History Textbook

West African Senior School Certificate Examination

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Cover illustration: Students at Aberdeen Primary School on June 22, 2015 in Freetown Sierra Leone. Photo © Dominic Chavez/World Bank, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0. https://flic.kr/p/wtYAdS

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Why this ebook?

This textbook is aimed at West African students taking West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) History Paper 1, "West Africa and the Wider World from Earliest Times to 2000". This **free** resource covers all the current syllabus, as well as including two chapters (11. Women, Gender and Political Authority; 12. The Environment in West African History) which - it is hoped - might be later added. The authors hope that this content will allow secondary school students to gain a good overview of West African history as their syllabus defines it, and at the same time contribute to new debates.

This textbook has been designed by matching up expertise and relevance of authors, geographical coverage for countries sitting the WASSCE exams, and ability to engage in collective work. Historians based in Ghana, Sierra Leone and The Gambia work here with Nigerian scholars in the diaspora. Together with this team are two colleagues selected for their particular expertise, from King's College London.

For an updating version, see the website hosting the ebook:
https://wasscehistorytextbook.com/

Funders

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The book was launched in Banjul, Gambia on 25 March 2018.

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Vincent Hiribarren trained as a History and Geography teacher and taught in France, China, Guinea, England and the United States. From 2008 to 2012, he undertook a PhD on the history of Borno, Nigeria at the University of Leeds. His first book *A History of Borno: Trans-Saharan African Empire to Failing Nigerian State* (Hurst and Oxford University Press, 2017) engages in the history of West Africa with a particular focus on the historical continuity of territories and borders of Borno, a region located on the Nigerian shores of Lake Chad. He is also interested in cartography not only the studying of maps but also their creation. You can have a look at his website to see some of his Digital Humanities projects.

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Introduction

In 1952, a group of British education experts met in Accra in the then Gold Coast, now Ghana, to establish the West African Examination Council (WAEC) to serve as the common examinations board for the five English speaking countries in British Colonial West Africa. The WAEC replaced the Cambridge and London Examination Boards which pupils in Ghana, Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone sat to at the tail end of their secondary school careers.

WAEC was at the time just one of several such transboundary institutions created by the departing British colonial rulers to bring the colonies closer; the other institutions were the West African Currency Board, the West African Airways, and the West African Frontier Force. It is an intriguing paradox that of these only WAEC has survived to this day and remains relevant 65 years after its creation. WAEC remains the sole examination body in the five Anglophone countries in West Africa (Liberia joined in 1974) and is serving its purpose very well so far.

Yet, pupils who sit its exams yearly have in the past several decades faced severe shortage of reference materials to prepare them for the exams which will enable them to enter tertiary institutions. This is particularly true of subjects like history. In the 1960s and 1970s, governments in the WAEC member states promoted the study of history and encouraged historical research in the universities like Ibadan in Nigeria and Legon in Ghana which produced well known historians like Adu Boahen and Jacob Ajayi. They wrote reliable history textbooks books for secondary school pupils such as Boahen's celebrated *Topics in West African History* (1966).

Sadly, in the past two decades, as governments feel obliged to cut on education budgets in the name of structural adjustment, they have removed subjects like history from the list of priority areas of study in the schools (from 2009 to 2016, history was in fact removed from the curriculum in Nigeria!). History teachers find it difficult to get scholarships at teacher training colleges or under graduate levels. Local and international publishers like Longman or Afram no longer publish history text books. This has negatively affected the availability of trained history teachers and resource materials.

Accordingly, secondary schools in WAEC countries no longer have access to dependable reference materials on either of the two components of the WAEC history syllabus- National Histories and West Africa and the Wider World. This has created a situation where teachers have become pamphleteers, photocopying or stitching together material which purports to cover the syllabus to sell to the pupils. These pamphlets are not only known for their crudity in terms of production but are of low standards; profuse with factual and grammatical errors. History pupils in some schools in The Gambia have to refer to up to five pamphlets as each history teachers has his own pamphlets which the pupils must buy. It this sad state of affairs which has dented students' performance in this very important subject, which has encouraged us to embark on this project to produce reference materials on history for WAEC candidates in our schools.

This basically is how the idea for this e-book started. Our aim is therefore to produce a dependable resource book covering the main aspect of the WAEC history syllabus for Senior Secondary Schools, namely, West Africa and the Wider World, and put it at the disposal of students and e. The students will find the material here presented absolutely useful as it is well researched and also written by people who are experts in the subject matter, and most of whom are prize winning history teachers, so to speak. This why every effort has been done to make the text student friendly with questions and fact boxes inserted to further assist the users. History teachers, who like their students, also suffer from chronic lack of useable reference material will also get a lot from this material while they await a teacher's handbook which will surely accompany his book. Its online availability will assist students with any form of internet connection to access the material at no cost.

We wish to thank all those whose participation has blessed this effort and made it possible, and all the many institutions without which it could not have happened: the University of Sierra Leone at Fourah Bay, where the initial meeting was hosted in May 2016; Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology at Kumasi through the support of its History Department; the Ghana History Teachers' Association; the University of The Gambia; and the funding which was provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the United Kingdom, the African Studies Association of the UK, and King's College London's Department of History and Faculty of Arts and Humanities, all of which has made this possible.

Work started on the project in late 2015 when the chapters were identified and assigned to the writers. Through a flurry of emails between the co-ordinators Hassoum Ceesay in the Gambia and Dr. Toby Green in UK, preparations for the first writers meeting were completed and held in Freetown, Sierra Leone in May 2017. There the parameters for the e-book such as house style, and final content were agreed upon and deadlines set for the chapters. It was also agreed in Freetown that the e-book will be launched at Banjul, Gambia in the margins of the WAEC General Meeting in March 2018 – we wish also to than our brothers and sisters at WAEC for facilitating this presentation so that it has come to pass today.

We wish to recommend this book to all our brothers, sisters studying history in our schools. In this effort by a handful of experts from across the region, they should get heart and courage that history, as a subject, still matters to all the national development efforts of the countries in WAEC. In other words, history is also a developmental subject which can help our economies grow through job creation in sectors like museums, heritage, tourism, hospitality amongst others. Historians can be the best public administrators also, and the most enlightened politicians. Above all, a study of history helps to give the teeming youth in our new nations a sense of identity and purpose which we know they need in order not to risk their lives across the Mediterranean Sea or end up being auctioned crudely in Libyan slave marts!

Benjamin Kye Ampadu, Hassoum Ceesay and Toby Green (January 2018)

1 - Historiography and Historical Skills

THE WRITING OF HISTORY

The historian's goal is not to collect the "facts" about the past but rather to acquire insights into the ideas and realities that shaped the past of lives of men and women of earlier societies. Some of the beliefs and institutions of the past may seem alien to us, others may also seem too familiar. But in either case, when we study the people of the past, what we are really learning about is the rich diversity of human experience. The study of history, however, is the study of the beliefs and desires, practices and institutions of human beings.

African history is the study of the past institutions and cultures of the people who live in Africa. The economic, political and social activities of the people who had once lived in Africa are studied under African history. The following is the importance of studying African history.

i. The study of history like other disciplines help some individuals to earn a living (career aspect). It serves as a source of employment for people who study the subject at a higher level.

ii. The study of African history has helped in the discovery of the activities of man in far off times. Africa has been proved by researchers like Dr. Louis Leakey to be the original home of man (Homo sapiens). The study of African history would lead to more discoveries of hidden facts. It will highlight Africa's contribution to world civilization.

iii. The study of African history gives the individual the opportunity to relate his past with the present in a better way. Thus, the various stages of society's development that has to be evaluated to understand the present situation. One will best understand the social, economic and political state of affairs of the society if they knows how things were done in the past. This gives them the key to find solutions to today's problems.

iv. African history has addressed the notion and misconception that Africa has contributed insignificantly to history and to dispel the idea of white superiority, e.g., the Hamitic hypothesis assumed that the African 'Hamites' were 'whites' akin to the European as they and their culture were inherently superior to the Black Africans and their culture, so that wherever Black Africans had apparently made a striking advance, the explanation must be sought in 'Hamitic' influence. Early Arab and European travelers met Africans in different cultural setting. The African has distinctive names, music and dances, political and religious settings as well as rites of passage. Because these practices did not conform to the cultural practices of the Europeans and the Arab writers, they classified Africans as primitive, backward or culturally stagnant.

v. African history enables the student to develop a critical mind and appreciate the variety of human behavior and motives and understand politics, economics and society. In this respect, history in the African context can increase human tolerance and respect for

differences in opinion. Knowledge of other cultures through the appreciation of history encourages students of history to engage in critical analysis of their own culture and society and to understand and criticize their own assumptions.

vi. The study of African history is beneficial since it helps to acquire knowledge about African traditions, culture, norms, and values and to take pride in them and present them. One is able to perceive and recognize the meaning of events from a perspective other than our own to appreciate the diversity of human beliefs and cultures.

vii. African history enables the history student to acquire knowledge of their own country and the African continent.

viii. African history has a practical use in international relations and diplomacy. Its study promotes international understanding and sympathy.

ix. Studying African history will enable the history student to acquire the skills and values that our past can give. African history students can be inspired by events and deeds of great people that will instill in them a sense of pride.

x. A proper examination of the past can tell us a great deal about how we came to be who we are.

xi. One studies African history to be able to appreciate the use of other sources in the writing and reconstruction of African history apart from written sources.

xii. It enables the student to develop an accurate sense of African historical chronology.

SOURCES OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Most rural communities in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, The Gambia and Ghana obtain their drinking water from streams or hand dug wells. One may describe such streams and wells as a community's source of water supply. Similarly, historians use the term historical sources to refer to the means by which historical information is gotten. Again, by historical sources, the historian means traces that the past has left of itself in the present, in the form of document, artifacts, buildings, castles and forts, coins, institution, traditions, festivals, customs and so forth.

TYPES OR SOURCES OF AFRICAN HISTORY

There are two sources for the writing of history. They are the primary and the secondary sources

- Primary sources

Primary sources are materials produced by the people or groups directly involved in the event or topic under discussion, ether as participants or as witnesses. Some primary sources are written documents such as letters, diaries, newspaper and magazine articles, speeches, autobiographies, treatise, census data and marriage, birth and death registers. In addition, historians often examine primary sources that are not written. Examples are works of art, films, recordings, items of clothing, household objects, tools and archaeological remains.

- Oral sources (interviews) and eyewitness accounts can be used as primary sources.

DOCUMENTARY OR WRITTEN SOURCES OF AFRICAN HISTORY

This refers to documents or written accounts which give information about past events concerning people. Examples of documentary sources are:

i. Newspapers

ii. Diaries

iii. Travelers' account

iv. Journals

v. Reports of commissions of enquiry

vi. Manifesto parties

vii. Government official records

viii. Minutes of meetings

ix. Private letters

x. Official reports of officers

xi. Court records

xii. Books

xiii. Anniversary brochures

xiv. Tributes

xv. Magazines etc

IMPORTANCE OR ADVANTAGES OF WRITTEN SOURCES OF AFRICAN HISTORY

i. Easy To Use

It is easier to use written sources in the reconstruction of African history. This is because books or documents can often be carried from one place to another where the reader or the writer wants to use it. This cannot be done in the non-documentary sources.

ii. Accurate and Reliable Facts

Written records of contemporary issues give first-hand information which is naturally more accurate and reliable. This is because dates and events are chronologically well recorded. For example minutes of meetings give exact and accurate date, and the time the meeting was held. Similarly, records written in diaries are recorded on the spot as events occur or soon after. This helped historians to know the exact dates for instance the Asante fought with the British because the wars were documented. Written sources help reduce any tendency of the historian to use guesswork in his work.

iii. Effective Means of Keeping Records

Keeping accurate records of events is very difficult especially where written sources are lacking and people rely solely on oral tradition. One can say therefore that written sources are more effective means or method of keeping records of past events.

iv. Promotion of Research

Written sources of African history promote research work. For instance, when readers feel that there is a deficiency in a written account, they are encouraged to dig further in order to contribute to greater and more accurate knowledge about the issue.

v. Help Cross-Checking Information

Written sources help in cross-checking data or information collected from oral and other sources of historical knowledge. This help to reach reliable conclusions.

vi. Provision of Detailed Information

Documents provide more detailed information than oral sources, e.g. dates, illustrative pictures, names of participants in events etc..

