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Who is an African?

Identity, Citizenship and the Making of the Africa-Nation

Foreword: Yakubu Gowon



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Published by
Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd
P.O. Box 43418
London
SE11 4XZ

http://www.adonis-abbey.com
Email: editor@adonis-abbey.com

First Edition, May 2009

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN:9781905068913 (HB)/ 9781906704551(PB)

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Chapter 4

SURVEYING THROUGH THE NARRATIVES OF AFRICAN IDENTITY

Mohamed A. Eno & Omar A. Eno

Introduction

Any question about identity, whatever that might be, is complex, particularly when the various social scientists define it each according to the tutelage of their particular discipline. This means that the formation of identity itself entails intricacies. Members of one nation or society may not agree on the interpretation of what symbol should really constitute their identity or what it should be based on. As a result of the inherent conundrum, identity becomes a variable which is a property of conscience and also of conscious imagination; an entity laden with fluidity since there exists not one identity for a person but many identities with the function of each one of them carefully calculated on the premise of convenience in a certain context, class and clan. The complexity, however, seems to increase as its application is adjusted and readjusted from individual identity to that of collective distinctiveness shared by a group. The latter type also stretches the complication as it is shifted from family unit, one clan, race, or nation to another. Consequently, African citizenship becomes as intricate to explain as African identity is indefinite to define. The cumbersomeness in the definition invites more questions than there can be an agreement on their answers and qualifications.

Immigration too, whether voluntary or forced, has taken its toll on the formation of African identity. It has created a major phenomenon in the tracing of a workable description for an African identity that could respond to the versatile categories of ethnicities, individuals with degrees of Africanity and of races that would want to identify themselves with Africa while being of a Diasporic culture in another continent. These realities open the door for the dynamics of African Diasporism which have emerged as what can be called a deliberate hybrid of African migration into various parts of the world and vice versa. Underlying this reality is another phenomenon by which the entire setup of African identity is constructed or reconstructed in order not to lose touch with

African citizenship. Therefore, this essay discusses aspects of African identity in general and how the degree of identity may vary within the same country, as in the example of Somalia, which consists of a segment of people who consider themselves as Arab descendants and an opposing one of African indigenous stock such as the Bantu-Jareer.1

The method used for this essay is mainly sources recorded in previous studies but relevant to this essay as well as secondary data collected from various written literatures by Somali and non-Somali scholars of renown. While some of those authors are oriental scholars who studied Somalia from the locus of a homogenous society of Arab origin, the other section consists of revisionists who contradicted that long-enduring perception of homogeneity and nomadic pastoralism with a more viable thesis of heterogeneity, multi-ethnicity, and multi-culturality; hence an identity confusion of a Somalia that lingers undeterminably between Arabness and Africanness.

What constitutes an identity?

Some categories and hermeneutics of Africanity

As a continent, Africa holds together a diversity of ethnic groups and races that are further classified and even often sub-classified into a multitude of smaller clan entities that share some kind of kinship, common values, social beliefs, cultures and ethno-political structures. Adediran (1999) concurs with us by contending that if "...a collection of people share a common, self applied appellation, have a sense and share belief in a common heritage then for all intents and purposes they should be regarded as an ethnic group (pp 42-49)." Lovejoy (2000: 10) emphasized, "...ethnicity is not a thing to be discovered by a test conducted either by historians today or by people in the past who applied ethnic categories to themselves or to others. Ethnic identification involved and involves reinterpretation and re-invention of the present and the past." (For more about ethnicity see Unger and Conley 1996; Diouf 1998; Gomez 1998)

In some countries including Somalia, these ties are tightly knit and are more structured than in other countries, varying between rural and urban societies. But all the peoples in the continent may claim African identity in one way or the other depending on the reasons adduced for that claim. The following are some (though not exhaustive) types of Africanity or Africanness as we may find on the continent:

a) Africanity by accident of geography: This group consists of those who happened to be in Africa without their wish to be there; individuals who found themselves living in the continent by virtue of circumstances beyond their control.

b) Africanity by birth: Someone who was born in Africa regardless of his/her race or ethnic group, or even political ideology or cultural doctrine.

