paris, 1991.

Coquery-Vidrovitch, Catherine "A propos des racines historiques du pouvoir: <Chefferie> et <Tribalisme>" *Pouvoirs*, no 25, 1983.

du Toit, P. and Theron, F. "Ethnic and Minority Groups, and Constitutional Change in South Africa", in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* vol.7, no.1/2, April/ October 1988, 133-147.

Dube, T. "The Fighting Youth of South Africa", in *The African Communist*, no. 102, Third Quarter, 1985.

Edun-Adebiyi, N.L. 'Deconstructing Nationalism: Towards a Social History of the Preindependence Movements in British West Africa, 1900-1945.' Paper presented to the Conference on Social Movements, Social Transformation and the Struggle for Democracy in Africa, Algiers, 18-21 July 1990.

Emerson, R. "Pan-Africanism", in I.L. Markovitz (Ed.) *African Politics and Society*, Free Press, New York, 1970.

Emerson, R. *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples*, Cambridge, 1960.

Enloe, C. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics,* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990.

E-Vally, Rehana "Les Metis en Afrique du Sud: La Quette d'une Identite" Politique Africaine Conference on "State, Nation and Ethnicity", Bordeaux, 1992.

Falola, Toyin "Pre-colonial Origins of the National Question in Nigeria: The Case of Yorubaland" Paper for National Seminar on the National Question in Nigeria, Abuja, 1986.

Fanon, Franz *Black Skin, White Masks,* Grove Press, New York, 1967.

Fanon, Franz *Towards the African Revolution*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970.

Faure, Veronique "Ethnicite a la Sud Africain: La fin de Huis-clos" Politique Africaine Conference on "State, Nation and Ethnicity", Bordeaux, 1992.

Fuglestad, F. "Djibo Bakary, the French, and the Referendum of 1958 in Niger", *Journal of African History* Vol.XIV No.2, 1973.

Fuglestad, F. *A History of Niger: 1850-1960*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983.

Furley, Q.W. 'The Historiography of Mau Mau,' *Hadith*, vol.4, 1972, 105-133.

Gaitskell, D. and Unterhalter, E. "Mothers of the Nation: A Comparative Analysis of Nation, Race and Motherhood on Afrikaner Nationalism and the African National Congress", in N. Yuval-Davis and F. Anthias (Eds.) *Woman-Nation-State,* Macmillan, London, 1989.

Garvey, M. *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement* Association Papers, University of California Press, 1983.

Garvey, M. *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey: or Africa for the Africans*, Frank Cass, 1967.

Gavshon, A. *Crisis in Africa: Battleground of East and West,* Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1981.

Gellner, E. *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1983.

Ghalioun, B "Etat, Nation et Ethnicite: L'Ambivalence des concepts" Politique Africaine Conference on "State, Nation and Ethnicity", Bordeaux, 1992.

Gilroy, P. *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, Hutchinson, London, 1987.

Gramsci, A. *Selections from Prison Notebooks,* Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1971.

Gregoire, Emmanuel <trans. by B. H. Hardy>, *The Alhazai of Maradi,* Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1992.

Hafkin, N. and Bay, E. (Eds.) *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1976.

Hall, S. "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance", in UNESCO *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism,* Paris, 1980.

Henderson, L.W. *Angola: Five Centuries of Conflict,* Ithaca, New York, 1979.

Hodgkin, T. *Nationalism in Colonial Africa,* Frederick Muller, London, 1956.

Hofmeyr, I. "Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnic Identity, 1902-1924", in S. Marks and S. Trapido (Eds.) *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*, Longman, Harlow, 1987.

Hugo, P. "Race and Class in South Africa", in *Politikon*, vol. 2, no. 2, December 1975.

Ibrahim, Jibrin "Accès a l'Etat, rente et crises ethnico-religieuses: Recul du multipartisme et crise de l'Etat au Nigeria" Politique Africaine Conference on "State, Nation and Ethnicity", Bordeaux, 1992.

---------- "From Political Exclusion to Popular Participation: Democratic Transition in Niger Republic" in B. Caron et al (eds) *Democratic Transition in Africa,* CREDU, Ibadan, 1992.

---------- "Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, no. 29 (1), 1991.

---------- "Religion and Politics in Nigeria: The Parametres of the 1987 Crisis in Kaduna State" *Review of African Political Economy,* no. 45/46, 1989.

---------- "The State, Accumulation and Democratic Forces in Nigeria", in Rudebeck, Lars (ed) *When Democracy Makes Sense: Studies in the Democratic Potential of Third World Popular Movements*, AKUT, Uppsala, 1992.

---------- "The Transition to Civil Rule: Sapping Democracy in Nigeria" in Olukoshi A. (ed) *The Politics of Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*, James Currey, London, 1993.

---------- *L'Accès à l'Etat: Classes sociales, élites factions; une étude du* "National Party of Nigeria" Thèse de doctorat, Bordeaux, 1991.

James, C.L.R. cited in Gilroy, P. *There Ain't No Black In The Union Jack*, Hutchinson, London, 1987, p.15.

Jayawardena, K. *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, Zed Books, London, 1986.

Johnson, C. 'Madame Alimotu Pelewura and the Lagos Market Women,' *Tarikh,* vol.7, no.1, 1981, 1-10.

Johnstone, F.A. *Race, Class and Gold: A Study of Class Relations and Racial Discrimination in South Africa*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976.

Joseph, R.A. *Radical Nationalism in Cameroun: Social Origins of the UPC Rebellion*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977.

Karimou, Mahamane *Tradition orale et histoire: Les Mawri Zarmaphones des origines a 1898,* IRSH, Niamey, 1977.

Kasfir, Nelson, *The Shrinking Political Arena.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

Kilson, M. 'The Analysis of African Nationalism,' *World Politics,* April, 1958.

Kohn, H. *The Idea of Nationalism*, Macmillan, New York, 1944.

Koudize, *Aboubacar Kio Chronologie politique du Niger de 1900 à nos jours*, Niamey, 1991.

Legassick, M. and Innes, D. "Capital Restructuring and Apartheid: A Critique of Constructive Engagement", in *African Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 305, October 1977.

Lever, H. *South African Society,* Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1978.

Lewis, J. and Randall, E. "The State of the Unions", in *ROAPE,* no. 35, May 1986.

Likimani, M. *Passbook Number F.47927 - Women and Mau Mau in Kenya*, Macmillan, London, 1985.

Machlalela, L.N. "Dramatic Growth of the Democratic Trade Union Movement", in *The African Communist*, no.101, Second Quarter, 1985.

Mahadi, A. and Mangvat, M. "Some Remarks on the National Question in Pré-capitalist Formations" Paper for National Seminar on the National Question in Nigeria", Abuja, 1986.

Mahmood, Cynthia "Do Ethnic Groups Exist? A Cognitive Perspective on the Concept of Cultures" *Ethnology*, vol XXXI (1), 1992.

Makonnen, R. *Pan-Africanism From Within*, (Ed. K. King) Oxford University, 1973.

Mama, C.A. *Beyond the Masks: Race Gender and Subjectivityy,* Routledge, London, 1995.

Mamdani, M. "State and Civil Society in Contemporary Africa: Reconceptualising the Birth of State Nationalism and the Defeat of Popular Movements". Paper presented to the General Assembly of CODESRIA in Dakar, Senegal, December 5-8, 1988.