WEAKNESSES/DISADVANTAGES/LIMITATIONS OF WRITTEN SOURCES OF AFRICAN HISTORY

i. Easily Destroyed

Written sources can easily be destroyed by termites, rodents, fire, flood, earthquakes, humidity, etc. Written records destroyed by any of these disasters cannot be retrieved unlike oral sources which can be retold. Termites and rodents may also eat away vital information in written forms.

ii. Condition Biases and Distortions

Another major limitation of written sources of history is that they may contain biases and distortions. The writer may intentionally write to suit his opinions or leave out some aspects of the events which are not to his liking. For example some books written by European writers state that slave trading is a blessing to the people of West Africa. Others have written in their books that until the coming of Europeans in West Africa, the history of West Africa was only wars and misery.

iii. False Information

Again, one of the strongest demerit of written source is, once certain materials or information have been written down, people take them to be as fact even when they are not crosschecked. Not all the information found in writing or books should be taken to be historical truth; there could be a little bit of exaggeration, bias or prejudice.

iv. Expensive

Written materials are expensive. The writer needs materials like paper, pen, book, diary, etc to put down events. Also, before one gets written materials, they may have to make use of the other sources like archeology, linguistics etc.

v. Difficult to get

Once again, written materials are hard to come by, especially in Africa where the art of writing started late. Even in Africa where they are available, they are fragmentary and far between. Since writing began very late in Africa apart from ancient Egypt, written records are generally scanty and scarce. This means that the historian has to rely more on the non-documentary sources, making the work more difficult.

vi. Getting Lost

Written materials can get lost, thus depriving the people the historical information if they are the only sources of information.

vii. Illiteracy

Documentary sources are written materials that have been put into writing and to be able to read one needs to be literate (able to read and write). Many Africans cannot read nor write, hence rendering written sources of African history deficient in the reconstruction of African history.

viii. Consult Experts

Finally, to come out with authentic written materials, the services of experts in the other disciplines like archeology, linguistics, etc. are needed in order to interpret correctly historical events.

NON DOCUMENTARY OR UNWRITTEN SOURCES OF AFRICAN HISTORY

This refers to pieces of information about past events collected from sources of history other than books and other written materials. This explains why this section refers to unwritten sources. Examples of non-documentary sources are Archaeology, Oral Tradition, Linguistic, Ethnography, Art forms/History, Ethnobotany, Ethnozoology, Ethnomusicology, Numismatics, and Serology.

ORAL TRADITION AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Oral tradition refers to accounts of the traditions about the past passed from generation to generation by word of mouth or other methods. It is usually passed on in the form of a story, legend, song, myth, folk tales, customs or other forms of music. There are two forms of oral traditions:

1. The Fixed Text Type

2. Free Text Type

The fixed text type of oral traditions have an unchanging format and content and have to be memorized and passed on from generation to generation. Example of 'fixed text' type are words of folk music, praise songs, drum music and horn music.

An example of drum music is the Mpintin drums of Denkyira which recall the past hegemony and wealth of that state in two terse lines: 'kotoko som amponsem' (the porcupine i.e. Asante serves Amponsem-the king of Denkyira) and 'Boa Amponsem a odi sika atomprada' (King Boa Amponsem who uses fresh gold all the time).

Similarly, Abuakwa horn music immortalize the valour of Abuakwa's Queen Dokuaa at the Akatamanso (1826) they sing 'Dokua obaa basia a oko oprem ano' (Dokua the valiant woman who fought before canon).

The free-text type consists of accounts of events usually stool (dynastic) histories and family or village traditions. For example some court officials can memorize some aspects of the state history and can tell others when necessary. Some court officials include the linguist (okyeame), court heralds (esen) and executioners (abrafo) in the Akan states. Also, in Mali the (griot) and Togo (evne) played similar roles.

MERITS/ADVANTAGES/BENEFITS OF ORAL TRADITION AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

i. Easily Accessible

Oral tradition is easily accessible in the sense that, gathering information by the historian does not involve much work. In every community, town or village in Africa, one can get some elders who are ready to give the traditions and historical events in the area. The historian in one way or the other, only need to contact knowledgeable informants and respondents for the necessary information needed.

ii. Main Source of History

In the absence of other sources, oral tradition becomes one of the sole sources of writing history. In a situation where there are no written records or other pieces of information like personal diaries, minutes of meetings, journals etc. the historian often relies to a large extent on the information provided by oral tradition to compile his findings.

iii. Helps Other Sources

Oral tradition as a source of African history has helped to confirm historical facts from other sources. For example, it helps the archeologist to confirm their findings thus throwing more light on the findings of the history of a place. Again, the archaeologist would have to be directed by a story from the local people before he goes to excavate the site. Therefore, without oral tradition, the archaeologist's work become difficult.

iv. Historical Trends and Events

Oral tradition helps the historian to determine historical trends and events. Through the comparison of several oral traditions, the historian can eliminate biases, inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the written records they are using, to come out with an accurate historical account of the past.

v. Interpretation of Archeological Findings

Oral tradition has also helped in the interpretation of archeological data dug from the soil. This is necessary because the artefacts found are both anonymous and fragmentary. For instance, if an archaeologist unearthed human skeletons with lost limbs apparently severed by sharp-edged materials, they may deduce that the excavated site was a mass grave where people who died after an armed conflict were buried. They may not conclude with that, but rather validate their evidence by embarking upon personal enquiry, interviewing target groups in the area. If they are lucky, they would have pieces of information about events similar to what they have speculated.

vi. Preservation of History

Oral tradition has done a lot to assist with the reconstruction of African history, this is because Africans have relied on oral traditions to preserve their history for centuries. It is

again, the only living source of historical reconstruction because it gives room for further questioning and analysis of the information given to ensure its validity or truthfulness.

DEMERITS/DISADVANTAGES/LIMITATIONS/WEAKNESSES/DEFECTS OF ORAL TRADITION AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

i. Not Precise in Detail

In the first instance, oral tradition is not precise in detail. The narrator may give information in a long clumsy way without any specific point. Important aspect of events and their sequences are forgotten as the informants advance in age. As these stories are retold to subsequent generations, they are filled with misrepresentation of facts.

ii. Exaggerations

Oral tradition is full of exaggeration, biases and prejudices. The narrator might add irrelevant information or might leave out information which does not suit his interest. Narrators normally leave out these aspects of the story consciously or unconsciously leading to one-sided information that cannot serve as a sound basis for historical writing.

iii. Inaccurate Figures

Moreover, oral tradition cannot be dated with certainty. The narrator might forget part of the events or important dates. People tend to lose track of events through no fault of theirs and therefore forget the actual date and time that a particular event took place. For instance, situations where an event occurs frequently, it brings confusion in terms of specifics since the narrator does a lot of guesswork.

iv. Death of Informants

Another shortfall of oral tradition is that, death or calamity affecting people can result in the loss of important aspect of oral tradition since only the living can tell it and not the dead. To top it up, if people were afflicted by a calamity leading to the loss of lives including the key informants, then the information of the affected area would be lost forever.

v. Mixing Up Facts

Furthermore in using oral tradition as the main source of reconstruction of African history, details and sequences of events might be forgotten with the passage of time since the human mind keeps the history, one might forget some important points as years pass by.

vi. Difficult to Cross-Check

Indeed cross-checking becomes difficult in oral tradition if the narrator is the only source of information. It is a fact that oral tradition is most likely to contain inaccuracies and failures

to collaborate the information gathered from other source might produce shoddy work hence the need to cross-check and test events.

vii. Emphasis On Personalities And Events

Oral tradition tends to lay more emphasis on personalities like kings, rulers and leaders as well as events like wars and migration to the neglect of social and economic aspects of people's history, thus making the historical approach somewhat narrow, to the disadvantages of scholarship and posterity.

viii. Oral traditionists are men, and thus there is a gendered bias in what is recalled, and the way it is recalled, which may diminish the role women have played in the African past.

ARCHAEOLOGY AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Archaeology is the study of a people's culture of years past through excavation and examination of material remains that are found. It is the understanding of human actions in the past through a study of what they did rather than what they said of themselves. Again, archaeology provides information about how societies adapted their ways of life to suit their natural environment or how they modified their environment to suit their way of life. Archaeological information is obtained through the excavation or digging of specially chosen sites.

In Europe, archaeology has been a useful source of historical evidence since the 19th century AD whereas in Africa, it has been helpful in the reconstruction of the past since the second half of the 20th century.

The archaeologist uses radio-carbon dating (carbon-14 dating) to determine the age of artefacts. The use of this technique to examine running of houses tools and weapons etc. has contributed immensely towards the reconstruction of African history. Among the evidences are the famous Ife works of art in bronze and pottery, which came to the notice of the world through archeological excavations in 1910. Secondly, excavated sites at Igbo Ukwu in the south of Enugu-Nigeria has shown that a highly advanced society existed in that part of Nigeria in the 10th century AD. Thirdly, in the Brong-Ahafo region of modern Ghana, excavation conducted at Begho provided evidence of copper and iron industries. However there are many important sites in West Africa such as Kantora on the Upper Gambia river and Kansala – capital of the Kaabu empire in north-eastern Guinea-Bissau – which still require excavation.

BENEFITS/IMPORTANCE/ADVANTAGES/MERITS/STRENGTHS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

i. Existence of Civilization Long Ago

Archaeological information shows that African societies attained high levels of civilization and development in pre European time. Example is the site excavated at Igbo Ukwu and Ife in Nigeria which have revealed highly advanced societies where bronze and pottery technology were practiced.

ii. Trade Contacts

Archeology helps to reveal the kind of trade contacts that existed among people in the past. A good example is that of the excavations carried out at Begho in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana, which showed that long before the arrival of the Europeans, Africans were in contact with China, Indonesia, Arabia and Phoenicia, since porcelain, coins, pipes and bottles from these areas were found.

iii. Revelation of Culture

Through the studies of archaeology we get an idea about the political organization of people, their religious/traditional beliefs and economic activities etc. These come to light when archaeologists excavate materials which experts examine and relate them. For instance, if a chief's linguist staff is found after excavations one may relate it to religious/traditional belief or authority.

iv. Ancient Tools

Archeology also provides information about the way different people have adapted to their environment e.g. by revealing the tools they made for various purposes.

v. Make Other Sources Clear

Archeologists help to confirm what can be known from other sources e.g. Oral Tradition

vi. Main sources of Pre-History

Archaeology has helped historians to write history of pre-historic times. Since writing began late in most parts of the continent, archeology has become the main source of information for the reconstruction of African history of the distant past.

vii. How Ancient people lived

Archeologists have revealed in their studies what our ancestors did and so help to provide useful evidence for writing about. Through archeology, the material culture of people in the past becomes known. It is only to excavations that we go to know the kind of building people built and the occupation they engaged in. For example, the ruins in Zimbabwe, Kumbi-Saleh (empire of Ghāna) and the pyramids in Egypt.

viii. Origin of Humanity

Archeological studies have shown that human beings originated from Africa. From this source, it has been proved that Africa was the first home of man (Homo sapiens). This has

been proved by the fossils discovered by Dr. and Mrs. Leakey at Olduvai Gorge in the Northern Tanzania.

ix. Dates of Events

Archeological studies help us to date event e.g. the use of carbon-14 dating or radio carbon dating.

x. Reliable Source

It has been a reliable source of history since artifacts could be seen and felt.

DEMERITS/DISADVANTAGES/LIMITATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

i. Guess work

In archaeology, one is bound to use much guess work in the reconstruction of the past, thus leading to inaccurate information. Also, the use of radio-carbon dating always approximate dates. Artifacts found are anonymous and lack the sequence of daily life. Makers and users of such artifacts are usually not known. This makes the archeologist do guesswork.

ii. Very Expensive

The use of archaeology as a source of writing African history is expensive. It is expensive considering high cost of labour excavating machines, finding the selected site, getting permit, laboratory expenses, and special tools among others. The use of the radio carbon dating (carbon 14) in determining the age of an archaeological find is very complex and expensive.

iii. Nature of the Climate/Climate Condition

The nature of the tropical climate in Africa makes it difficult for archeological findings (material remains) to be preserved in the soil. The tropical rainforest has high temperature and rainfall which promotes decay of fossil remains as well as chemical weathering. These conditions facilitate fossil decay and weathering of rocks leaving little or no traces of rock paintings or carvings which are very useful sources of information to historians in their attempt to reconstruct the African past.

iv. Accidental preservation

One major limitation of archeology is that the means by which information is preserved is not deliberate, so most of the findings discovered through excavations are accidental. With this we have the intuition of acquiring some knowledge, but would first at the same time be ‘gambling’.

v. View not comprehensive

Archaeological finding is unable to provide a comprehensive view and analysis of the past because it does not tell about the ideological and sociological aspects of life. All these factors limit the scope of information available to the historian.

vi. Spotty information

The information derived from archeology is often spotty because the information is usually got depending on materials found.

vii. Difficult to interpret

Archeology unfortunately needs knowledge of many disciplines to interpret information. For example, chemistry, botany, geology, art, history etc. That is, it is not easy to get one person with knowledge on such disciplines thus making interpretation a difficult task.

viii. Depend on other sources

Archeology rely on information given by oral tradition and written sources. The archeologists in most cases have to receive information about a site or read from a book about a site before excavations can take place. Without receiving information from the local people about a site of ruins, writing African history becomes difficult since the archeologist may be handicapped.

LINGUSITICS AS A SOURCE OF WRITING AFRICAN HISTORY

Linguistics is the scientific study of the origin, structure and changes of a language that occur in the languages over a period of time. Languages do change in vocabulary and grammar over periods of time. Such changes can tell the historian about the adoption of new ideas by people. Some languages, when studied closely relate to the other (Ga and Adangbe; Wali and Dagari; Ewe and Fon; Fante and Bono; and Dagomba and Mossi etc.). One could project that those languages may have developed from one single parent language. The comparative study of such related languages can provide useful information.