c) Africanity by settlership: These are citizens of colonial regimes who arrived as prospectors, whose governments allocated them expropriated land from the African indigenes. This group became settlers and decided to live in the continent after independence, either continuing to exploit African land and manpower or opting to sell 'their' land and property to other Africans before venturing into other activities.

d) Africanity by culture or acculturation: Someone who may not be an African by ethnicity but who has lived in the continent long enough as to have adopted the way of life, culture and tradition of the average African.

e) Africanity by ideology: Someone who may or may not be of African blood or ethnic background, but whose understanding and sentiment for Africanity is based on African thought, values, ideology and other sentiments of intuitive desire to be part of the African world.

f) Africanity by pretension or circumstantial Africanity: This group comprises of individuals or societies who use African identity as and when it suits them for their specific purposes; in other words, circumstantial Africans. Members of this group are not pleased to be identified with Negritude or blackness, be it by values, ideology, culture, ethnicity or any other quality except by 'the accident' of existing on the continent. This is close in nature to the type mentioned in (a) above.

Diversity of the African Identity

According to Appiah (1992:37) before diversity took its course, all people originated from one source, that's why "[t]here is no doubt that all human beings descend from an original population (probably, as it happens, in Africa), and that from there people radiated out to cover the habitable globe." Despite Appiah's contention, classification in one way or the other of the people on the continent is possible. As such, we may have diversified groups composed of:

a) African Negroid stock: Black Africans of sub-Saharan regions made up of the Negro inhabitants of the continent;

b) Afro-Asiatic Stock: This breed consists of those whose ancestors came to Africa from parts of Asia, mainly India, whether in search of better opportunities for survival or with the colonial regimes as junior administrative staff or as technicians or skilled people. This group may not necessarily have contractual marriage with the African indigenes but, due to long residence in the continent, have qualified to use the African segment of their identity, although at times we may call them 'Asians';

c) Afro-European stock: This indicates those diverse Europeans who came to Africa as a result of colonialism or other reasons but who later determined to remain in their respective African countries as citizens; or the offspring of African and European marriage or concubinary;

d) Afro-Arab stock: Descendents of Arabian immigrants or those born to African and Arabian parents who made the continent their home regardless of their original or ancestral home country;

e) An Arab stock of light skin pigmentation that maintains mainly an Arab-Islamic culture. This type of African identity is dominant in the Northern part of the continent and is also visible in the Sudan and some parts of East Africa.

Based on the above classifications, identity is as phenomenal as it is fluid. What is actually bona fide about identity is its symbolization of societies, the uniqueness with which it qualifies a group as distinct from other societies. Rennie states that "[i]dentities are basic to the classification of societies" (P.163). This classification of distinctness is not a factor that is isolated but one which embeds beliefs and other cultural or historical experiences (or both) which the members of a certain society value much as their way of life. The thesis here seems to support the perception that "ideology includes a value component" (p163) that is dearly sacrosanct to any given group of people that shares a certain commonality.

To some degree, we agree with Peil and Oyeneye (1998:5) about people becoming part of a society "by birth", though we also believe other methods and narratives exist in other societies (Schlee 1994; Helander 2000; M. Eno 2008). But, is this a sufficient qualification for one to be accepted as such, even when one does not appreciate his being part

of the ideals and values that inform the norm and socio-cultural beliefs of that society?

One of the conundrums of identity is that, as a tool, it can be traded in a magnitude of ways and situations, as and when it becomes applicable, and as such at times laden with undertones of ideology. Observing identity from a sociological point of view, Giddens (2002:29) postulates:

> The concept of identity in sociology is a multi-faceted one, and can be approached in a number of ways. Broadly speaking, identity relates to the understandings people hold about who they are and what is meaningful to them. These understandings are formed in relation to certain attributes that hold priority over other sources of meaning.