Mao Tse-Tung 'The Chinese Revolution' and 'On New Democracy,' in *Selected Works,* vol. 2, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1967.

Marchal, Roland "Formes de la Violence et de son controle dans un espace urban en Guerre: Les Mooryan de Mogadishu" Politique Africaine Conference on <State, Nation and Ethnicity>, Bordeaux, 1992.

Marchesia, P. *Tribus, ethnies et pouvoirs en Mauritanie*, Karthala, Paris, 1992.

Marcum, A. *The Angolan Revolution*, Vol.II, *Exile, Politics and Guerrilla Warfare, 1962-1976,* Cambridge, Mass., 1978.

Martin, D. "Les mefaits du Tribalisme" *Politique Africaine*, no 21, 1986.

Mba, N. *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965,* University of California, Berkeley, 1982.

M'buyinga, E. *Pan-Africanism or Neo-Colonialism?*, Zed Press, London and Union des Populations du Cameroun, 1982.

McClintock, A. "`No Longer in a Future Heaven`: Women and Nationalism in South Africa", *Transition*, vol.51, 1991.

Mdlalose, T. "The Place of the Church in our Liberation Struggle", in *The African Communist*, no. 104, First Quarter, 1986.

Médard, J-F "L'Etat sous-developpé en Afrique Noire: Clientélisme politique ou néo-patrimonialisme" Travaux et Documents, CEAN, no. 1, 1982.

Meyns, P. 'Liberation Ideology and National Development Strategy in Mozambique,' *Review of African Political Economy.* No. 22, 1981.

Molteno, F. "The Historical Significance of the Bantustan Strategy", in *Social Dynamics,* vol. 3, no. 2, December 1977.

Mondlane, E. *The Struggle for Mozambique,* Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969.

Mpangala, G. P. "Inter-Ethnic Relations in Tanzania: From Pre-colonial Times to the Present" CODESRIA Research Network on Ethnic Conflict in Africa, Nairobi Workshop, 1992.

Museveni, Y. 'Fanon's theory of Violence: Its verification in liberated Mozambique,' in N. Shamuyarira (Ed) *Essays on the Liberation of Southern Africa,* Dar es Salaam, 1971.

Mustapha A. R. "The National Question and Radical Politics in Nigeria" *Review of African Political Economy*, no 37, 1986

Mustapha, A. R. "Identity Boundaries, Ethnicity and National Integration in Africa" CODESRIA Research Network on Ethnic Conflict in Africa, Nairobi Workshop, 1992.

Neuberger, B. "A Comparative Analysis of Pan-Africanism", in R.A. Wright (Ed.) *African Philosophy: An Introduction,* 2nd. ed., University Press of America, Washington, 1979.

Niamdou-Souley, A. "Le Niger après Seyni Kountché". *Année africaine* 1989, Pedone, Bordeaux, 1990.

Nio Ong, B. `Women and the Transition to Socialism in sub-Saharan Africa`, in *Africa: Problems in the Transition to Socialism* (ed. B. Munslow) Zed Books, London, 1986.

Nkrumah, Kwame *Africa Must Unite*, Panaf, London, 1963.

Nkrumah, Kwame *Challenge of the Congo*, Panaf, London, 1967.

Nkrumah, Kwame *Ghana Today*, (Accra) July 29, 1964.

Nkrumah, Kwame *Ghana*, Nelson, London, 1956.

Nkrumah, Kwame *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism,* Nelson, London, 1965.

Nnoli, Okudigba "Reflections on Ethnicity and Multiparty Democracy in Africa" CODESRIA/Rockefeller Reflections Programme, 1992.

Nnoli, Okudigba *Ethnic Conflict in Africa*, CODESRIA working Paper 1/89, Dakar, 1989b.

Nnoli, Okudigba *Ethnic Politics in Africa,* Vantage Publishers, Ibadan, 1989a.

Nnoli, Okudigba *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, Fourth Dimension, Enugu, 1978.

Nyawuza. "New `Marxist` Tendencies and the Battle of Ideas in South Africa", in *The African Communist*, no. 103, Fourth Quarter, 1985.

O'Barr, J. 'Introductory Essay,' in Likimani, M. Passbook Number F.47927 - *Women and Mau Mau in Kenya,* Macmillan, London, 1985.

O'Connell, James "The Inevitability of Instability" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 5 no. 2, 1967.

Okita, S. "Towards an Acceptable Usage: Some Theoretical Considerations on the Use of "Tribe" and "Ethnic Group" in *Studies in Nigerian Culture*, vol 2, no 1, 1982.

Olukoshi, Adebayo (ed), *The Politics of Structural Adjustment in Nigeria,*. James Currey, London, 1993.

O'Meara, D. "*Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948,* Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1983.

Osaghae, E. E. "Managing Ethnic Conflicts Under Democratic Transition in Africa" in B. Caron et al (eds) *Democratic Transition in Africa*, CREDU, Ibadan, 1992.

Otite, O. *Ethnic Pluralism and Ethnicity in Nigeria*, Shoneson, Ibadan, 1990.

Padmore, G. *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, Dobson, London, 1955.

Parker, R. "The Senegal-Mauritania Conflict of 1989: A Fragile Equilibrium", in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1991.

Pegushev, A.M. 'The Leadership of the National Liberation Movement in Africa: General Considerations,' in *The Journal asia, africa, latin america,* Special Issue 7, (ed. T. Buttner) Akademie-Verlag, Berlin.

Prazauski, A. "Ethnic Conflicts in the Context of Democratising Political Systems", *Theory and Society,* vol 20, 1991.

Putake, P. & Gahama, J. "Conflits Ethniques au Burundi" CODESRIA Research Network on Ethnic Conflict in Africa, Nairobi Workshop, 1992.

Randall, P. (Ed.) *South Africa's Political Alternatives: Report of the Political Commission of the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1973.

Raynal, J.-J. "La Deuxième République de Niger: une démocratie bien ordonnée" in *Penant: Revue du droit des pays d'Afrique,* No. 804, October 1990.

Roberts, P. 'Feminism in Africa: Feminism and Africa,' *Review of African Political Economy,* no.27/28, 1984.

Rosberg, C. and Nottingham, J. *The Myth of Mau Mau: Nationalism in Kenya,* Praeger, New York, 1966.

Rubinstein, A.Z. *Moscow's Third World Strategy,* Princeton, NJ, 1988.

Salamone, F. A. "Becoming Hausa: Ethnic Identity Change and its Implications For the Study of Ethnic Pluralism and Stratification" in Sanda, A. O. (ed) *Ethnic Relations in Nigeria*, Sociology Department, University of Ibadan, 1976.

---------- "Playing at Nationalism, A Nation of <Ringers>" *Geneve-Afrique*, vol XXX(I), 1992.

Samatar, Said "The Somali Dilemma: Nation in Search of a State" in Asiwaju, A. (ed) *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884 - 1984*, Lagos University Press, 1984.

Saul, J.S. 'Frelimo and the Mozambique Revolution,' in G. Arrighi and J.S. Saul (eds.) *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*, New York/London 1973.

---------- 'Nationalism, Socialism and Tanzanian History,' in *African Social Studies*, (eds. P.C. Gutkind and P. Waterman) Heinemann, London, 1977.