MERITS/ADVANTAGES OF LINGUISTICS

Linguistics study has several advantages and importance in the reconstruction of African history.

i. Origin of ethnic group

Linguistics helps us to trace the origin of people and peopling of places e.g. Ewe, Akan, Bantu etc. Studies conducted by one linguist J.H.Greenberg into the origin of the Bantu and other West African languages have helped to arrive at the conclusion that the then Bantu

speakers dispersed throughout the eastern and southern Africa originate from the Nigerian-Cameroon border region.

ii. Confirmation of Origin

Linguistic studies can help confirm or question stories of origin e.g. Ewe as against Ga stories of origin from east of Ghana. In reconstructing Africa's history, linguistics has confirmed the established facts that Ewes once stayed with the Yoruba at Ketu, Benin and Togo before settling in Ghana. This can be found in the language of Ewe speakers in the West African countries.

iii. Identification of ethnic groups

Linguistics helps in identifying people into ethnic groups e.g. Ewe, Akan, Ga-Adange etc. indeed language plays very key role in identifying a group of people. For instance, it is the Ewe people that speak the Ewe language; also Twi is spoken by the Asantes.

iv. Borrowing of words

Linguistics again helps to throw light on the relationships that have existed between peoples e.g. existence of common words would point to exchanges between people otherwise not related. Also, a good example is the Akan words for political and other affairs in the Ga language, and words of Mande origin in Twi and other West African languages. Foreign influence

Furthermore, linguistics enlightens us on the influences that have come to people from outside, e.g. the existence of Portuguese words in Ghanaian languages like paano (bread), bokiti (bucket), asopatre (slippers), krataa (paper) and prete (plate).

vi. New ideas

Linguistics helps us to show the adoption of new ideas by people with changes in vocabulary and grammar. The changes that occur in languages can be studied to tell whether there has been an adoption of new ideas and general historical developments. Example, Akan words in Ga language like 'anokwaley', 'abotaley' etc.

vii. Emergence from the same source

Linguistic studies of the Bantu and West African languages have established that the ancestors of modern Bantu speakers originated from the Nigeria-Cameroon border area. The study of related languages may show that they emerged from the same source, probably a proto-language called 'Kwa'.

viii. Related languages

Through the study of linguistics, historians can establish whether speakers of closely-related languages have a common root e.g. Ga and Adangbe,Wali and Dagari; Ewe and Fon; Fante and Bono; and Dagomba and Mossi. Professor Abena Dolphyne of the University of Ghana

has studied Akan languages of the Asante, Fante and Bono. She concluded that the Bono language is more related to the Fante language than any of the two of the Asante language. This is confirmed by the oral tradition of the Fante that they stayed aTakyiman before moving to their present home.

DEMERTIS/LIMITATIONS OF LINGUISTICS

i. Difficult to study

It is difficult to study and analyze a particular language if the researcher does not have fore knowledge about it. Linguistics is such a complex study that there is very little unanimity or agreement among even the linguists themselves on their conclusions.

ii. Changes may not help

Linguistics cannot clearly point out changes in language over a period of time. This can lead to misrepresentation, loss or distortion of reality in history, thus making it very difficult to know the true origins or events needed by the writer.

iii. Less developed in Africa

Linguistics fell short in reconstruction of African history, because as a discipline it is less developed in Africa. Hence, it does not contribute very much like other sources in the writing of African history.That notwithstanding, in recent times, linguists in USA and elsewhere are researching on African history.

iv. Rely on other sources

Linguistics in most cases, the historian has to largely rely on the other sources for validation and collaboration of information obtained.

v. Coincidence in word usage

Some conclusions drawn by linguists based on words similarities may be sheer coincidence. In such cases, finding conclusive evidence remains difficult.

ETHNOGRAPHY/ETHNOLOGY AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Ethnography is the study of present-day social institutions as well as the crafts and artistic skills of people. Example is the collaboration of festivals, the process of making pottery, beads, weaving, construction etc.

ADVANTAGES/IMPORTANCE OF ETHNOGRAPHY

i. Understand the Present Day Technology

The conclusions drawn from the study and examination of these institutions and artefacts in examination of these institutions and artefacts in their present form help towards fully understanding and explain the past's influence on the formation of present skills/techniques.

ii. Understand the Past

The conclusions drawn from the study and examination of these institutions and artefacts in examination of these institutions and artefacts in their present form help to fully understand and explain the past.

iii. Study Festivals

Ethnography provides a useful opportunity to study Africa rituals and festivals which are mainly re-enactment of historical event (for example, the performance of the warriors during the Egungun festival of the Yoruba). Also, if the performance by the Alaketu (ruler of Ketu) during his installation demonstrate a play-back of the experiences of the first Alaketu in establishing Ketu state. Similarly, among the Ewes the Hogbetsotso festival is celebrated annually to commemorate their exodus and liberation from the tyrannical rule of Togbui Agorkoli I of Notsie.

DEMERITS OF ETHNOGRAPHY

i. Not easy to get meanings

One of the defects of ethnography is the study of present day social institution does not give the exact meanings to some traditional practices. The fast modernization and westernization of our traditional values may have swept away some important aspect of our cultural heritage.

ii. Tracing ancestry

Africans are able through ethnography to trace their ancestry or record some important events like Homowo, Hogbetsotso, Egungun festival.

iii. Influence of religions

Introduction of Christianity and Islam into African traditional society have slighted concentration in the celebration of traditional festivals and rites. Instead, there is more celebration of Christmas, Easter, Eid-il-fitr among others

NUMISMATICS AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Numismatics is the study of coins. This study helps us to know where the coins were minted and found.

i. Advanced economy

Numismatics studies has proved that Africans had an advanced economy in minting of coins. Numismatics throws light on trade contacts between people. For an example the discovery of 240 coins at Kilwa on the East African Coast show that from the 13th century AD, the sultans of Kilwa had their own mint.

ii. Accurate date

Numismatic gives accurate dates, names, places and events. For example the king list of Kilwa came to light when the 240 coins were discovered. It showed the sultans of the Swahili Coast.

iii. Reliable

Discovered coins can be seen, felt or touched, makes history live, or more interesting or reliable.

iv. High level of civilization

Numismatics shows the level of civilization to the people using coins. For instance, by the 13th century AD, the Sultans of the East African Coast had their own mint of coins for producing their coins for trade and other purposes. Also, gold weights represented the means of determining quantities of gold in Akan society where gold dust was the normal currency. The value of gold to be used in a money transaction was assessed by weights.

v. Political dominance

Numismatics shows the political dominance in societies using coins. During the colonial rule, Ghana's currency had the figure and name of the British crown.

vi. Preservation for longer periods.

Numismatics unlike the other artifacts, a coin can be preserved for a relatively longer period.

vii. Trade links

Through the activities of numismatics, it is known that as far back as the 9th and 10th centuries AD, the people of East Africa and China had established trading links.

DEMERITS OF NUMISMATICS

i. Gives limited information

Numismatics gives limited information in the story it tells. It may only identify a ruling class in the society engaged in trading activity who used the coin. This makes numismatics handicapped in tracing the other aspects of cultural lives of the user societies.

ii. Rely on other sources

Without the consultation of other sources like archeology and oral tradition, numismatics may somehow be impotent in revealing the entire cultural history of a society. This is also because not all pre-historic societies minted and used coins.

ETHNOBOTANY AND ETHNOZOOLOGY AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Ethnobotany is the scientific study of ancient remains of plants which are termed flora. Ethnozoology is the scientific study of animal remains from the past which are called fauna. These studies help to trace the origins of plants and the animals our ancestors fed on and exploited in the past. It is through such studies that crops are classified as indigenous and non-indigenous.

ADVANTAGES OF ETHNOBOTANY AND ETHNOZOOLOGY

i. Advance in Agriculture

Through the study of ethnobotany, it has been established that, Africans were advanced in agriculture. For example ethnobotany has revealed that, the (Dahomey Gap) in modern Benin in West African coastal forest belt is the cradle of yam cultivation. Also animals like West African dwarf goat, pigs, cattle, dogs, cats and guinea fowl are all indigenous to Africa.

ii. Contacts of people

Ethnobotany shows the interrelationships or contacts among peoples and the presence of some crops and fruits like guava, tangerine, mango, avocado pear and pineapple are known to have European origins. It has been observed that, the Bantu had for a long time relied on banana as a food source and therefore it has been suggested that the spread of banana to other parts of Africa had depended to a large extent on the migration of the Bantu.

iii. Determines settlement of people

Ethnobotany and ethnozoology help to locate settlement of people. Certain plants and animals determine settlement of people since generation after generation has used them as staple foods and diets.

iv. Dating events

The study of ethnobotany and ethnozoology has helped in dating events in the society.

v. Tree-ring dating

Ethnobotany has helped historians through the use of tree-ring dating method. It is the method used to date pieces of wood that are found in excavations to determine the ages of their use.

DEMERITS OF ETHNOBOTANY AND ETHNOZOOLOGY

i. Inaccuracy in prediction

The information about crop and animals being indigenous or non-indigenous may not be accurate. This is because weather and climatic conditions as well as the duration of the crop in a particular area might be so long that there is the likelihood of inaccurate prediction.

ii. Generalizations

A remarkable problem associated with ethnobotany is generalization. For instance it is established that Tetteh Quarshie brought cocoa to Ghana from Fernando Po but another source have it that the Basel missionaries brought cocoa from Surinam before Tetteh Quarshie. It will be incorrect to generalize that cocoa came to Ghana from Fernando Po or Surinam because the climatic condition in these places are the same.

iii. Depend on the Other Sources

Ethnobotanist must work in conjunction with other sources of writing African history before they can establish the validity or otherwise of their find. Without this inter-disciplinary approach, ethnobotany will be impotent.

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Ethnomusicology is the scientific study of music (musicology) which focuses on the study of music forms in their cultural perspective. It deals with the role of music in the cultural history of a group of people, and how the formal structures of music evolve in different historical contexts.

i. Confirmation of Events

Ethnomusicology confirms and supports events of history. Most folk songs and ancient musical forms usually make reference to important socio-economic events and political events in the life of the people who composed and sang them. E.g. the Asafo songs of the Fante make references to the exploits of their three warlords which included, Obunumakoma, Odapagyan and Oson. Also, the Akyem Abuakwa's warrior Queenmother Dokuah's role in the courageous woman who fights with the gun. This describes Dokuah's contribution to the Akyem Abuakwa state. Similarly, in Mande peoples, the epic of Sunjata Keita recounts the formation of the empire of Mali.

ii. Storehouse of Information

It is also a storehouse of historical information in the form of drums, horn, music, dirges and praise songs. For instance, during the Damba festival of the Dagombas, they play drums that give messages about Toharjie-the great warrior who led them to their present settlements. Drums are one of the Africa's great living books.

iii. Changes Occur In Music

The study of the changes that occur in people's musical forms over a period of time is also another source of history, for example, a study of the religious songs of the Ga has revealed that the music as well as the song belongs to an older and different ethnic group. This supports the claim of Guan oral tradition that they occupied the highlands of the Ga state prior to the arrival of the Ga. Moreover the change in African musical instruments in the New World has given much information about diaspora history.

DEMERITS OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

i. Lyrics authenticity

One major defects of ethnomusicology is the authenticity of the text or lyrics the song conveyed.

ii. Difficult to trace the origins of songs

Another shortfall of ethnomusicology is that there is no African culture ever developed a notational system for its organization of culturally defined musical sound. This implies there is little hope in hearing African music with any accuracy of tracing the actual sound of music to any substantial time-depth.

ARTS FORMS/ARTS HISTORY AS A FORM OF AFRICAN HISTORY.

Art history is the study of art forms such as engravings, paintings, carvings and sculpture on stone surface, tombs, slabs or walls of caves, palaces and shrines.

ADVANTAGES OF ART HISTORY

i. Activities of human beings

Arts forms or history helps to discover the economic activities, religious beliefs, culture and political power a group of people had in the past. For instance, the art works found in the Tassili Caves suggest that the dry areas of North Africa might not have been as dry in the past as they are today.

ii. Eating Habits

Paintings of food crops found in the tombs in the Sahara give impressions that the early inhabitants of these region might have relied on grains as food source. This helps historians to know and determine the eating habits and occupations of the early inhabitants of the Saharan regions.

iii. Life in the Sahara

Another painting found in the rocks of the Sahara might have shown that the Sahara had at a point in time harbored aquatic animals. This has given the impression that the Sahara has always not being as dry as it is today.

DEMERITS OF ARTS HISTORY

i. Difficult to get

Rock paintings which are peculiar to art forms are not common on the African continent especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This is due to the fact that painting was restricted to perishable surfaces such as textiles, wood, house walls among other therefore could not survive the high humid climatic conditions of the environment.

ii. Depend on other sources

The art historian encounters the problem of dating their artistic find. For that matter they resorts to the archeologist in dating things such pre-historic art.

SEROLOGY AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Serology is the branch of medicine concerned with the study of blood types. It deals with the blood serum components that protect the blood against diseases.

ADVANTAGES OF SEROLOGY

i. Human blood varies in composition from one person to another in the sense that some genes present in some people in some people are absent in others. For that matter people can be categorized according to their blood groups. It is therefore possible that adequate knowledge of a predominant blood type in another area or region should be able to establish some kind of hypothesis that the people of region A must have formed part of region B.

ii. Belonging to a source

Studies in the frequency of the sickle cell should be able to give the clue that, people belong to a particular source. A very good example of how the studies in the frequency in sickle cell can help historical research could be found in Windward Coast in Liberia. In this region, the Kru people are almost devoid of the sickle cell trait. Yet it is very common among the neighboring people. This confirms the fact that the Kru has been a close community who did not intermarry with their neighbors.