Controversial and complex as the qualification to, and for Africanness, remains, more disagreement may even emerge from the more conservative nationalists who might still live with a grudge caused by the untended wounds colonialism has caused to generations of Africans. One of the most excruciating pains of these unhealed wounds, among others, is the psychological as well as material damage, which the white man has caused in the appropriation of land, the most precious property of the African peasant. As prominent Kenyan scholar Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1983:26) elaborates:

> The white settler came early in the country and he immediately controlled the heart of the economy by appropriating the best part of the land to himself...The white settler was told that this would be a white man's country, and he was able to use his political power to consolidate his economic position. He forced black men into labour gangs, working for him in the 'White Highland.' "

Discussing a similar situation but focusing on the Somali context , Omar Eno (2004) weaves his lengthy writing about Italy's exploitation of the indigenous Bantu population. He narrates how the appropriation scheme resulted in "...the establishment of immense Italian plantations, which were acquired by confiscating the indigenous arable land between the two rivers Juba and Shebelle" (p143). (See also Ahmed Q. Ali 2004)

According to wa Thiong'o so "massive was the land given to people like Delamere and Grogan" (p27) that in order to realize the goal of the settler scheme "violence was used to thwart the cause of justice" (p29). In the long run, it was the common consciousness of the peasantry that waged the long hard struggle to regain its economic source from the

white man. The result was the consolidation of segments of tribal-'nations' into a broader identity of one nation.

Nation as identity

Not very unlike the conundrum that surrounds the definition and interpretation of identity, the explication of the term 'nation' is also contentious, particularly from our African perspective. Owing to its large ethnic diversity and loyalty to a specific geographical territory, the pre-colonial African society was composed of ethnic polities with independent structured leaderships. So, as it emerged, the concept of the wider nation demarcated by colonial territorial boundaries, as we see them today, has appeared as an outcome of the need for a consolidated effort in waging a collective rebellion against European colonialism. Therefore, to a considerable degree, there exists an ethnic/tribal[2] nation that is very immediate to an individual member of an ethnic group whose territorial and genealogical distinctiveness is measured against the other ethnic groups that surround their tribal borderlines. Very often, more integrity and individual sacrifices are ascribed to the tribal/ethnic group one subscribes to than to the 'peripheral nation' that was born as a result of colonialism. In Walker Connor's (1994) perception, the essence of what is called a nation is one that remains intangible. Indeed it is a kind of solidarity that is embedded in a communal belief, a norm that holds a highly cherished social 'self' driven by strong psychological force that informs distinctness of the group concerned. As Nasong'o (2008:24), drawing from Connor puts it, "when analyzing a socio-political situation, what ultimately matters is not what is, but what people believe." Connor, however, seems to agree with Anderson (1983) that the concept of nation or nationhood, in reality, binds together political communities which are imagined.

Gellner (1925-1995) contends that such ideas as nation-state, nation and nationalism have sprung into life as a result of 'modern civilization', which also came as an offspring of the industrial revolution. Somehow, Gellner (1983) tends to believe that "in traditional societies the concept of nationalism was not much known about", or adhered to as such. But Anthony Smith challenges Gellner's perception by noting the existence of a cohesive relationship between nation and earlier societies, since the idea of nation seems to have firm connections with what was earlier seen or described as ethnic group – society based on common pedigree or genealogical forefather, cultural identity and as a group that identifies itself with a given geographical territory. Smith's view is interpretable to

the ethnic-based societies of Africa, which Somalia remains a good example.

Complexity of Somali Identity: who is an African?

There is nowhere the issue of identity takes more queer dimensions than in Somali society, a matter that Mohamed Eno calls "identity confusion" as compared to identity formation. When carefully examined, the Somali identity has sustained itself in turbulent existence between:

a) Long enduring claim of Arabness by which the community seeks superiority over Negritude/Africanity; and

b) That of Africanity which the nomadic Somalis look down upon as depreciated humans of inferior quality, and as a result of which Indigenous Negroes (Bantu/Jareer) are degraded and victimized.

The Arabness of this Horn of Africa people is an identity, which was well orchestrated by the Somali people themselves and narrated to foreign scholars who came to the country to study the theme of Somali origin. In an outstanding work in the country, Luling (2002:82) noted: "The genealogy of every Somali can be traced back to a single ancestor, the legendary Hiil. Hiil in his turn is said to be descended from the Quraysh, the lineage of the prophet."