---------- 'Neo-Colonialism vs. Liberation Struggle: Some Lessons from Portugal's African Colonies,' *Socialist Register 1973*, London 1974.

Schlemmer, L. "Theories of the Plural Society and Change in South Africa", in *Social Dynamics*, vol.3, no.1, June 1977.

Senghor, L.S. *The Foundations of 'Africanité,' Negritude, Arabité*, Presence Africaine, Paris, 1971.

Shivji, I. *State and Constitutionalism: An African Debate on Democracy*, SAPES, Harare, 1991.

Sithole, Misipula "Political Conflicts in Zimbabwe: The Dominance of Ethnicity Over Class" CODESRIA Research Network on Ethnic Conflict in Africa, Nairobi Workshop, 1992.

Sklar, R. "Democracy in Africa" in P. Chabal (ed), *Political Domination in Africa*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.

Slabbert, F., van Zyl, F. and Welsh, D. *South Africa's Options: Strategies for Sharing Power*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1979.

Smith, A. D. "The myth of the 'Modern Nation' and the myths of nations", in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol.11, no.1, 1988.

South Africa, Republic of. Hansard, House of Assembly Debates (Weekly Edition), May 16-20, 1983, Government Printer, Pretoria, col.7045-7065.

Stalin, J. "Marxism and the National Question", in B. Franklin (ed.) *Stalin: Major Theoretical Writings*, Croom Helm, London, 1973.

Steady, F. *Female Power in African Politics: The National Congress of Sierra Leone,* Munger Africana Notes No. 31, Pasadena, 1983.

Tamarkin, M. 'African Nationalism, Nation-Building and Civil Society in Africa - Fateful Connections.' Paper presented at the Conference on Civil Society in Africa, Jerusalem, 5-10 January 1992.

Theobald, R. "Patrimonialism" *World Politics*, no. 34, 1982.

Thompson, L. and Prior, A. South African Politics, David Philip, Cape Town, 1983.

Tidjani Alou, M. S. *Les politiques de formation en Afrique Franciphone: Ecole, Etat et Société au Niger,* PhD Thesis, Bordeaux, 1992.

Trevor, H. "The Role of the Masses in our Liberation Struggle", in *The African Communist*, no. 97, Second Quarter, 1984.

Tronchon, J. *L'insurrection malgache de 1947: Essai d'interpretation historique,* Maspero, Paris, 1974.

Unterhalter, B. "Changing Attitudes to `Passing for White` in an Urban Coloured Community", in *Social Dynamics,* vol.1, no. 1, June 1975.

Urdang, S. 'The Last Transition? Women and Development in Mozambique,' *ROAPE*, No. 27/28, 1984.

Vail, Leroy (ed) *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa,* James Currey, London, 1989.

van der Ross, R.E. *Myths and Attitudes: An Inside Look at the Coloured People*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1979.

Vosloo, W.B. "Separate Development as a Framework for Peaceful Change in South Africa", in *Politikon*, vol.3, no.2, October 1976.

Wallerstein, Immanuel *Africa: The Politics of Independence,* New York, 1961.

Wamba dia Wamba, E. "Discourse on the National Question" in Issa Shivji (ed) *State and Constitutionalism: An African Debate on Democracy*, SAPES, Harare, 1991.

Watson, G. *Passing for White: A Study of Racial Assimilation in a South African School*, Tavistock, London, 1970.

Webster, E. "The Two Faces of the Black Trade Union Movement in South Africa", in *ROAPE,* no. 39, September 1987.

Welsh, D. "The Nature of Racial Conflict in South Africa", in *Social Dynamics*, vol. 4, no. 1, June 1978.

Western, J. *Outcast Cape Town*, Human and Rousseau, Cape Town, 1981.

Wilmot, P. *In Search of Nationhood*, Lantern, Lagos, 1979.

Wolpe, H. "Liberation Struggle and Research", in *ROAPE*, no. 32, April 1985.

Yuval-Davis, N. and Anthias, F. (eds.) *Woman-Nation-State*, Macmillan, London, 1989.

Politics and Ethnicity in Africa
(Some thoughts and notes)

Yolanda Foster

> It is an oversimplification, even when attempting a brief survey, to think of the history of Africa. On such a vast continent there will obviously be various histories of different cultural and/or geographical regions (Malan: 97:11)

How *can* you understand Africa? Each country's experience is determined by their particular colonial history and the specific racist regimes thereby encountered. Perhaps a universal theme is foreign influence and exploitation in Africa. It is this aspect of Africa which interests me. It is of analytical interest, as the continuing impact of geopolitics on Africa is often overshadowed by what many theorists have alluded to as the 'sudden explosion of ethnic conflict around the globe following the end of the Cold War[1]. Allusions themselves do not explain the processes at work in sharpening ethnic awareness. When turning to the arguments put forward to explain the resurgence in primordial identities it will become telling that the wider political context is ignored in the quest to pin down this thing called ethnicity.

---

1 Surely it is the alleged 'suddeness' which should be of theoretical interest. What is it about the new geopolitical order after the Cold War which gives rise to new forms of identity expression?

First some arguments.

Communal fireworks around the globe light up our intellectual skies throwing previous theoretical arguments into relief.[2] One theory was the instrumentalist approach to politicised communal behaviour (Fredrik Barth, 1969, Paul Brass, 1991). 'Instrumentalisation' has typically been understood to have undergirded the deployment of ethnic identities by those in power or those seeking power. This line of argument would at least take debates on ethnicity into an investigation of the pursuit of hegemony by those in power. This argument however has been challenged, given that ethnic conflict is seen as the greatest threat to security in some regions -- most notably the Balkans, the former Soviet Union and Sub-Saharan Africa. Some theorists (Horowitz, 1985, Fishman) are keen to stress that perhaps there really is something to this category 'ethnicity' after all. 'Ethnicity may be the maximal case of societally organised intimacy and kinship experience' (quoted in Horowitz 85: 59-60).

This line of thinking challenges a medley of theorists seeking to distance themselves from an early literature stressing primordial identities, including such unlikely bedfellows as social constructionists, Marxists and postmodernists. Perhaps this set of theorists *have* got the motivations for political behaviour all wrong.[3] Ethnicity may be more salient than intellectuals are willing to concede. Or is it? Not all sharp cleavages or differences of opinion between members of different ethnic groups lead to large-scale violence; and where violent conflict does occur, it is not always clear that it was instigated by resentment over ethnic

---

2 At least the argument by modernisationists that communal identities are rooted in tradition and would change via nation-building. See Karl Deutsch, Lucien Pye etc.

3 A key failure of the Marxist project has been seen to be its failure to account for the salience of ethnicity. "Marxist approaches still leave ethnicity unexplained, or explained as a vague superstructural phenomenon serving ruling class interests...to keep the workforce divided and preclude the development of class consciousness" (Devalle: 1992: 43).

or cultural differences. In fact, as my later case study of Rwanda (see p.109,) will show, it is the exigencies of the norms and institutions of governance in Africa which are more important factors than 'ethnicity' for triggering so-called ethnic conflict.