METHODS USED IN GATHERING/COLLECTING INFORMATION FOR THE WRITING OF AFRICAN HISTORY

To collect data for the reconstruction of African history, the historian must not rely solely on written sources or non-documentary sources but rather the following methods must be employed to check biases, prejudices and exaggerations.

i. Personal enquiry and interview

One method of gathering information from non-documentary sources of African history is interviewing of knowledgeable persons about the culture of a particular community. This is to say that the historian must interview people about the information of the past such as eye-witnesses or traditional historians like court linguists, older court officials and the elderly. The historian can record these interviews and later play, write out and analyze the information given.

ii. Inter-disciplinary approach

Another method of gathering information about African history is the interdisciplinary approach. Cooperation with scholars in other fields of knowledge gives information for African history. The historian has to cooperate with specialists like the linguists, archeologists, botanists, ethnographers among others to obtain materials that can be used to reconstruct African history. The researcher works together with these scholars to gather important information to draw valid conclusions.

Reviewing

In writing African history, one can use the review method to get information by reviewing the written sources such as books, newspapers, journals, broadcasts, diaries, manifestoes, and private letters among others, by reviewing the research through written sources both primary and secondary for information which they examine and cross-check. Even though these written records have shortcomings and inadequacies, they can be reviewed by the historian to ensure an accurate reflection of the past. This helps to produce unbiased history which is backed by evidence.

Questionnaire

To get the best results of collecting data for writing African history, a carefully composed questionnaire should be used which must cover the political, economic, social, religious and technological aspects. In this situation, a series of well-structured questions are given out to persons who know about the past to solicit for information. The responses to these questions are gathered and analyzed by the historian in order to draw a reasonable conclusion.

Personal Observation and Records

Through personal observation by visiting places of historical importance like slave sites, castles, forts etc. and personally recording events like festivals, funerals and the like, important findings can result in the collection of data for writing African history. Such details are necessary since they constitute first-hand information as the events happened before their own eyes i.e. eye witness account. Such accounts can be compared and questions are asked on them to get a reliable view of what actually happened in the past.

Reliability of the sources for the study of African history

Despite the fact that written and unwritten sources of African history have shortfalls, we can still describe them as adequately reliable, since the work of a historian is based on historical methods where they use scientific methods in drawing conclusions. Written records of history have a high level of precision and very reliable. All the documentary sources e.g. newspapers, personal letters, diaries, journals, manifestoes etc. can be reviewed and cross checked for a fair assessment of the past. This process helps to get rid of prejudices, biases to ensure truthfulness. By putting written records side by side with other forms of evidence, the historian can establish an objective conclusion.

The reliability of unwritten sources of history cannot be underestimated since they all involve scientific methods in carrying out researches. For instance, the Ghanaian linguist, Professor Abena Dolphyne undertook a research on the Bono, Asante and Fante people and arrived at an important conclusion. She found out that the Asante language is less related to the Fante. Also, archeology which is our main source of information on African history uses scientific methods like reconnaissance, stratification, radiocarbon and potassium argon dating methods and data analysis. These methods help archeologists to come to accurate and reliable conclusions significant for historical writing. Reconnaissance involves the process of discovering sites and plotting them for digging.

However, archeology as a non-documentary source of African history has some flaws. It is an unfortunate fact that there is no conscious system of preserving archeological knowledge. For that matter what archaeologists come across may be an accidental preservation. In this case, one goes into archeological excavation with the idea of acquiring some knowledge but relying on chance if not luck. Again, archaeological remains are subjected to wear and tear, weathering, and disfigurement and therefore are likely to present difficulty in the historians' attempt to derive very reliable information from them. The process of radio-carbon dating is very expensive and that constitutes a hindrance to effective research.

Moreover, oral tradition is full of exaggeration on establishment of information to suit the narrator's interest. Many a time, they tend to present history in a way that would not only exclude portions that do not meet their interest but worse of all, it might not be able to give specific details due to genuine loss in memory. Again, oral tradition tends to put so much emphasis on personalities and events like wars, whilst playing down on social and economic aspects of the past With this, information becomes very scanty to the disadvantage of scholarship and posterity.

In conclusion, we can deduce that both documentary and non-documentary evidence must be used to complement each other in the writing of African history. Since both are the work of human beings, one cannot be more reliable than the other since people tend to be subjective, biased and impressionistic.

Samuel Adu-Gyamfi And Benjamin Kye Ampadu

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2 - Trans-Saharan Trade. Origins, organization and effects in the development of West Africa

Origins and Timeframe of Early Trade

The connections of West Africa with the Mediterranean world is a very old one, which long predates the rise of Islam in the late 6th century CE. Several centuries before the rise of the Roman empire, the Greek historian Herodotus (c. 484-425BCE) wrote of peoples in Africa. Herodotus wrote repeatedly of the peoples of the Nile Valley, stressing that many of them were Black Africans, and suggesting connections with people further to the west. Rock art from this period, and later, suggests the existence of wheeled chariots south of what is now the Sahara, and suggest a connection with the Mediterranean world.

Zoomorphic figures. Round head period (9.500 - c. 7,000 BP). Algeria. Tassili n'Ajjer. Tan Zoumaitak. Wikipedia. Public domain.

It's important to know that the Sahara desert itself was not as harsh in these ancient times as it later became, and is today. Rock art from the Sahara desert is abundant, and some of it is as much as 12000 years old. A good example is the Tassili n'Ajjer, north of Tamanrasset in the Algerian Sahara. This is one of the oldest examples of rock art in the Sahara. Another good example is in the Tibesti Massif in Chad, which also has rock art dating from around this time. These old paintings show areas which are now in the desert as fertile, rich with animals which can no longer live in these desert areas, such as buffalos, elephants, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus. It's important to bear in mind that this era of fertility in the Sahara coincided with the European Ice Age. The Ice Age was not a problem in Africa, and in fact this seems to have been a time of plenty.

The Sahara appears to have begun desertifying more rapidly around 3000 years BCE, but there remained strong connections with the Mediterranean until a later point. This is shown by the Carthaginian general, Hannibal. Carthage was an empire based in Libya [the most powerful empire in the Mediterranean until the rise of Rome], and around 220 BCE Hannibal embarked on an attack on Roman forces in Europe which involved crossing the high Alps mountain range. His military supplies were carried by elephants, and these were African elephants connected to the peoples and geographies south of the Sahara.

Desertification increased and the geographical boundaries became harder to cross. By the time of the rise of Islam, in the early 7th century CE [from c. 610fl., with the establishment of the early Caliphs, c. 610 CE], there were fewer connections. But the growth of powerful Islamic kingdoms in Morocco, and of centres of learning based in Cairo, Tripoli, and the Middle East, saw the rise of the caravan trade. By the 9th century CE, the empire of Ghāna [also known as Awkar] had been founded in what is now Mauritania [the first historical references coming from c. 830 CE], with the capital at Koumbi-Saleh [the trading route from Ghāna was concentrated in the Western Sahara, with its terminus at Sījīlmassa]. By the 10th century CE there were separate settlements for those practicing African religions and those practising Islam at Koumbi-Saleh, indicating the large number of North African traders who were coming. The gold trade was already spreading to influence commerce and society in the Mediterranean, and it was at around 1000 CE that West African gold was first minted for markets in Europe.

It's important to grasp how events in West Africa were connected to those in North Africa and even in Europe by the 11th century. A vital change occurred in this time, spearheaded by the Almoravid movement. They appear to have grown from Berber Muslims who migrated north from the Senegal river seeking a purer form of Islam after the middle of the 11th century. They conquered the Kingdom of Morocco, founded Marrakech in 1062, and then swept into Al-Andalus in southern Spain in the 1080s, where they defended the Caliphate of Córdoba from the reconquest led by the Christian kings of Spain. Córdoba had already splintered into many different mini states in southern Spain known as the Taifa states in the 1030s; in the 12th century these were overtaken by the Almohads, who also came from Morocco, overthrowing the Almoravids in 1147.

In West Africa, the most important changes came in Ghāna. Until 1076, Muslims and worshippers of African religions had co-existed there, but in that year the Almoravids sacked the city and Ghāna fell into decline. Mali would not rise until the 13th century. Thereafter, the gold trade was the centrepiece of the trans-Saharan trade. Money was the cause of the early interest of Arabic traders in West Africa, which was indeed known to them as "the golden country".The influence of the trans-Saharan gold trade on European societies can be seen for instance in the derivation of the Spanish word for gold coin in the 15th century, *maravedí*, from the Almoravid *murabitūn* dinar.

The trade in gold saw the rise of powerful empires such as Mali, Bono-Mansu, and Songhay, the expansion of urban centres such as Kano, and the rise of powerful trading classes such as the Wangara. Arabic became increasingly influential through the spread of Islam and its use as a script for administration. By the 15th century, when the Atlantic trade would begin,

the trans-Saharan trade had been flourishing for at least 5 centuries, and had already shaped the rise, fall, and consolidation of many West African states and societies.

Key Factors of Trade: Environment, Gold, Horses, and the Organization of the Caravan Trade

One of the major elements in the creation of trade networks is geography. Trade tends to be in products which cannot be found in one area, and which are exchanged with those which are needed in another. For example, societies living in areas with forest products can exchange them for salt from desert areas, and grain crops from savannah areas.In turn, savannah and desert peoples can acquire forest products. Thus, a vital factor in the emergence of the social fabric of West Africa was the Sahara desert.

Where the geographical barriers between different climate zones are extensive, the trade networks needed to move goods have to be more complicated. In order to thrive, societies need to develop new means of accommodating stranger traders. Where the barrier is as large as the Sahara desert, or the Atlantic Ocean, the social fabric will become intertwined with these complex trading networks. This occurred in West Africa with the trans-Saharan trade; and the social frameworks which emerged with this trade then became influential in shaping the early trans-Atlantic trade. So it is hard to understand the importance of trans-Saharan trade without understanding its importance for society, in terms of organisation and belief.

One important climatic factor in the shaping of West African societies was the spread of the tsetse fly. In humid forest zones, the tsetse fly which causes Sleeping Sickness meant that it was hard for pack animals to survive. Camels, horses, donkeys, and the like could not easily survive in areas where the tsetse fly could live and thrive. This meant that society had to be organised so that people would fulfill that role, and be able to carry headloads of gold, kola nuts, ivory, and more. This became significant as the trans-Saharan gold trade became ever more important from the 11th century onwards.

There were two main zones for the location of gold in West Africa. One was on the Upper Senegal river, especially the tributary of the Falémé. The other was in the forests of the Gold Coast. Being close to the source of gold was of course a great political prize, and it is significant that the areas near to both the Falémé and the forests of the Gold Coast saw the rise of stable political systems for many centuries. In the Falémé, this was the kingdom of Gajaaga [known by the French as Galam], which saw stable rule for 8 centuries [according to the Senegalese historian Abdoulaye Bathily]. In the Gold Coast, this came in a series of powerful Akan states, beginning with Bono-Mansu in the 14th century, and then continuing through Denkyira and Akwamu to 1700, all of whom relied on the gold trade.

In Senegambia, the Falémé source of gold was in a semi-desert area where the tsetse fly could not thrive [later this was close to the heartland of the kingdom of Bundu]. This favoured the creation of powerful cavalry forces, and so one of the main things traded by the North African traders in the trans-Saharan trade were their famous “Arab” horses. Cavalries were important to the process of state formation and military control in areas such as the Jolof empire in northern Senegambia, and in Borno and Kano further to the east.

Indeed, one of the first areas of the trans-Saharan trade which Europeans copied was in the institution of a horse trade, with horses bred on the Capeverdean islands and traded to the West African coast as early as the 1470s.

In Bono-Mansu, however, horses could not flourish because of the tsetse fly. This meant that the role of head-carriers was vital in ensuring the smooth operation of the gold trade. Gold was dug out of the mines in the forests a hundred miles north of the Atlantic coast, and then porteraged north to the termini of the trans-Saharan trade at Oualata [in present-day Mauritania], Timbuktu [in present-day Mali], Kano, and N'gazarzamu at Borno.

These urban centres were vital to the organization of the trans-Saharan trade as a whole. They had to develop complex infrastructure of service provision for the long-distance traders.By the 15th century, each of these cities had hotels for horses and traders, clearing houses for animals to return for the long-distance trade back to the Mediterranean, and markets where the wherewithal for the trade could be bought: saddlery and other kit for camels and horses, huge stocks of grain (millet, rice, and cous) to feed the slaves and traders crossing the Sahara, skins for water, dried meat, and more. Some, such as Timbuktu, had also become centres of learning for the scholars who accompanied the caravans; for Islam was also becoming ever more closely related to the success and transformation of the trans-Saharan trade.

Traders and Diasporas

The traders who specialised in linking up the different centres of the trans-Saharan trade were known as the Wangara. By the 15th century, the Wangara formed an important trade diaspora, stretching from The Gambia in the West to Borno in the East; they also had connections in the Mali empire, and as far south as Bono-Mansu, and some of the Akan states on the southern Atlantic coast of what is now Ghana.