Another British anthropologist, I. M. Lewis (1955) has noted of the Somali-Arab alliance and writes: "Somali tribes have often become powerful through alliance with immigrant Arab Sheiks, of whom in retrospect they consider themselves the descendants" (p14). Lewis goes further to name specific nomadic clans who attached themselves to Arabian forefathers and writes, "the Darod family of tribes traces descent from an immigrant Arab culture-hero" (p18). He also describes the Isak in northern Somalia as "traditionally the descendents of an Arab Sheik" (p23). Likewise, the Hawiye who trace their genealogy from an Arabian ancestor do not want to be left out of the Arabian connection.

This Somali-Arab identity was recently revisited constructively and academically disputed by a number of scholars. One of them, sociologist Abdi Kusow (1995:83) questions the veracity of the tradition because, according to him, the "early Arab immigrants who arrived before the 16th century were mainly disjoined individual families who came as a result of economic and political pressure within their homelands" (p83) and therefore had neither a proof of nobility nor the significance in

number to overwhelm statistically their indigenous hosts (Mohamed Eno 2008).

Notwithstanding the apparent scholarly suspicion, the myth of Somali origin from an Arab pedigree was sustained by lack of examination into Somali genealogy. The argument was often avoided as a taboo whose investigation amounted to a betrayal of the oral traditions. One Somali intellectual and writer, Ali Mouse Iye (2008:81-82), who encountered that scenario comments:

> I thus learned a difficult lesson: nobody, not even scholars, can question in writing, the founding myths of the Somalis. In other words, I was accused of being unfair and unfaithful to my oral culture, by challenging in writing the authenticity of a cherished legend, and by transforming and ensconcing my heretic view in writing, giving it the veneer of scriptural truth.

From another critical perspective, Somali egalitarianism and pastoral democracy became dismayed at Kusow's revelation of "increasing identity assertions of previously suppressed social identities" (xiii) thence debunking an oft-hidden identity crisis within the society (See also M. Eno 2008; Eno & Eno - forthcoming). The said "assertions" undermine the purported ethno-cultural homogeneity while yet standing in favor of a Somalia that constitutes multi-ethnic communities of diverse ancestral identities i.e. Africans, Persians, Arabs and so on, but under various social strata framed by the nomads. It is the appearance of the voices of these 'suppressed social identities' that somehow partly shook the balance off the homogeneity concept which, as a consequence, paved the way for the disquieting of the revisionist scholars who overturned the earlier narrative about Somalia from its mendacious and untested homogeneity and cultural nomadism to one of multi-ethnic reality constructed on the pillars of cultural diversity.

Taking an untraditional course about Somali identity, Besteman (1995:43) argues, "Somalia can no longer be represented as a 'nation of nomads' or 'a pastoral democracy'" thus connoting the existence of identities and cultures other than Somali-'Arab' and pastoral nomadism. After a keen observation of the interplay between the Somali communities and the undesirable socio-ethnic status of the Bantu Jareer indigenes, Besteman elaborates, "the ambiguity of their status as Somali and non-Somali at the same time has perhaps facilitated their representation as a distinct and unified social group within Somali society" (p44). She challenges early writers of Somali homogeneity and

cultural nomadism by laying open the distinctive identities of the two groups: "people who are jareer are considered more 'African,' as distinct from Somalis, who are considered more 'Arabic'" (p47-48). (For more about Jareer – Jileec Somalis read Omar Eno "The Jareer Factor in Somali History: Emphasis on Ethnicity, Slavery, Stigma, and Plantation Economy (1840-2000); Forthcoming PhD Dissertation).

In one of his contentious and most read works on Somalia, Ali J. Ahmed (1995) censures orientalist scholars for their part in purporting the core Arab element in Somali genealogy. The same concern, as Ali (1995:141) writes, was raised by a Washington Post reporter who describes the country as "Poor Somalia – not enough Arab and not enough African." An analysis of the reporter's well-articulated but taunting phrase, informs a kind of derogation which, in our opinion, does not look down on either Africanness or Arabness in their rightful entities, but the dilemma that harbors anything short of any of them i.e. being in-between and, therefore, impure. But to reach a specific goal in an unavoidable situation, a Somali may instantly swerve from his Arab identity to that of Africanity: a) If s/he encounters discrimination or identity denial from that group; b) If the African identity serves to achieve a goal at a specific time and place.