Over-emphasis on 'ethnicity' as a way of understanding politics and conflict in Africa seems to be straying down the wrong analytical path. True, the significance of 'ethnicity' as a mobilising factor must be dealt with. What must not be forgotten are some of the arguments about the production of political identities and the consequences of the logic of production. This theoretical entry-point requires an understanding of identity as the result of discursive formation and practices which constitute the social field. Any mention of the word 'discourse' usually sends a shiver down realists' spines since it is assumed that obfuscatory language on subjectivity and interpellation will follow.[4] I will resist the lure of such language and try with the help of a little theoretical hand-waving to make my argument about why we should approach politics and ethnicity in Africa as the product of historical, genealogical and discursive formations clear.

A number of recent analyses view changing forms of subjectivity and identity as a consequence of wider social and cultural transformations -- modernity, 'late modernity' and the risk society (Bauman, 1991; Giddens, 1991; Lash and Friedman, 1992). These analyses echo views of the rise of the individual as a consequence of a general social transformation from tradition to modernity, feudalism to capitalism, *Geminschaft to Gesellschaft*. These kinds of analyses regard changes in the way human beings think about themselves as the outcome of 'more fundamental' historical events located elsewhere - in

---

[4] Those wishing to dip into such texts should take a look at the essay 'The Field of the Other' in Peter Osborne's interesting book *The Politics of Time* (1995) p257. The essay does offer provocative insight into the relationship between psychic drives, discourse and identity formation, but there is an excess of jargon to distract the casual visitor to discourse and its discontents!

production regimes, in technological change and a mutable 'culture'.

Whilst these analyses have their limitations, it is true that prior to the advent of modernity people had a narrower range of sets from which to draw their identity. Sets which included identites such as clan, religion and place. Following the development of capitalism, a new set - the market and labour identities was added to this. Then, following competitive politics at the nation-state level, the issue of political identity was added to the sets.

This means that despite the urgency with which the norms of liberal democracy are being pushed in states where governance appears to have broken down,[5] there is an argument to be made that it is the nature of democracy itself with its competitive politics which creates the conditions for the resurgence of communal identities. This is because competition for political power produces political rationalities or mentalities of rule which use hardened communal categories as a means of cementing horizontal bonds of support.[6] This results in the hardening of identities which were previously 'fuzzy.'[7] This is not to argue here against promoting good governance but to remind policy makers that different contexts make for nuanced approaches to governance.

People's culture stems from historical development. It reflects this historical development and embodies a set of values by which

[5] See for example a UNDP publication: *Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity*, a Report, which was the product of an international conference held in New York from 28-30th July 1997.

[6] The direction for this theoretical argument is indebted to the writings of Michel Foucault. In particular, his idea of a genealogy of the arts of government where government is conceived of, most generally, as encompassing all those more or less rationalised programmes and strategies for the 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 1991).

[7] This concept is borrowed from Sudipto Kaviraj's analysis of caste in India.

people view themselves and their place in time and space. Culture is influenced, however, by external as well as internal influences. This means that while we can understand subjectivity contextually, allowing for an understanding of knowledge as engendered and embedded in the material context of place and space, we must also look at the wider structural changes impacting on identity. This approach would allow for a gendered approach to ethnic discourse. Sadly, my paper is unable to explore the gender issue in any depth. However the theoretical model I propose would enforce those undertaking case studies to have a gendered approach.

When we try and understand the discourse of ethnicity in a particular country, we should also be aware of substantive transformations which have shaped the social and political space for the production of political identities. It does not matter if we, as social theorists, disagree over the label we give to our contemporary era ('late modernity' for Giddens or 'post modernity' for Lyotard). Whatever term we use, there is no doubt that a series of substantive transformations have altered the parameters of established society in the twentieth century and impact on political rationalities and individuals' response to identity.[8] This theoretical approach recognises the specificity of positionality whilst recognising the wider political context in which identities are produced.

The reader may wonder about the necessity for this theoretical elaboration on identity in a paper on politics and ethnicity in Africa. It is necessary because much of the literature on 'ethnicity' fails to distinguish between immediate and remote factors impacting on the production of ethnic discourse. If we

[8] These transformations, to borrow Giddens' schema include time and space changes; the intrusion of distance into our lives; the phenomenon of globalisation and the process of institutional reflexivity. These transformations have impacted on the way people conceive of themselves, the relations between individuals and society and society and the state. See Giddens, 1990.

adopt a method which unravels the genealogy of subjectification and homes in on the ways in which different regimes have been devised and have changed the relation of self to other, we may move closer to understanding the logic of the production of political identity as ethnicity.

This requires country case studies which trace the technical forms accorded to the relation of oneself in various technical practices -- legal, industrial, familial and economic. This would highlight different discourses for understanding the changing relationship between people and their material place and space: the imposition of European visions of the nation-state giving rise to new discourses on citizenship and governance. The use of such genealogical methods does not deny that people can change their subjectivity or close off the space for resistance. It would in fact, highlight the strategies for hegemonic power which enable one particular discourse to predominate.

If we balance genealogical method with an understanding of the substantive transformations occuring through modernity we will be able to recognise the heterogeneity of discourses on ethnicity but also be able to understand why, for example, in 1994 a particularly virulent strain of Hutu extremism dominated Rwandan society. Awareness of the wider context enlivens us to the geopolitical factors shaping or supporting the production of particular ethnic discourses.

In order to understand politics and ethnicity in Africa we need theories which can account for the specific and macro processes at play in shaping identity. The next chapter will argue that this requires a processual approach with an understanding of social relations.

Rwanda -- a case of ethnic discourse as myth?

> 'The functionalist model of 'traditional' Rwanda reflects features of both precolonial and colonial Rwanda, but it is a valid portrait of neither. Political relationships were more complex, and identities less rigid. The structures

> of Tutsi domination were more recent and less extensive than the model assumed, and they were transformed in important ways during the European colonial period. It is these transformations that need to be studied if we are to construct an adequate explanation of the impact of colonialism and the role of social changes in creating the preconditions for revolution (1959) in Rwanda. (Newbury: 88: 6).

> The first organised massacres of Tutsis took place in Rwanda in November 1959, encouraged as a political duty by the Belgian colonial government and sanctioned as a virtue by the powerful Catholic Church. (Omaar: 1997: 111).

> The real source of Rwanda's division is not ethnic but political and economical. (Jean-Pierre Bizimana, *Time* May 4 1998: 98).

I didn't know much about Rwanda until 1994. Then media coverage of the genocide, with its pictures of skulls and amputated limbs supplemented by the anguished testimonies of survivors, pushed this small central African country into my consciousness. The figures emerging about the scale of violence in Rwanda seemed unbelievable. In April-June 1994, more than a million Tutsis were killed (Omaar:97:110). Comparisons were drawn between the Nazi Holocaust and the Rwanda genocide -- comparisons born out of an awareness of the efficiency, speed and depth of the killings. What precipitated the violence?

Media coverage highlighted the gory elements of the carnage, uncontrolled machete wielders and the complicity of nuns and priests with acts of brutality. The focus of much writing was on 'ethnic hatred' -- the re-emergence of primordial loyalties, a favourite topic of modernisation theorists of the fifities. Despite appeals for humanitarian relief, I also noticed that, despite comparisons with the genocide of Jews in World War 2, the

media understated the complicity of state agents in organising the violence in Rwanda. Official reports of the crisis also evaded this area.