As we have seen, Islam had become closely connected to trans-Saharan trade: all of the traders from North Africa who came with the caravans were Muslims, and they preferred to trade with Muslims only. The rise of the Almoravid movement in the 11th century, and the fall of Ghāna, made it clear that those rulers who converted to Islam would fare better in the trans-Saharan stakes.

At the same time, Islam remained the religion of the nobles and the trader class. It was not the faith of everyone, and some would resist it strongly. Thus West African rulers who wanted to succeed in the trans-Saharan trade had to develop a complex strategy. On the one hand, they had to be seen as Muslims in order to be able to entice the trans-Saharan traders: and yet at the same time, they had to be able to relate to their subjects, many of whom were not Muslims.

This commercial reality contributed to what historians call "plural societies". A plural society can be defined as one in which more than one religion is allowed and tolerated where people can mix across ethnic and religious lines, and where the ability to respect more than one faith is an important part of political and social life. This can be seen through the oral accounts of key rulers such as Sunjata Keita of Mali, many of which emphasise the place of

musicians in the court of Mali. The balafon was a royal instrument, which can be seen through its relationship in oral accounts to the sorcerer-king whom Sunjata defeated, Sumanguru Kante. Sumanguru was also reputed as a "Blacksmith king", in tune with the supernatural powers of smiths and previous political regimes. Thus even Islamic rulers such as those of Mali showed their respect of African religions [and this may also explain why political leaders from Mali explained in Cairo in the 1320s that it was not possible to convert the producers of gold to Islam].

The Wangara diaspora of traders gradually became more and more important in creating a common culture across different parts of West Africa. Their arrival in Borno by the 15th century showed how the pluralism of society, the spread of Islam as a scholarly, religious, and commercial religion, and the arrival of more and more global influences were all coming together across a wide part of West Africa.

Arabic, Literacy, and Scholarly Production

One of the impacts of the growing trans-Saharan trade was the spread of Arabic as a written language in West Africa. Arabic became not only a language of faith and religious scholarship, with the many mallams, shereefs, and other seers who came to the region. It was also a language of government and law. The many manuscripts now housed in the Ahmed Baba Institute in Timbuktu are testament to the spread of literacy in West Africa from an early time, and certainly it had become important by the 13th century.

Rulers of important West African empires such as Mali and Songhay of course maintained existing indigenous frameworks of rulership. However they borrowed Islamic bureaucratic forms, religion, scholarship and legal structures to govern the new states, and the complex international relationships which they were developing through trade with the rest of the Islamic world. Taxation, law, and state offices all developed alongside the literate class which became vital to the functioning of the states of the Sahel.

By the 15th and 16th centuries, certain desert clans were renowned for their learning and scholarship. In Western areas such as Mauritania, these were known as the *zwāya*, and in the later 17th century they would have a major role in the Islamic revival movement which spread in the 18th century.Desert clans such as the Masūfa also migrated to Timbuktu from Māsina in central Mali, bringing special areas of learning in Islamic law (*fiqh*).The high status of these scholars is shown by the fact that the great Timbuktu scholar Ahmad Baba had as his main *shaykh* or religious instructor a scholar from Djenné on the Niger. [Ahmed Baba lived from 1556 to 1627, and wrote over 40 books in his lifetime; he has the reputation of being Timbuktu's greatest scholar].

Great Mosque of Djenné, 2003. Wikicommons.

The spread of Arabic has been studied by some historians through the spread of the use of Arabic on tombstones. The Brazilian historian PF de Moraes Farias spent his career studying these funerary inscriptions in cemeteries in Mauritania, Mali, and Niger. What he found was a more integrated history of Songhay, Tamasheq, Berber and Mande peoples than traditional histories had suggested. Arabic was not only an elite language of learning, but also became a language used by many to pay homage to their departed family members.

Headless figure, Jenne-jeno, Mali, 900-1400 AD, terracotta - National Museum of Natural History, United States. Wikipedia. Public domain.

An important feature of this rise of Arabic was the spread of scholars from North Africa in centres of learning such as Kano and Timbuktu. Indeed, this was also an exchange, since scholars from West African cities moved to learn, study, and preach further afield. One was Al-Kānemī, from Kanem-Borno, who lived and taught in Marrakesh c. 1200, before dying in Andalusía in Spain. By the 14th century, annual caravans took pilgrims from West Africa to North Africa and then to Mecca, and there was in Cairo a hostel to accommodate only those pilgrims who came from Borno; while Askia Mohammed, who became ruler of Songhay c. 1495, instituted a garden and lodge for pilgrims from West Africa in Medina [a holy city of Islam, in Arabia], during his own *hajj*.

Tomb of Askia (1443 - 1538) — mud building in modern Mali. Wikipedia. Photograph by Taguelmoust, CC BY-SA 3.0.

The frequency of such presences of West Africans in the wider Islamic world is shown not only through the spread of Arabic, and the number of documented journeys made, but also by oral accounts. For instance, [the Gambian theologian Lamin Sanneh notes that] one of the most important strains of Islam in this period was that of Suwerian Islam. The founder of Suwerian Islam, al-Hajj Sālim Suware, is said in oral accounts to have made the pilgrimage to Mecca seven times in the early 13th century. This is unlikely to be true, given just how difficult this journey was [and also as the Qur'an lonely requires it as a duty for Muslims to make the pilgrimage once in their lifetimes if possible]. However, the story reveals just how normal these journeys were, and how often they took place.

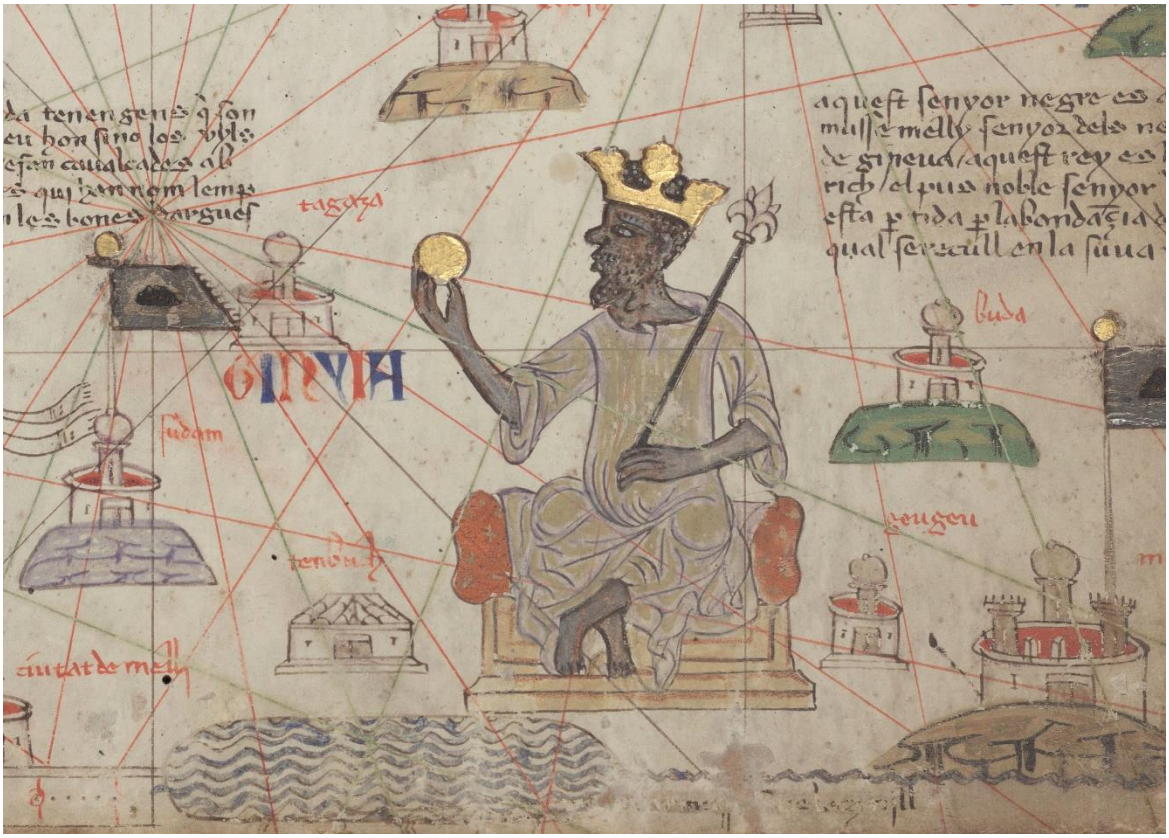
By the 15th century, the growth of the gold trade had gone hand in hand with the emphasis on scholarship. The last 15th century Sarki of Kano, Mohammed Rimfa, invited large numbers of scholars to settle in the city, and one of them – Sherif Abdu Rahman – came from Medina. Rahman brought his own library and many learned followers. The city walls of Kano were built, and the Kurmi market established, which showed just how much urban developments, learning, and the growth of the trans-Saharan trade had become interconnected.

This was also very apparent in Timbuktu. Timbuktu grew a reputation as a city of learning, and yet during the reign of Sonni Ali (c. 1464-93) of Songhay, its scholars felt undermined and slighted. After Sonni Ali's death, many mallams from Timbuktu complained at his rulership and departure from orthodox Islam, and the ways in which they claimed he had persecuted the mallams. In the 16th century, a succession of Askias ruled who followed a more orthodox path of Islam, and the city's reputation as a centre of learning reached its

peak. But this would fall with the Moroccan invasion of Songhay in 1591 [after which time, many of its scholars would disperse west, to Mauritania; which is why many scholars of Islam in Mauritania see this as the centre of Islamic scholarship in the Sahel by the 18th and 19th centuries].

Mali and Mansa Musa

Perhaps the most famous and influential kingdom linked to the trans-Saharan trade was that of Mali. Mali was founded by Sunjata Keita in the 13th century, defeating the blacksmith king Sumanguru Kante. However, in Mali, the ruler who reached world renown at the time was the Emperor Mansa Musa.



Abraham Cresques, Catalan Atlas, Detail showing Mansa Musa sitting on a throne and holding a gold coin, 1375, Wikicommons.

Mansa Kankan Musa Keita was the son of Mansa Aboubacarr II the Navigator who in the 1300s sent out an expedition across the Atlantic Ocean from River Gambia to discover new territories. His son Mansa Kankan Musa Keita better known as Mansa Musa ruled Mali from 1312-1337. His reign lasted barely quarter of century but the whole 1300s are still called the Century of Mansa Musa because of his lasting legacy.

This legacy came out more for his exploits on his way to Mecca to perform his pilgrimage 1324-1325 than in any wars he fought and won or lost. He apparently did not want to perform the pilgrimage as he was still a nominal Muslim but when he accidentally killed his mother, he decided to perform the Hajj to purify himself and atone for his capital crime. He took along the entire court of his to Mecca including doctors, princes, griots and an army of

body guard which numbered 8000 men! He left he Capital of Mali and traversed the Sahara through Walata in present day Mauretania, then Libya before entering Cairo. From Cairo he entered the Holy city of Mecca.

This pilgrimage had economic, political and religious consequences.

Economically, Mansa Musa dispensed so much gold on his way to Mecca that he has since then been called the richest ever human being to live on this earth. He also cemented trade ties between Mali and the Middle East and Cairo such that from 1325, caravans of over 10,000 camels traversed the Sahara into Mali at Gao and Timbuktu. Religiously, Mansa Musa and his huge entourage returned from the hajj renewed Muslims who now wanted to strengthen the religion and spread it far and wide. The Malian masses which were mostly animist then, were soon converted by the fresh pilgrims. Also, Mali opened up to more Arab scholars who were attracted by the immense wealth Mansa Musa displayed. These Arabs built fabulous mosques and courts for Mansa Musa. He also brought along great scholars who helped him establish the famous libraries in Gao, Jenne and Timbuktu. The hajj became one of the world's greatest PR exercises! Politically, Mali became well known and Mansa Musa earned international repute. His pilgrimage put Mali firmly on the map. Indeed, before his death in 1337, Mansa Musa has expanded Mali into a sprawling empire with over 400 cities extending from the Atlantic in the West to the forest zones of the south. All the known states of the time such as Songhay,, Ghana, Galam, Tekrur formed part of Mansa Musa's Mali. Mansa Musa indeed gave Mali her glory and Mali also gave Mansa Musa his glory!

Political reorganization in the 15th century: Bono-Mansu, Mossi, Kano, and Songhay

The growth of the trans-Saharan trade from the 10th to the 15th century led to profound transformations across West Africa, and this can be seen through a whole range of transformations that took place in the 15th century, from West to East and from North to South. It would be political, economic and social transformations in West Africa that would drive globalization and Europe's role in this, not the other way around.

A good example are events in Nigeria. In Borno, the growth of the gold trade from Bono-Mansu would lead to the movement of the capital away from the old centre of Kanem, further south to Gazargamo (Ngazargamu) in Borno circa 1470. In Kano, there was the establishment of a new system, the *Sarauta* system. Meanwhile, the 10-metre deep earthworks known as "Eredos", built around Ijebu in Yorubaland, have recently been dated [by the archaeologist Gérard Chouin] to the period 1370-1420.