Our argument, focusing on this peculiar characteristic of the Somali, appears to be supported by several researchers who studied Somalis. In a very recent study, Kroner (2007) reveals how Somalis configured with Africanity under a circumstance of oppression and discrimination:

> The negative attitude of their host country's population leads the Somalis to form a new group identity versus the Egyptian/Arabs while in other countries I heard quite often that at least some Somalis have Arab ancestors and they differentiate themselves from Africans. So said Said Omar, 'The Somali people who say that they have Arab ancestors don't know what they are talking about. We are Africans!' He goes on to state that 'the Arabs are the biggest racists, they are worse than Apartheid. They despise us because we are black.' In the case of the Somalis in Egypt, due to multiple forms of discrimination they embrace an African identity (p56).

Although Kroner quotes her respondent as saying "They despise us because we are black" and that in Egypt the Somalis "...embrace an African identity"; a close analysis of Kroner's work also shows how Somalis resort to the very identity (Africanness) they despise and denigrate in their own country, as was elaborated in Ahmed and in

Besteman above. But such embrace was made possible only after encountering "multitude forms of discrimination."

Somalia's genealogical connection to Arab ancestry has a long history among scholars, oral historians and traditionists, all of whom encountered at one stage or the other how Somalis ..."differentiate themselves from Africans" (Kroner, p56). As a further elaboration of our contention about the Somalis' superiority complex over Africans, and for that matter over Negritude, we may quote a verse from the poetry work of popular Somali bard Ali Dhuux in despise of the black African citizen:

Annaku caddaankaanu la loolannaa
Madowgu ma Ciseyno

Translation:

We compete with the white man, (and therefore)
Deem no respect for the Blackman/black race

Ali Dhuux's remark reminds us of Jafferson, cited in Appiah (1992), who "...argued in his *Notes on the State of Virginia,* that the Anglo-Saxon people were superior to blacks in the endowments both of body and mind..." (p49). On the other hand, while some of those born in Africa are distancing themselves from Africanity, others of African ethnic background but born in other continents, are more attached to Africa. For instance, Du Bois cited in Appiah (1992:41) affirms that

> "Africa is of course my fatherland. Yet neither my father nor my father's father ever saw Africa or knew its meaning or cared over much for it. My mother's folk were closer and yet their direct connection, in culture and race, became tenuous; still my tie to Africa is strong."

Another historical incident was reported in *The East African Standard* (1930) after Somalis waged a strong protest against the "status under the law of the Colony of the Natives of Africa" which classified them as Africans. Rather than being classified as Africans, the Somalis preferred that "they should be recognized as Asiatics" regardless of the higher tax they would be imposed in the latter category, as long as they were recognized for their Arab identity!

Claims of Somali homogeneity and Arab identity, led to the suppression of the identity of the African stock among the community; the specific group scholars describe as 'the aborigines', 'indigenes', 'Negroid stock', 'Zenj', 'Jareer', 'Bantu', or as 'residues of the

Bantu/Sabaki speaking tribes of Shungwaya.' (See Cerulli 1957 -- 1964, Nurse 1980; Allen 1983; Luling 2002; Eno & Eno 2007).

Despite his paradigmatic portrayal of Somalia as an homogenous society of pastoral democracy, I.M. Lewis hints at the diversity of the people in this African peninsula in his citation of Puccioni as the latter discusses another category of people consisting of "...despised people of possible Negroid origin with whom the other Wangial (*Somalis*) do not intermarry" (p40) (Emphasis added). Lewis elaborates the category of the "despised people" as the indigenous Bantu stock consisting "...of original nuclei of pre-Cushitic Negroid inhabitants" (p41). The era in Lewis' context traces these events back to a time when "[m]ost of the country, certainly the southern part, was peopled by Negroes" who were not slaves as mentioned in the mythical tradition of the self-ennobled Somali nomads, but as people "who seem to have constituted the aboriginal population" (p45).