To take one example a UN background report[9] on Rwanda states: 'Essentially, there are two schools of thought. Proponents of the first school, which may be referred to as the "primordial school", believe that there have always been two distinct ethnic groups in Rwanda, namely the Hutus, "the sons of the soil" and the majority population, and the Tutsis, who were invaders from North Africa. This school sees as its mission the destruction of Tutsi domination in the country and its replacement with a Hutu hegemony.

'The second school of thought sees all existing divisions between ethnic groups as a product of the nineteenth century and colonial rule. It is argued that Tutsis and Hutus share a common language, culture and religion and that the racial divide was accentuated by colonial powers who favoured the Tutsis in early phases of colonialism. This resulted in what had been more generally an occupational divide -- Tutsis were cattle herders and Hutus were farmers -- into a racial divide. According to this school of thought Hutus and Tutsis are one group and the problem is one of class not race. This school argues against the recognition of ethnic differences and wants public policy to be formulated without fear or favour to any ethnic group.'

Although the Report goes on to qualify the 'two theory model' conceding that 'historians of non-Rwandan origin see the truth as being somewhere in between', it is interesting to consider how these types of categorisation impact on our perception of ethnicity in Rwanda. Official reports are, of course, trapped in the easy solution demands of pragmatism. Social science,

---

9 Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women its causes and consequences, by Radhika Coomaraswamy published in UN document E/ CN.4/1998/54/Add.1 p5. Although I am critical of this section, the report is an excellent documentation of gender violence.

however, needs to consider what methodologies are appropriate for understanding 'ethnic hatred'. Whilst looking for material on Rwanda, I found that Catherine Newbury's book: *The Cohesion of Oppression, Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda 1860-1960*, offered a useful guide to appropriate research tools. Although her focus is historical, focusing on Rwandan court strategies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it points the way forward to a better way of understanding ethnicity than a simple division between primordial versus instrumental approaches.

In her introduction she notes: 'to understand the politics of ethnicity one must study the changing context within which ethnic interaction occurs. The following chapters concentrate not on ethnicity *per se*, but rather on changes in state power that transformed relationships between groups, created new forms of cleavages, and fostered new forms of solidarity. Such analysis indicates that far from being "primordial', ethnic solidarities in Rwanda were engendered in large part by transformations within the political system itself. Of course, cultural affinities can serve as an important basis for building cohesion and collaboration. And there do (and did) exist differences between Tutsi, Hutu and Twa in Rwanda. Yet the definition of group boundaries and the recognition of cultural affinities as a basis for solidarity could, and did, change over time, as did the mobilisation of ethnic identity (to be differentiated from regional solidarities) to further political purposes. Like all relative categories they were conditioned by the larger context of political activity. To capture this processual aspect of political identity, a diachronic approach to studying ethnicity is adopted here. It focuses on how individuals and groups (elites as well as non-elites) attempted to shape change. And it shows how these interrelated processes have moulded patterns of social cleavage and the state.' (Newbury: 88: 14).

Whilst there is an overlap between Newbury's processual approach and instrumental approaches, a key difference is her sensitivity to everyday practice and 'voices from below'. A question usually missing from instrumentalist approaches with

their focus on elites is: Why do the followers follow? Do they, in fact, follow? These questions are important since they broaden out the discussion on ethnicity to the wider terrain of issues of power. Power requires legitimate domination, and often ethnicity offers such legitimacy. Does ethnicity exist as a discourse, located historically, prior to the emergence of post-colonial politics? Or is ethnicity part of the production of social space by the rulers? Is it part and parcel of the reproduction of hegemony for what Gramsci might have described as a dominant bloc -- one that includes a bourgeoisie, a state with its own realm of institutional autonomy and a nexus stretching from landowners to an army in cahoots with francophone interests?

Geoffrey Hawthorne reminds us of the importance of these questions: 'To grasp the politics of any particular Third World country and thereby to make illuminating comparisons between two or more of them, is to understand how those in power in each country (and those who seek it) have formulated their ambition to increase revenues, improve production and distribution and capture the social space. How they or their predecessors have framed constitutions and formed institutions to realise their ends; how, imaginatively and practically, they have actually used them; and what difficulties they have met in so doing" (Manor: 91: 32).

If we decide to adopt the methodological position that ethnicity functions as a discourse, this need not mean giving up all notions of intentionality. People's identities may be fluid, but the Rwandan case highlights the fact that identities can become ossified. The multiplicity of factors at play in this process requires attention to the way in which ethnicity feeds into the wider political context.

The 1994 disaster in Rwanda was a political emergency par excellence. Mass murder was the central policy of the interim government of Rwanda. Human suffering was not an incidental by-product of the political strategy; it was the very raison d'etre of the ruling authority. Many of the dilemmas present in the Horn of Africa over the previous decade were particularly stark in

Rwanda in 1994 (Africa Rights:96:28). What is interesting to probe is the geopolitical aspect of the crisis. It could be argued that the men and women who designed, encouraged and implemented the genocide of 1994 drew moral justifications, political conclusions and practical guidance from the manner in which earlier anti-Tutsi programs had been planned, carried out and excused (Omaar: 97: 110). They knew that no-one would be punished.

The failure of the international community to stop the slaughtering in Rwanda is partly due to a cynical defeatism and naivete. By focusing on the 'ethnic' aspect of the genocide, international complicity in aiding Juvenal Habyarimana's rise to power is overlooked as a factor in the genocide. Indeed an argument could be made that it was Western powers' pushing of 'democratization' in African states after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 that created a situation in which the state became overstretched and used ethnic discourse as a tool for holding on to power.[10]

Post-Cold-War politics laid the basis for a shift from one party states across Africa to a demand by Western governments (as opposed to grassroots demands) for multipartyism. In Rwanda this demand was met in that Habiyarimana formed new parties under his tutelage. Then a constitution was framed whilst Western governments funded various media projects (over 50). From a situation in which Habiyarama was able to promote his vision of governance, different discourses proliferated. To cut a deeply complex story short, the state came under deep pressure to be accountable in a way it had never been challenged before. Then on October 1 the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded

[10] This is an area which requires further research, but it might prove more conceptually interesting than a reiteration of ethnic enmity.

northeast Rwanda.[11] To counteract threats to his power, Habyarimana orchestrated an increasingly chauvinist media policy which portrayed all Tutsis to be in league with the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) .

On April 6, 1994, an airplane carrying the president, Habyarimana, was shot down as it attempted to land at the airport in Kigali, Rwanda's capital. As news of Habyarimana's death leaked out, Hutus began the systematic killing of Rwanda's Tutsi minority. Television pictures showed tens of thousands of Tutsis fleeing across the Kagera River into Tanzania and mounds of dead bodies. The horror of this 'inter-ethnic' warfare was on most TV viewers' lips. To various academics, Rwanda captures both the power and some of the puzzle of ethnicity (Cornell and Hartmann: 98: 41).

My cursory look at the crisis in Rwanda highlights the problem in overemphasising ethnicity as the key factor. As Dominique Franche points out: 'the history of Rwanda, like that of Burundi, has been distorted by Pere Blancs missionaries, academics, and certain colonial administrators who all trotted out more or less the same story. They made the Tutsis out to be a superior race which had conquered the region and enslaved the Hutus.' (Franche: 1996:14). We need to be more careful. What must be distinguished are remote and immediate causes.