In other regions similar transformations were afoot. In Mali, the Dogon people of the Bandiagara escarpment probably moved there in the 15th century. At the same time, in the 15th century, the Mossi kingdom rose in what is now Burkina Faso, linked to the profits to be made from taxing the onward gold trade.Al-Sa'dī describes Mossi attacking the town of Mâssina in this period.It was also at this time that Bono-Mansurose to prominence. Meanwhile, the key gold-trading centre of Bighu, also on the Gold Coast and which was to

become very important in the 17th and 18th century, is mentioned by al-Ouazzan (as Bito) in the 1520s, suggesting that it too rose to prominence in these decades.

Meanwhile, in Senegambia, the rise of the major military leader Koli Tenguela at the end of the 15th century coincided probably with an attempt to control the gold trade which came from the kingdom of Wuuli, on the north bank of the Gambia river. Tenguela, a Fula, would eventually lead an army south across the Gambia river to the Fuuta Jaalo mountains in Guinea-Conakry and establish a new polity there. This would lead in turn to the establishment of Fuuta Tooro on the Senegal river.

In other words, all across West Africa, from Borno to Fuuta Tooro, political transformations were taking place well before trade with Europe had begun. West African mining technology, economic transformation, and political reorganization grew. This helped to create the framework in which European powers sought to expand their knowledge of the world, as they began to sail along the West African coast in the 15th century.

The most remarkable example came in northern Nigeria. Kano grew very rapidly in the 15th century, sending out military expeditions to the south and becoming a regional hub linking trading networks from southern Nigeria to what is now Mali and beyond. [The Kano Chronicle gives some details of these changes]. In the reign of Kano's Sarkin Dauda (c. 1421-38), we are told of the connections between Kano and the province of Nupe. The major power between Kano and Nupe was Zaria, which conquered a large area of land. The Kano Chronicle says, "at this time, Zaria, under Queen Amina, conquered all the towns as far as Kwararafa and Nupe. Every town paid tribute to her. The Sarkin Nupe sent forty eunuchs and ten thousand kolas to her…in time the whole of the products of the west were brought to Hausaland [of which Kano was the capital]".

Just as European power was beginning to expand along the West African coast in the 15th century, therefore, so the impact of the trans-Saharan trade reached its zenith. The 15th century was not just the time of European expansion, but of global expansion of networks, trade, productions, and the manifestation of this power in more complex states, in West Africa and beyond.

Koli Tengella and Tekrur

Tekrur was another of the states which thrived largely as a result of the Trans-Saharan trade. It was founded in the 7th century, and was located in present day North-East Senegal in the valley of the Senegal River. For many years, Tekrur laid quietly as a vassal of the Ghana and Mali empires. Tekrur had largely Serahuly and Mande speaking populations, but in the 15th century, the Fula became powerful and removed the ruling Mande class and established the Janonkobe dynasty. They were led by a warrior the Senegalese historian Ousman Ba called 'the great hero and saviour of the Peulh' named Koli, the son of Tengella. He formed and mobilised a vast army and ravaged through Fouta Jallon, Mali and Jollof to make Tekrur the unvanquished power in the region. Koli was crowned as Satigi or emperor over the vast lands now under the control of his Fula armies. His capital was at Gode, near the present day Matam.

Koli is remembered in the Fouta Toro legends as the big chief of the Fula animist aristocracy who lived on war and slavery, catching especially of the Fula and Tukulor Muslims of his empire. No doubt then in 1776, the Muslims headed by Sulayman Bal revolted against Koli's oppression to found the Muslim state of Fouta. How did Koli benefit from the trade across the Sahara? Simply put, by trading grain in exchange for firearms. He was able to build a strong army which maintained Tekrur's dominance for many decades. It is clear from what has been said above that the trade across the Sahara helped to build strong states and also to destroy them as weapons became readily available and the lucrative trade also generated envy and the desire to dominate.

Ghana and Songhai Empires

Ghana was one of the most famous and earliest of the West African empires. It existed between the 5th and 13th centuries in the modern Mali and Mauritania, and was heavily connected to the trans-Saharan trade. The Ghana empire with its capital of Kumbi Saleh in Mauritainia, is not to be confused with modern Ghana with its capital at Accra, which was named after it. The principal inhabitants of Ghana were the Serahuli, also called Soninke, who were part of the Mande-speaking people.

Ghana owed her progress and prosperity and influence to the strategic role it played in the Trans-Saharan trade. British historian Kevin Shillington was categorical in this: '...Ghana's position with regard to the trade.... made it grow powerful and its rulers became rich.... It seems likely that trade was a major factor in the growth of Ghana from the very beginning'.

Ghana was located half way between the sources of the two Trans-Saharan trade items: salt from the desert up north and gold from Bambuk to the East. Ghana played the enviable role of middleman. The introduction of the camel as carrier of goods in the trade was a massive boost to the exchange between Ghana and the desert peoples such as the Berbers.

Ghana's glory could not be hidden simply because it was well traced and chronicled by the Arabic traders who came there. As early as the 11th century an Arab geographer called al-Bakari visited Kumbi Saleh, the capital and described the fabulous wealth he saw and the well advanced form of administration run by the Ghana ruler. He observed that Kumbi Saleh had two separate wards: the foreigners' quarter where Arab trader resided and the main ward where the king and his people lived. The dumbstruck Arab visitor also described in glowing terms how well dressed in gold the Ghana king was, how he was able to raise an army of 200,000 men and how he allowed both Islam and animism to be practised in Kumbi Saleh. Of course, our Arab writers only met the royals, nobles and traders as they were interested only in gold. They said little about what the ordinary people did for a living; but we can glean from the writings that they fished and farmed along the banks of the River Senegal to survive.

Ghana's glory rested on trade and so did its collapse. When the Almoravids started to wage war against other Berber tribes, the trade routes to Ghana became unsafe and trade was affected. Dry weather conditions also affected Ghana's ability to feed herself and her vast army; this seriously weakened the state. Also, by the 12th century, vassals like Mali had began to rebel to gain freedom from Ghana's dominance.

Songhay, on the other hand lasted from the 11th to 16th century. It rose to prominence as a result of the Trans-Saharan trade. As early as the 14th century Muslim traders were settled in Gao, the principal trade town of Songhay. Gao became the hub for the Trans-Saharan trade for the central and eastern Sahara. The farmers and fishermen of Songay ensured the traders were well fed.

Songhay collected the bulk of her revenue from the taxes levied on trade caravans. One of the great Songhay emperors was Muhamed Ture also called Askia Muhamed who introduced Islam in to Songhay and increased the empire's reaches. Like Mansa Musa of Mali, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca where he showed how rich and powerful his kingdom was. The Trans-Saharan trade helped to make Songhai rich and prosperous.

Conclusion

It should be noted that the trans-Saharan trade continued to be important into the 19th and even the 20th century, as the continuing trade and human traffic shows. The desert is a geographical barrier which requires complex organisation to cross – those who crossed it laid the foundations of some of the most important states in West African history.

Factbox:

3000BCE: Sahara starts desertifying

220BCE: Hannibal of Carthage crosses the Alps with West African elephants

400 CE: City of Jenne-jenò in the Middle Niger has grown to 4000 inhabitants

900AD: Gold from the forests of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire found in North African mints in increasing quantities

1062: The Almoravids from the fringes of the Senegal river valley conquer Morocco and establish Marrakech.

1076: Almoravids sack Koumbi-Saleh, capital of Ghāna

1080s: Almoravids sweep into southern Spain

1070-1100: The kingdom of Kanem-Borno converts to Islam and becomes important in the trans-Saharan trade. Regular pilgrimages to Mecca via Cairo of the Borno kings begin in the 1100s.

1200: Kano's city walls completed by this date

1200-1250: rise of the Mali empire under Sunjata Keita, founded on trans-Saharan wealth

1322-5: Pilgrimage of Mansa Musa, emperor of Mali to Mecca via Cairo

1330s: Djinguereber mosque built in Timbuktu using the architect As-Sahili from Andalusía in southern Spain

1350-1390: Wangara traders bring Islam to Kano with trade

1433 – 1474: Emergence of Songhay to rival Mali for imperial power; with the loss of Timbuktu to Songhay in 1468 to their ruler Sonni ‘Alī

1470s: The capital of Borno moves south to the fortified redoubt of Ngazargamu

1492: Death of Sonni ‘Alī, ruler of Songhay. He is replaced by Askia Mohammad in 1494, who inaugurates the great age of Songhay

1490s-1510s: Rise of Koli Tenguella, founder of Futa Toro on the northern bank of the Senegal river

1591: Fall of Songhay to the forces of Morocco

Hassoum Ceesay and Toby Green

3 - Islam in West Africa. Introduction, spread and effects

Africa was the first continent, that Islam spread into out of Arabia in the early seventh century. Almost one-third of the world's Muslim population resides today in the continent. It was estimated in 2002 that Muslims constitute 45% of the population of Africa. Islam has a large presence in North Africa, West Africa, the horn of Africa, the Southeast and among the minority but significant immigrant population in South Africa.

The first West Africans to be converted were the inhabitants of the Sahara, the Berbers, and it is generally agreed that by the second half of the tenth century, the Sahara had become Dar al-Islam that is the country of Islam.

In this chapter, we shall look at the spread of Islam in West Africa as well as the effects of Islam. We shall also find out the activities of the Almoravids.

The Spread of Islam in West Africa

After the Berbers' Islamisation, the religion spread into the Western Sudan from the closing decades of the tenth century. First, Islam spread into the regions West of the Niger Bend (Senegambia, Mali), then into Chad region and finally into Hausaland.

According to some Arabic sources the first Black ruler to embrace Islam was the King of Gao who had done so by 1009. The first King of Mali to become a Muslim was Barmandana, who was reigning by the middle of the eleventh century. The Kings of Ghana, on the other hand did not embrace Islam until about the beginning of the twelfth century, after the Almoravid invasions.

In the Chad region, it appears from the Arabic sources that Umme Jilmi, who became the king of Kanem in 1086 was the first Muslim King. Islam was first introduced into Hausaland from either Kanem or Air in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, but it did not really take root there until during the second half of the fourteenth Century.

Reason for the spread of Islam in West Africa

The following are the reasons for the spread Islam in West Africa. By the end of the fifteenth century, Islam had spread southwards to the fringes of the forest belt.

i. The Nature of Islam

The nature of Islam as a religion accepting polygamy to some extent, its tolerance of traditional African religions, its simplicity of doctrine and mode of worship helped propagators to make converts in Africa. These factors also made Islam easily adaptable to the African communities with which it came in contact. Again, the Islamisation of Africa was paralleled by the Africanisation of Islam. The making and sale of charms and amulets, which

were believed to offer protection against evil forces and generally ensure success in life, were important in winning over converts.

ii. Trade

Another major reason that led to the rapid spread of Islam in West Africa was the trans-Saharan trade network. From the seventh century onwards, Muslim traders from the Maghreb and the Sahara started settling first in some of the market centres in the Sahel and then in the Savanna areas. Al-Bakri, a renowned Arabic Scholar and merchant wrote in 1067, that the capital of ancient Ghana was already divided into two parts; about six miles apart, the Muslim traders' part which had as many as twelve mosques and the King's part had one mosque for the use of the king's Muslim visitors. It was these resident Muslim traders who converted the rulers and the principal local town's people to Islam. Also, according to Kano Chronicles, during the reign of Yaji, the King of Kano from 1349 to 1385, the Wangarawa came from Melle bringing the Mohammedan religion. These examples grew the process of Islamisation or conversion to Islam, as it gathered momentum.

iii. Activities of Muslim Clerics

Islam also spread into West Africa through the activities of Muslim clerics, marabouts and scholars or mallams. These clerics or learned men founded their own religious centres which attracted students from all parts of the Western Sudan and who on the completion of their studies and training went back to their own homes to win converts. Many of them went on lecture or missionary tours to convert people, while others became advisers to Sudanese Kings on how to become effective rulers. Some clerics devoted a great deal of their time to writing books and instructions on all aspects of Islam for the education and conversion of people or the purification and strengthening of Islam. Some examples of clerics follow:

Ibu Khadija al-Kumi, a Muslim missionary and Abu Ishaq al-Sahili, a poet, scholar and architect from Granada were both invited by Mansa Musa to accompany him on his return from his celebrated pilgrimage in 1324/5. Both of them settled in Mali where they taught Islam. Al-Sahili also designed the great mosque of Timbuktu as well as a magnificent palace for Mansa Musa in the capital of Mali.

Again, the great Mande scholar, Abd Rahman Zaite (now identified as Abd al-Rahman Jakhite) settled in Kano on the invitation of Rumfa, the King of Kano. He built a mosque and introduced the practice of Koran recital and other devotional exercises.