The narrative here clearly displays the identity divide between the people; one group yearning for identification with Arabness and the other celebrating the pride of its African Negritude. In a radical essay by a Somali scholar, Ahmed (1995:141) comments on the Arab–African identity divide, taking SAMO (Somali African Muki Organization) as an example, the movement that advocates for justice and equal rights for the oppressed Bantu-Somalis in contrast to the organizations of the predominant Somali (Arab) nomadic groups. He wrote:

"By including 'African' in its name, the organization bares a hidden secret in Somali society. Supporters of the movement belong to the segment of the Somali society who are often given the derogatory epithet of Jareer (kinky hair)".

In one instance, Ahmed describes the Bantu – Jareer people as a " group that has among other reasons been victimized for their physical features" (p142) and their identification with Negritude and/or Africanity. After noting the perplexity of identity within a single nation, with Somalia being a case in hand, we may cross to the other side of the African identity in the enterprise of Pan-Africanism.

Pan-Africanism

How to define the constituents of African identity may be problematic in the context of Pan-Africanism. Here we have to consider certain realities about the dynamics of African identity.

Although there are many ways to identify one's ethnic "identity," it's even more complex and confusing when some segments of the "African"

society tend to not only refrain from identifying themselves with other African ethnic entities but in fact disdain Africanism. Indeed, Somalia and some other nations in the African continent opted to identify themselves as Asiatic-Arab rather than Africans, not simply from the perspective of identity per se, but also from a socio-psychological belief that the former is superior to the latter. Based on such attitude and thinking, several so-called Africans perceive that being an African is a derogative identity.

It is worth reminiscing that several individuals (including scholars) from certain Northern African countries, the Sudan and Somalia, whom we (separately and together) encountered in discussions on race and identity on various occasions in Africa, Europe, Asia and in America, preferred to identify themselves *first* with their Arabian identity (for which they had a right to) than with their African citizenship. By this paradigm, ethnicity seems to be more of a priority than the national geographical identity. But, among the aforementioned countries, the dilemma rests with Somalia and Sudan who are ethnically black but categorize themselves *first* as Arabite stock.

To begin with, we assume the answer to the questions: *what should constitute Africanity,* or, *who should qualify to be an African?* - should not summarily evade the other inevitable segment of the question: *who should determine the qualities of Africanness and/or qualifiers for Africanity?* These types of questions need to be adequately exhausted particularly in considering the various aspects of the multi-raciality and multi-ethnicity of the communities living on the continent. Relevant also is the question: *Should Africanity be determined on the premise of ethnicity or in terms of language or culture or ideology?* Even if the philosophy of Pan-Africanism materializes, how will the language or languages that will be Africa's identity through its medium of communication be determined among the diverse ethnic national and regional languages that are already in (or have shown) rivalry with one another? Robert July (1992:29) highlights this tendency about Africa of "whether an accurate assessment is best achieved by racial or by linguistic qualification."

Although Lipset holds the notion that whereas in European or Canadian society nation is tied to community and that ideological commitment is what holds the nation of America together; the situation of Africa is quite different where ethnicity and segmentary tribal entities predominantly characterize the society. A multi-ethnic Africa ushers in another reality about Africa; that of linguistic perplexity which will heave a burden in the scheming of a politically as well as socially consolidated

African continent. As we have seen in the process of formulating a national identity, a type of national language was used effectively to connect with people and mobilize them (Wright 2004). Contrarily, in the wider sense of establishing a common African identity that is workable, the primary obstacle may be the adoption of a common vehicle of communication that also reflects Africa by identity.

Therefore, whatever the political orientation or economic strategies, a question will remain as to whether one or more African languages will be adopted as a symbol of African identity and as a vehicle of communication, or whether a European (colonial/imperial) language will take this function as a medium of communication (as it is today) to the disadvantage of African identity and unity. The linguistic aspect of the question needs to be appropriately addressed considering the significance of language as a representative of a *certain* culture and as such an *identity* of a group and not the other/s.