---

[11] The RPF was made up of Rwandan (primarily Tutsi) refugees based in Uganda. Most of these refugees fled Rwanda in 1959 following anti-Tutsi violence. Many ended up in Uganda where they were recruited as mercenaries, forming a significant percentage of the Ugandan Army. Following World Bank Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) in 1992-3, the Ugandan Army was streamlined, leaving many Tutsi refugees unemployed. These refugees began drifting across borders. Their role (funded by the Americans, interested in propelling Kabila to power) in the Ugandan Army in chasing Mobutu out in Zaire reflects problems with analysing politics unless we take into account the complicated nature of globalisation. For a sophisticated argument about post-modern conflict see: Duffield : 1998.

Recognising the magnitude, complexity and chaos of the Rwanda emergency underscores the need to take a processual approach to ethnicity which grounds it in the wider context of national and global power relations. How, for example, do we have a situation where there are criminal governments in exile waging war across borders? This is not to underestimate the specificity of personal narratives of pain and experience by the survivors of the genocide. At the zenith of the killing ethnicity as a lived category was a category which meant death or survival. The important lesson is to deal with the multiple factors lending salience to that category.

History and its Discontents: the 'curse' of the nation-state and globalisation

> 'For centuries the history of the continent has been anonymous. In the course of 300 years traders shipped millions of slaves out of here. Who can name even one of the victims? For centuries they fought the white invasions. Who can name the warriors? Whose names recall the suffering of the black generations whose names speak of the extermination of tribes? Asia had Confucius and Buddha, Europe Shakespeare and Napoleon. No name the world would know emerges from the African past. More: no name that Africa itself would know.
>
> And now almost every year of the great march of Africa, as if making up for irreversible delay, new names are inscribed in history: 1956, Gamal Nasser; 1957, Kwame Nkrumah; 1958, Sekou Toure; 1960, Patrice Lumumba.' (Kapuscinski: 1990:49)
>
> 'I have been thinking of meanings we give to our past. Images of the past or those that embody the sense of the past can, of course, be objects or statues. I remember

> Ben Okri, commenting on a programme on the destruction of Benin in the nineteenth century, that when all the "Benin bronzes", the images of the gods, were taken away or destroyed the way in which people could construct their identity was changed. The result was a sort of schizophrenia.' (Jane Weale)

One of the major constraints to nation-building in post-colonial Africa is that externally generated and directed processes of state formation and development have tended to undermine indigenous values, institutions and patterns of solving problems.

This undermining produces a kind of political schizophrenia. At one level there exists a rhetoric of freedom and self-determination by African leaders, but this is counterposed by the straightjacket imposed by the adoption of nationstatism. In the postcolonial era, African leaders like Nkrumah and Sekou Toure adopted nationstatism as the only available escape from colonial domination. The legacy of a European-defined state has been widely perceived to be a 'curse', to use Basil Davidson's phrase. 'Many nations on the African continent are only in a state of limbo, they exist in a halfway state of purgatory until, by mundane processes or dramatic events, their citizens are enabled to raise the nation reality to a higher level, then even higher still, until it attains a status of irreversibility -- either as paradise or hell.' (Soyinka: 96: 23).

Wole Soyinka's dramatic words enliven us to the crisis of institutions in Africa -- a major institution being that of the nation-state. To spare you the numerous arguments deployed on the inanity of the nation-state and problems of sovereignty and statehood I shall just offer a few voices.[12]

'...there are Somalis, there is no Somalia, there are just people moving around the Horn.'

'...define what you mean by a state, because we in Somalia have different states.'

---

12 Those wishing for theoretical elaboration can read Mayall, 1990.

'I happen to be a Yoruba, from that region accurately and until recently described as the Western Region of Nigeria, but lately (since the 1993 elections) referred to as the Southwest.' (Soyinka: 96: 40).

'When is a nation? The question could be phrased in several ways: For instance: what price a nation? Half a million lives lost in brutish termination, within the cheap span of a mere month, and for no discernable purpose but for vengeance, a vengeance that is also opportunistic, since it harbours the undeclared goal of creating a Rwandan 'nation' of pure Hutu breed? What mores define a nation? Or indeed, what yardsticks? What does the claim 'I belong to this nation?' mean to the individual and when did it come to mean anything? For instance to the Ewe split between Ghana and Togo? -- Nationhood may prove itself to be more complicated than the actualised sovereignty of any human grouping, not necessarily homogeneous.' (Soyinka: 1994: 19).

These problems -- the misfit between nation and state persist. Globalisation has actually aggravated the tension. A key factor within the present transformation that shapes the way people live in both the North *and* South is the changing nature of the nation-state.[13] Within the South following the end of the Cold War, new forms of regime classification are being imposed by the North. Rather than political ideology, achieving positive

[13] Although much has been made about the World Bank's concept of 'governance', we might ask whether their vision of 'political decay' is useful. Why is it said that sub-Saharan Africa has become less governable since the 1970s? What implications does this have? How might 'political decay' be related to concepts of 'weak' or 'fragile' states? To what extent does weakness of state systems reflect the nature of underlying social and economic structures, or can it be remedied by attending to policy issues? Again these are huge questions, moving us away from a focus on 'ethnicity'. Check out : Brett, E. A. 1986. 'State Power and Inefficiency: Explaining Political Failure in Africa'. IDS *Bulletin*. 17. 1. January. And: Crook, R. 1990. 'State, Society and Political Institutions in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana', IDS *Bulletin*. 21. 4. October.

recognition is now largely based on a state's willingness to adopt neo-liberal economic policy and co-operate with lender demands (Duffield: 1998: 12). The term *privatisation* has become a powerful symbolic operator for Western governments and lender agencies. It can also be deployed by what would otherwise be pariah states to gain international favour.

For example, because of its human rights record, the Nationalist Islamic Front regime (NIF) in Sudan is regarded as a political pariah by most Northern states. However. in order to consolidate its position it has made extensive use of privatisation as a means of purging and marginalising its opponents. This has included common tactics of selling state assets at derisory prices to allies: 'The NIF have privatised and rationalised with a dedication that out-Thatchers Margaret Thatcher, but with few of the constraints she faced.' (Hirst: 1997)

How to factor in changing state formations?

The modern nation-state emerged in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The state is now changing as capitalism itself becomes more flexible. In attempting to analyse political authority and its implications, we need to shift our focus towards an ethnography of the state (Verdery: 96: 209). That is, the state is not a thing, a collection of institutions, but a set of social processes and relations. Globalisation and the redefinition of nation-state competence demand this type of approach.

> 'Nkrumah attacks the colonialists: "Their policy is to create African states that are frail and weak, even if independent. The enemies of African freedom believe that in this way they can use our states like marionettes to contain the imperialist control of Africa'."[14]

> 'There are two elements at the heart of the globalisation process. The first is globalisation as the contemporary

[14] A speech listened to by Ryszard Kapuscinski in Ghana, 1957 (Kapuscinski: 1990: 37)

> form of capitalist modernisation. This constantly pushes in the direction of cultural homogeneity. It seeks to reproduce itself and its social and cultural forms everywhere. This is the trend towards Nikeisation or McDonaldisation of the world. But there is a second aspect which has a different dynamic. This is the opening to homogeneity and difference. We've never seen capital on a global scale investing in difference as the price of its survival in the way we see now. Capital now has to indigenise itself.... The reason I say globalisation is not just a question of capitalist modernisation is that it raises the question of what is modernity. It opens the question of many other definitions of modernity.' (Stuart Hall: 97: 36)

> 'Since 1987 global military spending has gone up rather than down -- but not in the developing world. The two regions where it has gone up rather than down are the poorest -- sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. And who sold (the arms)? The five permanent members of the Security Council supplied 86% of them.' (Mahbub ul-Haq, co-ordinator behind the *Human Development Report:* 94:21)

Having argued earlier on, for a contextual approach to the production of ethnicity, it may seem dangerous to open the hornet's nest of modernity and globalisation. The point is that local actors are influenced by the global, the historical dominance of the nation-state model being one factor of the phenomenon of globalisation. These brief notes on the nation-state and the unequal phenomenon of globalisation serve to remind us that any approach to understanding politics in Africa must take account of the structuring effect of, for example, globalisation in promoting systematic inequality.