Another brilliant Berber scholar called Abd al-Rahman al-Maghili (1477-78) established his Zawiyaie Islamic school in Tuat in the Sahara, and from there went on a missionary tour of the Western Sudan which lasted from 1492 to 1503. During this tour, he visited Air, Takedda, Kano, Katsina and Gao and preached to both rulers and commoners.

iv. Activities of Rulers

Islam gained ground in West Africa through the activities of the individual rulers. The rulers of the Western Sudan encouraged the trans-Saharan trade and extended hospitality to both traders and visiting clerics, but perhaps one of the most important ways in which they

encouraged acceptance of Islam was through their own conversion. With a Muslim King or ruler it rapidly became a matter of prestige among the aristocracy also to convert to Islam in many kingdoms. Many rulers made considerable efforts to encourage Muslim institutions such as Islamic tax and legal systems or the provision of facilities such as mosques, through the appointment of Muslim officials such as judges and butchers who observe the Islamic code and to lead prayers, celebrating Muslim festival and ordering every town under their control to observe the ritual prayers. The pilgrimages that many of the rulers undertook – such as Mansa Musa and Askia Mohammed -- had a considerable spiritual effect increasing their determination both to strengthen and purify Islam and to spread it even further.

v. Holy War

What is more, another way in which Islam was introduced and spread in West Africa in general and the Western Sudan in particular was the militant jihad, or the waging of holy war against infidels or lukewarm Muslims. This method allowed the third and final stage of the process of Islamisation to reach its climax with the nineteenth-century *jihad* in the Western Sudan, between Mali and Senegambia and Hausaland in northern Nigeria.

The first *jihad* in the Western Sudan which has accounts was that waged by the head of the Sudanese confederation. It was Tarsina against the Sudanese people in 1023, soon after his return from the pilgrimage to Mecca. He was killed during these clashes. The second is that of the King of Takrur, War-Ajabbi, before his death in 1040. The third and the best known of these early jihads was the one declared by the Almoravid movement of ancient Ghana between 1048 and 1054 by the scholar, Abdallah Ibn Yasin. Between 1056 and 1070s, the Almoravid conquered the whole area between ancient Ghana and Sijilmasa. By 1087 the Almoravid Empire stretched from the Senegal in the south across the Mediterranean to Spain in the north.

vi. Inter-marriage

Islam also spread on to West Africa through inter-marriages. The Muslim merchants from North Africa came down settled and married the African women who became Muslims including their children.

vii. Scholars

The early Muslim missionaries opened Islamic schools and colleges. The products of these schools and colleges also did well by spreading the religion. They worked with the rulers as advisors, councilors etc. for instance, Ibn Yasin established a Zaniyaor college and founded the Almoravid movement which contributed considerably to the spread of Islam in the Sahara and Western Sudan. Also one of the greatest clerics and missionaries of the Western Sudan was al-Hajj Suware, the Soninke scholar founded the important Zawiga at Diakha – Bambuk which attracted students from all over the Western Sudan during the first half of the thirteenth century. Scholarship was indeed also attractive to rulers in West Africa, because the widespread use of the Arabic script made administering their kingdoms easier, and tax revenues easier to accrue. Thus, Timbuktu became known for its famous

Djingnereber Mosque and prestigious Sankore University, both of which were established in the early 1300s under the reign of the Mali Empire, most famous ruler Mansa Musa.

THE EFFECTS OF ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA

Islam had a great impact on the people and states of Western Sudan and for that matter West Africa in general. Unlike Christianity, Islam is not a just a religion or a mass of doctrines or beliefs and rituals, but rather a complete way of life or civilization. The following are the effects of Islam in West Africa.

POLITICAL EFFECTS

i. Unity

Islam cut across family, clan and ethnic ties and loyalties and emphasized unity and brotherhood. It enabled rulers to build larger Kingdoms and empires embracing different peoples and Linguistic groups. It also provided them with a commonly accepted basis of authority in place of African traditional religious which differed from place to place. Many of the rulers of Western Sudan, such as Mansa Musa of Mali, Askia Mohammed of Songhai and Idris Alooma of Borno did attempt to use Islam in these ways to generate a feeling of unity and as a basis of their authority.

ii. System of Administration

Most of the Muslim rulers of Western Sudan adopted the Muslim systems of justice and taxation. Thus, Islam promoted a more efficient administration in some of the states of Western Sudan since it enabled the rulers to employ educated Muslims as secretaries, administrators, judges and diplomats and also to correspond with provincial rulers and administrators. It is significant that even non-Muslim rulers such as those of ancient Ghana before the eleventh century employed some Muslims in their administration. Furthermore, the holy wars which some rulers waged helped to extend the frontiers of their states.

iii. Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

The rulers of Western Sudan established strong diplomatic relations with other Muslim rulers abroad as Mansa Musa and Idris Alooma did with those of Egypt and Tunis respectively. Other diplomatic connections were with the Ottoman Empire, and Al-Andalus in southern Spain.

iv. Army

The *hajj* brought pilgrims into contact with technology and scholarship at the centre of the Muslim world, which were often adopted and introduced when the pilgrims returned home. For instance, Idris Alooma of Borno brought back from his pilgrimage musketeers and Turkish military instructors, and created musketeers corps in his army which enabled him to extend the frontiers of his state relatively with ease.

RELIGIOUS EFFECTS

v. Pilgrimage to Mecca.

The pilgrimage or *hajj* which Muslims were expected to undertake if they were able to do so, contributed in many ways to the growth and strength of some of the states. The *hajj* enabled the pilgrims to acquire first the highly coveted title of Al-Hajj and more importantly, the Barka, that is, the spiritual power which a pilgrim acquired by touching the black stone of the Ka'ba or Great Temple in Mecca and visiting the tomb of the Prophet at Medina. This power was of great importance, especially for the rulers, since it greatly increased their reputation and religious standing among their subjects.

Indeed, it is because of the acquisition of this power that the hajj was and is still so popular among Muslims, especially, Muslim rulers.

vi. The Pillar of Islam

There was the replacement of the worship of false gods in some areas. Converts seriously observed the five pillars of Islam, namely; daily prayers including the Friday congregational prayer, fasting, compulsory alms-giving and pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).

SOCIAL EFFECTS

vii. Literacy

Islam introduced literacy as well as Muslim education into West Africa. Literacy made it possible for scholars to preserve the history and the oral traditions of some of the states in books. Examples of such books are the *Tarikh es Sudan* written by Al-Sa'di in Timbuktu in the seventeenth century. Literacy also enabled people in the Western Sudan to join access to the invaluable Islamic literature, sciences and philosophy which broadened their knowledge, improved their statecraft and widened their horizon.

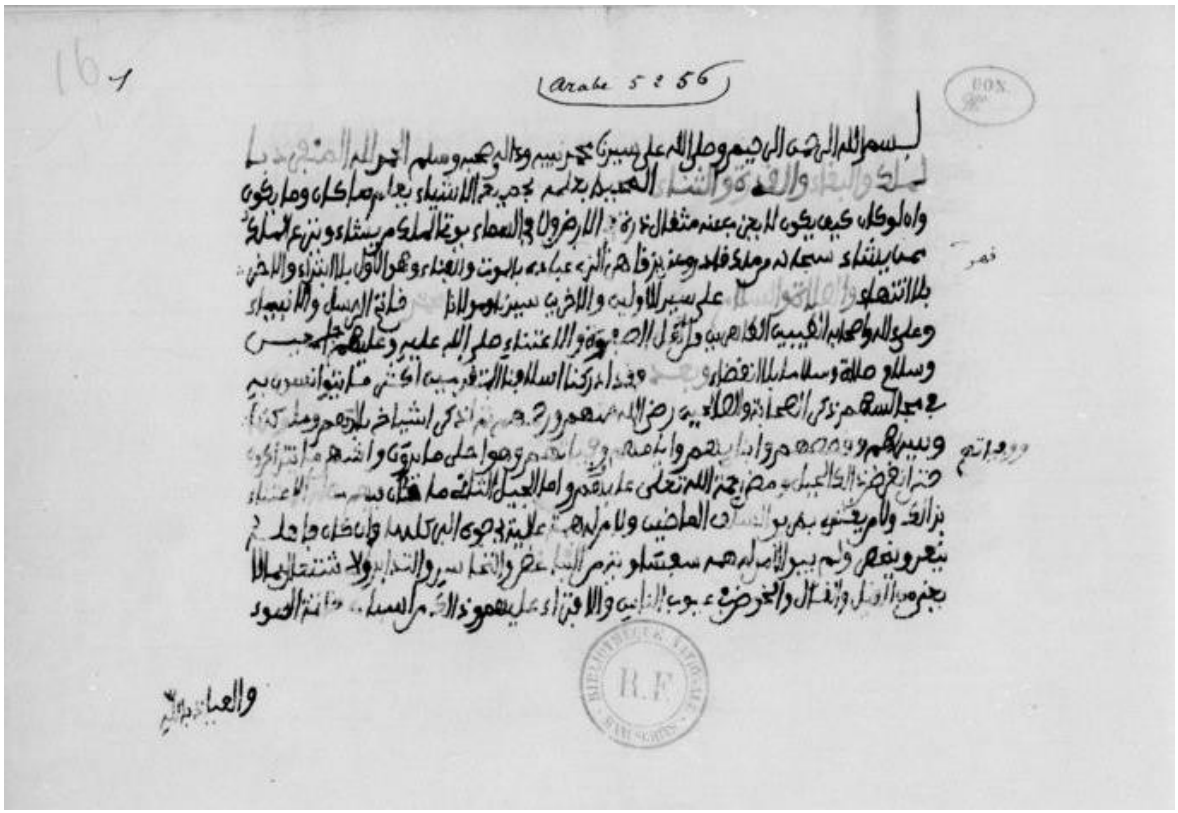
viii. Establishment of Schools

As Islam continued to spread in West Africa, schools and educational centres were established in large towns and cities in Western Sudan. Such towns include Jenne, Timbuctu, Gao Kano and Katsina, and were as much creations of the Islamisation of the Western Sudan as they were of the trans-Saharan trade.

ix. Great Scholars

Islam produced great scholars in Western Sudanese states and West Africa as a whole. Among them are; Mahamud Kati(1468-1593) a Soninke scholar who wrote the *Tarikh al Fettash* (The Chronicle of the Seeker). The second was Abdurrahman-as Sadi a government

secretary and diplomat who wrote the *Tarikh al Sudan* (The Chronicle of Sudan). The third was Ahmed Baba, the author of fifty works on law and a biographical dictionary. Thirteen of his writings are known. He was also the owner of an important library.



Abdurrahman-as Sadi, *Tarikh al Sudan* (Taʾrīḫ al-Sūdān), public domain, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Arabe 5256, http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc20347c

x. Change in Culture

There was also the change in cultural life as a result of the introduction of Islam in West Africa. In all the states of Western Sudan-Muslim wives of prominent men were required to live in *purdah* (seclusion) and to veil their faces when they went out.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

xi. Architecture

Islam helped in the introduction of burnt brick for example, Ibrahim As-Sahil designed a magnificent brick mosque in Gao, Timbuctu and a stone palace in Mali for Mansa Musa.

xii. Trade

Islam promoted trade between West Africa and the Mediterranean. The religion developed and widened the trans-Saharan Caravan trade. The trade enriched the West African and the

Muslim traders. Muslims from North Africa came in their numbers and settled in the commercial centres. This helped in the development of the cities such as Timbuctu, Gao, Jenne and Kano.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS

The Islamic religion had a great effect on West African societies. In the first place, it challenged traditional African religion, weakening the basis on which some of the Sudanese states such as Kanem and ancient Ghana rested, contributing to their downfall.

Secondly, it often divided the ruling group into Muslim and non-Moslem factions, conflict between which further weakened some of the states such as Songhai.

Thirdly, the jihad not only caused periodic outbreaks of instability and chaosin the Western Sudan but also precipitated the downfall of some states like the Hanusa.

From here it is important to understand the history of Islam in West Africa through different movements. So the remainder of the chapter looks at some key moments: the Almoravids and Ghana, the role of the Jakhanke the rise of Sokoto in Nigeria, and the importance of Omar Tal in the 19th century.

A KEY PHASE IN ISLAMIZATION: THE ALMORAVID DYNASTY

The term ‘Almoravid’ comes from the Arabic word ‘al-Murabit, literally meaning “one who is trying” but figuratively meaning “one who is ready for battle at a fortress”.

The Almoravid dynasty was an imperial Berber Muslim dynasty centered in Morocco. It established an empire in the 11th century that stretched over the western Maghreb and Al-Andalus. The dynasty was founded by Abdallah Ibn Yasin. The Almoravid capital was Marrakesh, a city which was the ruling house founded in 1062. The Gudala nomadic Berber tribes of the Sahara, traversing the territory between the Draa, the Niger and the Senegal rivers.

The Almoravids were crucial in preventing the fall of Al-Andalus to the Iberian Christian kingdoms, when they decisively defeated a coalition at the Battle of Sagrajas in 1086. This enabled them to control an empire that stretched 3,000 kilometers North to South, from Senegambia to Spain.

Abdallah Ibn Yasin was a Gazzula Berber and probably a convert rather than a born Muslim. His name can be read as “son of Ya Sin”. Ibn Yasin certainly had the ardour of a puritan zealot, his creed was mainly characterised by a rigid formalising and a strict adherence to the dictates of the Quran and orthodox tradition.

Ibn Yasin's arguments were disputed by his audience. He responded to questioning with charges of apostasy and handed out harsh punishments for the slightest deviations. The Gudala soon had enough and expelled him almost immediately after the death of his protector, Yahaya Ibn Ibrahim, sometime in the 1040s.