The linguistic domain has increased recently compared to the ethnic or racial mirror from which Africa was usually seen. Like the ethnic complexity, July notes the linguistic paradigm as "a technique that indeed eliminates certain complications, but unfortunately introduces others" (p20). On the other hand, even if the uphill task of formulating the qualifiers of African identity is painstakingly elaborated and agreed upon -- whether ideologically- or physiologically-based -- the determination of which African language to adopt will remain a puzzle since linguistic rivalry poses a serious problem to the African societies at the clan or tribal levels within many nations. This reality prefigures a concern, especially when world class African scholars like Ahmed (1996) reveal that in many African countries, including Somalia, "...the kind of language used is in contention" (p2). The solemn reason for this anxiety denotes another more dominant factor in contemporary African society as language shapes "the socio-political and economic definitions of the nation" (p3). (For more about the problem of languages in Africa see Bokamba 1992; Mazrui and Mazrui 1995; M. Eno 2005, 2008)

Zeal and over-ambition to create a more unified, more cohesive Africa to function as the states of the European Union or the US may expose what Winston Churchill would call (2002:756) "a situation both immeasurable and laden with doom" to a continent and people already politically and economically vulnerable, ravaged by disease, war, corruption and resource mismanagement; factors that contributed significantly to the continental brain drain and the creation of an immense population of African Diaspora scattered in the various corners

of the world. These, together with other external forces, including the legacy of slavery and colonialism, have reduced Africa to a position of "...a troubled continent, bubbling with conflicting forces and tribal, personal, and national rivalries" (Palmer and Perkins, p502).

Notwithstanding our contention with Davidson (1955:233) about Africa's being "united by a common acceptance of despair" because of Africa's struggle against colonialism and its effects rather than acceptance of it, we seem to agree with his suggestion of the continent being "united by a common surge of hope," a hope which, in our opinion, holds a vision and ideology for unification, while yet struggling "to realize in practice the African political aspirations."

Looking at the African scene from another perspective, and reviewing Lippman's statement that "the true constituent members of the international order of the future," which indeed Africa is an entity, "are communities of states," an amalgamation of the holders of African identity under a single banner may contribute in many respects to the world societies, while simultaneously bearing in mind the fact that not all these African identities have emerged from the same historical experience or socio-political orientation.

However, it may not yet be too late for Africa to learn from previous discrepancies related to the formations of institutions and counter-institutions which one after the other became unproductive and in fact collapsed due to what Palmer and Perkins suggest as "rivalries among the leaders of the new African states and by conflicting interests and orientation" (p585). Some reminiscent examples are: Conference of Independent African States (CIAS); and The Proclamation of the Casablanca Group, which has not lived up to expectations.

Conclusion

Quoting Collins and Porras (1997:40) Ramphele (2001) writes, "One of the most important steps you can take in building a visionary company is not action, but a shift in perspective." We seem to endorse this notion of "a shift in perspective" for Africa to participate in the global economy as well as political power play. But in order to achieve worthwhile results of an effective "shift in perspective" the scheme should first of all lay its foundation firmly at the national level. A unified African ideological stance as well as identity-consciousness (and not ethno-centrism) can not be realized when a certain segment of the sons and daughters of Africa depreciate their black identity and the values of African consciousness just to a symbol of inferiority. We concur with Ramphele that "A shift in

perspective is surely needed to liberate those trapped by this stigma" (p68). Accordingly, until and unless we learn to be intrinsically proud of who we are, and the ideological doctrine for which we stand, Africans are bound to lose touch with the reality of their identity.

One step towards making 'a shift in perspective' is, as Ramphele suggests, "...to confront the legacy of inferiority and superiority complexes" (p68). It is necessary that some of us first of all overcome the evils of psychological torture such as stereotyping and its affluent product – prejudice -against one another. In other words, Africa has to take the initiative of addressing at the national level all sorts of ill-will caused by the "particular culprit" (Steele 1992:68) called stigma. In the circumstance where in the same country one section of the society craves for a non-African identity and another suffers marginalization, degradation and victimization owing to its African identity, the answer to the question of *who is an African* acquires a certain sense of urgency. Or, put in another way: *who is more African?* Whatever the perspective, mutual co-existence is eventually what everyone will want the continent to achieve, rather than the formation of pseudo-identities and genealogical lineages of inexplicable origin.

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Notes

1 Please take note that the names Bantu and Jareer will be used in this chapter interchangeably because both names refer to the same people.

2 Although these days the word tribe is often used by many, it was historically introduced by European colonialists to Africa. For the purpose of this chapter and from an anthropological and sociological perspective we are safe to use the word "tribe." Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Africans used words such as kinship, clanship, endogamy, etc.

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