This also underlines the importance of addressing geopolitics. Recently Preside Clinton committed the United States to a

partnership with South Africa in pursuit of the dream of an African Renaissance *(Guardian 5/4/98)*. This is the same President who failed to comment on the massacres in Rwanda and did not move sanctions against a genocidal government although he is keen to demonise Iraq. The President of Ghana, Jerry Rawlings, was quick to comment on the use of such terms as "African Renaissance"' (Reuters Special, ETV 9/5/98). He noted: 'They cannot understand what it is like down here in the pit. They can look in but it is our feet that are on fire.'

As a *Guardian* article noted, while Bill Clinton calls the shots on his African trade tour, Nelson Mandela has the insight to expose the United States as an ill-disguised capitalist opportunist.[15] A letter-writer noted: 'Promoting the adoption of Western capitalism and trade not aid as a solution to poverty is more likely to perpetuate historical exploitation and generation of profits for the few.'

We would do well to ask: Renaissance -- for whom?

Hermeneutic red herrings or theoretical dynamite?

Theoretical diversions are sometimes useful as they encourage us to swerve off the well-trod path. Whilst drifting down an alternative route we may be able to see something we had not noticed before.

First, a philosophical puzzle.

Imagine two women sitting behind a bush. They see a brown furry object sloping along, a shared observation about this animate mass being that its hind legs are slightly longer than its forelegs. They try to place it, try to come to a mutual consensus. Woman X says: "There goes a rabbit". Woman B says "No, that's a *gavangai*". Then the furry object vanishes. The question is, can rabbit mean *gavangai*? A *gavangai* may not directly mean rabbit, it may mean 'undetached rabbit part' (as opposed to hacked

[15] "Africa markets shape Clinton itinerary", March 22. *Guardian Weekly.*

rabbit lying cold on a butcher's slab). A practical solution to this dilemma would be to kill the furry object and make a stew. If this was done, however, the women may simply arrive at two different interpretations (the rabbit now being detached so no longer *gavangai!*).

What could we, as social scientists count on as being certain that the object is the same object whatever name we put on it? The crux of the dilemma is: can we have unmediated observation that rabbit and *gavangai* equal X? Once the women articulate their descriptions they are trapped by their language. The philosophical point being: we can never know, for sure, if we're referring to the same thing. The reader may wonder why this matters, given that realists argue reality is 'out there' even if we can not describe it. It matters because people shout, murder and maim over different descriptions. One woman might feel so passionately that the furry object is a *gavangai*, that she hits the other woman and stomps off. In another context a person may claim ethnicity to be real and kill another from alleged ethnic grievances. The X, or the description social scientists pursue can not be exhaustively grasped by observation.

What we as social scientists, since this is one of the worlds we inhabit writing and researching papers, can recognise, is that in the twentieth century various philosophical arguments have been recast. It is now difficult to quibble over the idea that our interpretations are saturated in values and interests. Intellectual certitude in disinterested descriptions has vanished. Disinterestedness will never answer the 'why?' questions. When I started thinking about this paper I wondered what values and interests served the title. 'Politics and Ethnicity in Africa' seemed to take it as unproblematic that we could refer to such things as politics and ethnicity. Of course, to return to Quine's philosophical dilemma, realists can argue that there is an intrinsic rabbitness to the brown furry object.[16] If we accept this proposition surely

[16] This puzzle is part of Quine';s theory of the 'inscrutability of reference' (1961).

social scientists could put aside these messy arguments about description and, in the interest of pragmatism, adopt a shared theoretical parsimony in order to describe that intrinsic quality. As a community of scholars the self-interest of such parsimony might be appealing. It does not however displace the philosophical dilemma. How will we understand each other and the context of what we are describing?

Ironically, Quine raises the philosophical dilemma in order to shelve it. He argues that social science should expose, not question. To me, this results in a scientific minimalism incongruous with the vocation of social science which surely seeks to question, the motivation for questioning not simply being to lose oneself in philosophical arguments. Questioning exposes the fact that observations are constructed by language, by discourse. It does matter how we choose to describe our worlds. To return to Africa: what does my questioning require me now to do? In a brief survey of the literature on various conflicts I feel that further research might be more useful if it focuses on on how concepts like 'the state' and 'ethnicity' come to be 'lived' by Africans rather than how we, as social scientists, try and promote shared descriptions of these terms. I will expand on the necessity of contextual understandings of what politics and ethnicity means to people through a brief comment on Somalia. I will quote extensively from a paper by Rainer Frauenfeld[17] since it demonstrates the inapplicability of narrow Western norms and a social science which aims to conserve, to a clearly different cultural identity.

Somalia suffered a chequered colonial history being ruled by both the British and the French. In Somalia education was provided by the British in the North and the Italians in the South. Two different languages of education and two different systems were applied to generate knowledge that would be indispensable

[17] Rainer Frauenfeld., 1993. Somali - *The 'Right to Development' in the Light of Language and Law*. Thesis submitted for an MA in Development Studies, University of London, pp 28-33.

to replace the colonial powers' administrative structures which did not reach too deep into the desert lands of Somalia. In 1961/62 the total number of pupils in pre-primary, preparatory, primary, intermediate, secondary and teacher training schools in the North and South combined equalled 20,803; the total population of young, independent Somalia, the united British and Italian territories combined totalled approximately 4 million people (Laitin: 77: 66). The necessity of education for joining the administrative and representative institutions alludes to the scantiness of representation of the people. The Somali people's dispersal over the territories of Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti at the time of independence creates additional difficulties. Recently in 1991, Somaliland has declared itself an independent state and presently the somewhat obscure state of Oromo is pleading for statehood as well. What would the category of ethnicity mean for these scattered Somalis? Language makes for shared community, but should we try and link this into a Eurocentric definition of nation-state? Somali people have been torn into pieces by a cruel history of dissection.

The case of Somalia perfectly demonstrates the inapplicability of narrow Western norms to a clearly different cultural identity. Without romanticising lack of conflict prior to foreign interference, there is no doubt that Somalis managed their affairs differently. Negotiations by respected members of Somali clans were protracted. However, the erosion of local methods for dispute settlement proved highly problematic. Long ago foreign elements started changing even the most distinct Somali pastoral society, which incorporates numerous democratic elements, albeit non-compatible with current international requirements. These institutional norms are born out of a limited forum of powers which knew how to create an obedient retinue in the form of Western-educated or acculturated individuals. This retinue is in charge not only of mediating between their distinct peoples and the centre, but also of shaping them into an internationally responsible mould of domestic organisation -- the outcome being newly democratic states which present us with husks of

institutions like national assemblies, parliaments and presidents. These share names but not functions with their brothers in the centre. Obviously there is no room for the authentic development of operational political structures.

This farce, the result of cruel dissection, is what politics comes to mean for Somalis.

As social scientists we can learn from both high-modern and post-modern theorists' rejection of the Enlightenment belief that 'knowledge is power'. Our current social science frameworks remain saturated with interests which seem unable to provide us with methodologial tools for a critical theory. We have to face up to the fact that: "Our past, whatever it was, was a past in the process of disintegration, we yearn to grasp it, but it is baseless and elusive, we look back for something solid to lean on, only to find ourselves embracing ghosts" (Berman: 83: 12). This instability has robbed the 'modern project' of its worthiness and desirability. It remains important, however, to analyse what sort of political agenda follows from an analysis of the institutions of 'late modernity'. I have argued for a contextual understanding of ethnicity --how is this category lived by people? However, as I iterated in section two, it is important not to lose sight of the broader terrain amidst which contexts exist. Colonialism in Africa rears its ugly head in a new geopolitical form -- whether this is through ongoing surplus extraction, structural adjustment policies or academics' inability to come to terms with systematic inequalities which shape the way we think and breathe.

Social scientists must be aware of where they speak from, what windows they look through to perceive the world and what interest them in their descriptions. I could have chosen to write this paper on the so-called 'African Renaissance' looking at a new group of African leaders who may restore democracy. Or, I could have focused on the South African experience as a route to managing multicultural societies. I chose to look at this concept of ethnicity as a screen. The case of Rwanda shocked me as a

conflict fuelled by francophone and elite interests. It appalled me as a genocide which the UN sat back and watched in bureaucratic turpitude.

As children, many social scientists (at least Western social scientists) have probably read the diary of Anne Frank and been appalled at the Jewish Holocaust. In the period after World War 2 a shared responsibility was accepted by intellectuals that their descriptions of the world in which fascism was allowed to emerge were flawed. This resulted in such bold statements as: 'To lend a voice to suffering is the condition of all truth' (Theodore Adorno). The phenomenon of Nazism provoked social theorists to re-consider methodology. The ascendancy of German fascism created new kinds of questions. Was Nazism a product of Western technology and Reason, or was it something else? What were/are the links between fundamentalism and positivist reasoning? These questions required a methodological revolution about how theorists study human culture and how they should analyse human institutions.

Contemporary social theory is now extremely wary about the pursuit of truth. A question we must persist in asking ourselves, however, when we try and grapple briefly, and perhaps very superficially, with a concept like Africa is what kind of critical theory is possible in late modernity? The theoretical choices we make are vital in either maintaining or erasing the space for critical theory. Although the Marxist project has come under theoretical scrutiny for its lack of attention to specificity and its economic determinism, a key lesson from Marxism is that we are forced to be free. Not free from the vicissitudes of history but forced to be free in that we can, through self-reflection, make choices.

If, as I argue, ethnicity is a screen, what ghosts are lurking behind it? One ghost is the different experiences of globalisation. As I finish writing this, Robin Cook has to face questions in the British Parliament concerning the sale of weapons to the

government of Sierra Leone.[18] Freetown is the site of another messy conflict. The structural as well as local factors playing into the conflict would need to be analysed. Whilst we wrestle with what the category 'ethnicity' means, it is vital to re-evaluate our current methods of understanding politics. Clearly the issue of Ogoniland in Nigeria cannot be dissected from the sordid practices of Shell. The debacle in Rwanda can not be separated from francophone interests in Africa. The story of Kabila's springboard to power in Zaire is entwined with American contracts for the diamond mining rights. This thing called ethnicity may be much more of a chameleon than we think.

Bibliography

African Rights. November 1994. *Humanitarianism Unbound?* Discussion Paper 4. London.

Fredrik Barth. 1969. "Introduction" pp9-38 in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference*, edited by Fredrik Barth. Boston: Little Brown.

Zygmunt Bauman. 1991. *Modernity and Ambivalence.* Cambridge. Polity Press.

Tom Bottomore 1991. *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought.* Basil Blackwell. UK.

Paul Brass. 1991. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison.* Newbury Park. CA: Sage.

Steven Cornell and Douglas Hartmann. 1998. *Ethnicity and Race.* Pine Forge Press. Sage. California.

[18] May 9 1998.

Basil Davidson. 1992. *The Black Man's Burden*. Times Books. New York.

Mark Duffield. 1998. "Post-Modern Conflict: Warlords, Post-Adjustment States and Private Protection", circulatory paper to be published in *Journal of Civil Wars*, April 1998.

Susanna B. C. Devalle.1992. Discourses of Ethnicity: *Culture and Protest in Jarkhand.* Sage. New Delhi.

Michel Foucault. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Tavistock. London.

---------- 1991. 'Governmentality', in G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P.Miller (eds).*The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Hemel Hampstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf (87-104).

Dominique Franche. 1996. "There's only one ethnic group in Rwanda, Rwandan". *Guardian Weekly*. November 24 1996. p14.

Rainer Frauenfeld. 1993. *Somali- The 'Right to Development' in the light of Language and Law*. Thesis submitted for an MA in Development Studies, University of London.

Stuart Hall. 1997. "Les Enfants de Marx et de Coca Cola". *New Statesman.* 28 November 1997. pp 34-36.

Anthony Giddens. 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Polity. Cambridge.

---------- 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

Stuart Hall & Paul du Gay. (eds.) 1996. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Routledge. London.

Mahbub ul-Haq. 1994. Interview in *New Internationalist*. December 1995 pp 20-23.

David Held and John Thompson. 1989. *Social Theory of Modern Societies*. Cambridge University Press.

Donald L. Horowitz. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

Robert H. Jackson. 1991. *Quasistates: sovereignty, international relations and the Third World*, Cambridge University Press.

Stuart Lash and J. Friedman.(eds.)1992. *Modernity and Identity*. Oxford. Basil Blackwell.

Cheikh Lo. 1996. *Ne La Thiass*. World Circuit CD.

Jannie Malan. 1990. *Conflict Resolution Wisdom from Africa*. Accord. South Africa.

James Manor. (ed) 1991. *Third World Politics*. Routledge. UK

James Mayall. 1990. *Nationalism and International Society*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary. 1993. *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation*. Routledge. London.

Bala A. Musa & Ben Fraser. "Globalism, Peace and Development in Africa: A Communitarian Vision" in *Cantilevers*. Vol. 4 Second Half 1997.

Ryszard Kapucinski. 1990. *The Soccer* War. Granta. UK.

Catherine Newbury. 1988. *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda 1860-1960.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Rakiya Omaar. 1997. 'A Genocide Foretold' pp109-120 in *Soundings*. Issue 7. Autumn 1997.

W. V. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", in F*rom a Logical point of View*. New York: Harper and Row. 1961. pp20-46.

Wole Soyinka. 1996. *The Open Sore of A Continent.* Oxford University Press. Oxford.

Katherine Verdery. 1996. *What was Socialism, And what Comes Next?* Princeton. New Jersey. Princeton University Press.

ICES

COLOMBO

Printed by Unie Arts (Pvt)Ltd.