Ibn Yasin, however, found a more favourable reception among the neighbouring Lamtuna people. Probably sensing the useful organizing power of Ibn Yasin's pious fervor, the Lamtuna chieftain Yahya Ibn Umar al-Lamtuni invited the man to preach to his people. The Lamtuna leaders, however, kept Ibn Yasin on a careful leash, forging a more productive partnership between them. Invoking stories of the early life of Muhammed, Ibn Yasin preached that conquest was a necessary addendum to Islamicization, that it was not enough to merely adhere to God's law, law was necessary to also destroy opposition to it. In Ibn Yasin's ideology, anything and everything outside to Islamic law could be characterized as "opposition". He identified tribalism, in particular, as an obstacle. He believed it was not enough to urge his audiences to put aside their blood loyalties and ethnic differences, and embrace the equality of all Muslims under the Sacred Law, it was necessary to make them do so. For the Lamtuna leadership, this new ideology dovetailed with their long desire to refound the Sanhaja union and recover their lost dominions. In the early1050s, the Lamtuna, under the joint leadership of Yahya Ibn Umar and Abdallah Ibn Yasin-soon calling themselves the al-Murabitin (Almoravids)-set out on a campaign to bring their neighbours over to their cause.

The Almoravid Conquest In Northern Africa

From the year 1053, the Almoravids began to spread their religious way to the Berber areas of the Sahara, and to the regions south of the desert. After winning over the Sanhaja Berber tribe, they quickly took control of the entire desert trade route, seizing Sijilmasa at the northern end in 1054, and Aoudaghost at the southern end in 1055. Yahya Ibn Umar was killed in a battle in 1057, but Abdullah Ibn Yasin, whose influence as a religious teacher was paramount named his brother Abu Bakr Ibn Umar as chief. Under him, the Almoravids soon began to spread their power beyond the desert, and conquered the tribes of the Atlas Mountains. They then came in contact with the Berghouata, a Berber tribal confederation, who followed an Islamic "heresy" preached by Salih Ibn Tarif three centuries earlier. The Berghouata resisted. Abdullah ibn Yasin was killed in battle with them in 1059, in Krifla, a village near Rommani, Morocco. They were, however, completely conquered by Abu Bakr Ibn Umar, and were forced to convert to orthodox Islam. Abu Bakr married a noble and wealthy Berber woman, Zaynab an-Nafzawiyyat, who would become very influential in the development of the dynasty. Zaynab was the daughter of a wealthy merchant from Houara, who was said to be from Kairouan.

In 1061, Abu Bakr Ibn Umar made a division of the power he had established, handing over the more-settled parts to his cousin Yusuf Ibn Tashfin as viceroy, and also assigning to him his favourite wife Zaynab. Ibn Umar kept the task of suppressing the revolts that had broken out in the desert. When he returned to resume control, he found his cousin too powerful to be superseded. In Novermber 1087, Abu Bakr was killed in battle – according to oral tradition by an arrow, while fighting in the historic region of the Sudan.

Yusuf Ibn Tashfin had in the meantime brought the large area of what is now known as Morocco, Western Sahara, and Mauritania into complete subjection. In 1062 he founded the city of Marrakech. In 1080, he conquered the kingdom of Tlemcen (in modern-day Algeria) and founded the present city of that name, his rule extending as far east as Oran.

The Almoravid Conquest of the Ghana Empire

According to Arab tradition, the Almoravids conquered the Ghana Empire sometime around 1076. An example of this tradition is the record of historian Ibn Khaldun, who cited Shaykh Uthman, the faqih of Ghana, writing in 1394. According to this source, the Almoravids weakened Ghana and collected tribute from the Sudan, to the extent that the authority of the rules of Ghana dwindled away, and they were subjected and absorbed by the Soso, a neighboring people of the Sudan. Traditions in Mali related that the Soso attacked and took over Mali as well, and the ruler of the Soso, Sumaouro Kante (Sumanguru Kante) took over the land.

DECLINE OF THE ALMORAVID DYNASTY

Three years afterwards, under Yusuf's son and successor, Ali Ibn Yusuf, Sintra and Santarem in Portugal were added, and he invaded Iberia again in 1119 and 1121, but the tide had turned, as the French had assisted the Aragonese to recover Zaragoza. In 1138, Ali Ibn Yusuf was defeated by Alfonso VII of Leon, and in the Battle of Ourique (1139), by Afonso I of Portugal, who thereby won his crown. Lisbon was conquered by the Portuguese in 1147.

According to some scholars, Ali Ibn Yusuf provided a new generation of leadership that had forgotten the desert life for the comforts of the city. He was defeated by the combined action of his Christian foes in Iberia and the agitation of Almohads (the Muwahhids) in Morocco. After Ali Ibn Yusuf’s death in 1143, his son Tashfin Ibn Ali lost ground rapidly before the Almohads. In 1146 he was killed in a fall from a precipice while attempting escape after a defeat near Oran.

His two successors were Ibrahim Ibn Tashfin and Ishaq Ibn Ali, but their reigns were short. The conquest of the city of Marrakech by the Almohads in 1147 marked the fall of the dynasty, though fragments of the Almoravids (the Banu Ghanaiya,) continued to struggle in the Balearic Islands, and finally in Tunisia.

Military organization

Abdallah Ibn Yussin imposed very strict discipline measures on his forces for every breach of his laws The Almoravid first military leader, Yahya Ibn Umar al-Lamtuni, gave them a good military organization. Their main force was infantry, armed with javelins in the front ranks and pikes behind, which formed into a phalanx, and was supported by camelmen and horsemen on the flanks. They also had a flag carrier as the front who guided the forces behind him, when the flag was upright, the combatants behind would stand and when it was turned down, they would sit.

Al-Bakri reports that, while in combat, the Almoravids did not pursue those who fled in front of them. Their fighting was intense and they did not retreat when disadvantage by an advancing opposing force, they preferred death over defeat. These characteristics were possibly unusual at the time.

The Jakhanke Islamic Movement

A history of Islam in West Africa cannot be complete without a mention, however brief, of the Jakhanke Islamic Movement which arose in the 12th century under the charismatic scholar Alhajj Salim Suwareh who helped to spread Islam in the present day countries of Mali, Guinea, Senegal and The Gambia, the most Islamized countries in West Africa today. The Jakhanke Islamization effort indeed have borne rich fruit! But let us begin by addressing the brass tacks: who were the Jakhanke? Why do they deserve attention in our study of the spread of Islam in West Africa?

The highly regarded Gambian historian Lamin Sanneh who is also the leading authority on the Jakhanke calls the Jakhanke a 'specialized caste' of Muslim clerics and educators. 'Caste' gives them an aura of belonging to a bigger group, the Serahuli ethnic group also called Soninke in other writings. Today, they are erroneously categorized as Mandinka. They speak a dialect of Mandinka, but their 'Mandikanization' was largely because they were hosted by Mandinka chiefs when the Jakhanke moved from present day Republic of Mali to the Senegambia region. 'Clerics and educators' indicate their profession as literate and therefore able to proselytize and do missionary work. Apparently, the Jakhanke who are found in the Senegambia region today in large numbers do not put much premium on their ethnic origins but rather on their work as propagators of Islam in the past 800 years.

This is exactly why the Jakhanke should interest us. They started a peaceful propagation of Islam in the Senegambia region. This is all the more relevant as we write today because of the rampant violence associated with Islam in many parts of the world. Much of the subsequent styles, and techniques associated with the peaceful spread of Islam in Senegambia is their creation. In a nutshell, they set the standards for missionary work.

What were these standards? Chiefly, they professed the peaceful path to Islam. They did not raise the sword to spread the religion. They resorted to more peaceful methods such as establishing Koranic schools and mosques, upgrading of mosques, holding sessions on Koranic exegesis, preservation of holy sites where yearly Islamic gatherings take place and being itinerant traders who took Islam to their clients and customers. But just as they had methods, they also had tactics! For example, they believed in numbers and therefore were keen to multiply their talibes or disciples. The disciples having gone through years of tutelage, would be allowed to disperse and then mass up new disciples themselves. Through massification, the Jakhanke helped to strengthen their religion. Also, they had a tactic of withdrawing into enclaves far from the maddening crowds, so to speak. Generally, Jakhanke needed the quietude of the monastery and thus were very good at establishing theocratic entities sometimes deep in the Senegambian Savannah, where they developed self sustaining communities dedicated to Islamic scholarship and renditions. Sutukuho, Sutukung, in The Gambia and Niokhlo and Suna Karantba in Casamance are extant examples of such religious villages.

So far absent in our discussion is the figure of Alhaji Salim Suwareh, the founder of the Jakhanke Islamic movement we have discussed above. He was a central in the success of the Jakhanke missionary work and therefore deserves our brief attention. His early life is shrouded in mystery, but a few strands deserve serious attention and are revealing. He died around 1500 and reputedly made seven pilgrimages to Mecca where he had relatives and lived before relocating to Black Africa to spread Islam, settling in the Jaka region of Masina, in present day Mali. Hence the name of his people Jakankhe, meaning in Mandinka 'those who hail from Jaka'. When he completed his seventh hajj, he returned to Africa and stayed. He led his people from Jaka Masina to Jaka Bambuku. When the animist ruler of Bambuku became hostile, Suwareh did as the prophet of Islam did when Meccans started to throw stones at him: flee into exile. Suwareh led his band of talibes towards present day Senegambia. The historian Professor Sanneh writes that since this hijra or flight like movement, Jakhanke 'have been united by a close bond of solidarity based on fidelity to Suwareh characterized by bonds of solidarity'.

So dedicated were the Jakhanke to the spirit of peaceful spread of Islam that when a Serahuli religious hothead, Momodou Lamin Drammeh(1835-1887) opted to wage war to convert Bundu (eastern Senegal) into Islam, the Jakhanke disowned him and fled further down to present eastern Gambia. His swashbuckling style was quite in contrast to their orderly ways of Islamization! Without bearing the sword, the Jakhanke were able to fasten the spread and reform of Islam in contrast to the jihadist like Drammeh, Umar Taal, or Maba Jahou Bah. The paradox here may not be obvious but is palpable: how Jakhanke whose mentor, Suwareh, lived and had relatives in Mecca could have disavowed the uncompromising Wahabi doctrine to espouse the 'path of accommodation'?

To conclude therefore, what is the significance of the Jakhanke movement? Simply put, the Jakhanke epitomized peaceful and community led spread of Islam which made a deep impact on the recipient societies of Islam as the way of peace. The present day bomb throwers who claim to spread this religion by doing so may want to learn a lesson or two from the Jakhanke movement which started over 500 years ago

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THE SOKOTO CALIPHATE

Introduction

Created by a jihad launched by Usman dan Fodio (also spelt Usman Ibn Fodio, Uthman Dan Fuduye, or Uthman Ibn Fodio) between 1804 and 1810, the caliphate of Sokoto was the largest and most populated state of nineteenth-century Africa. According to a nineteenth-century account, it took four months to travel from west to east and two months to travel from north to south. The caliphate was organised as a decentralised state seeking to establish Islamic law over its large territory. The jihad and caliphate officially ended with the 1903 British conquest, but has since been widely studied and its legacy endures today, especially in Nigeria. Many observers have tried to understand the jihad, the caliphate and especially the figure of Usman dan Fodio. The jihad, itself at the origin of a rich Islamic scholarship, has now given place to a wide and varied literature.

The jihad and the creation of the caliphate

For dan Fodio, the main reason for the jihad was the purification of Islam in territories which were already Muslim at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The legitimacy of his struggle stemmed from his belief that, until this point, Muslim leaders had only practiced an impure form of Islam.

Some historians understood the jihad of Sokoto as a revolution because of the Hausa kingdoms' socio-economical inequalities at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Dan Fodio's success rests on his preference towards a form of equality and his proclaimed fight against corruption. As a champion of the people, dan Fodio launched his fight against the king and the aristocracy of Gobir in 1804. Even if the social dimension of the jihad should not be totally neglected, dan Fodio himself declared mainly religious reasons to be at the origin of the jihad in Kitab al-Farq. Correspondence exchanged with the leader of Borno in the 1800s is here revealing. After attempting to invade the kingdom that had existed since the ninth century, dan Fodio tried to convince Mohammed el-Kanemi of the religious and legal merits of his struggle. For dan Fodio, the jihad was mainly (but not only) conceived as a way of reforming lax Muslims by pure Muslims.

In the 1970s, some historians stressed an ethnic dimension in the jihad of Sokoto. According to this interpretation, dan Fodio was the descendant of Fulanis installed in Hausa regions since the fifteenth century, and would have pitted Islam against Hausas. However, even if most leaders of the Sokoto jihad were Fulani, it is difficult to argue that the numerically inferior Fulani would have believed that they could have overthrown the Hausa kings on exclusively ethnic grounds. Dan Fodio himself wrote against any ethnic discrimination in his treatise *Bayan Wayan Wujub al-Hijra*.

Scholars have also tried to show to what extent the jihad was not totally new in West Africa. Indeed discussions on the place of Islam in society had already taken place before the jihad

of dan Fodio whether it was about food bans, marriage laws or clothes that women had to wear. It was this last point that had attracted the attention of Shaikh Jibril b. 'Umar, one of the masters of Usman dan Fodio. Other jihads had already taken place in West Africa before that of dan Fodio (Bundu, late seventeenth century, Futa Jallon, 1725, Futa Toro, 1776). In other words, some Muslim scholars had already become reformers-conquerors before the advent of Usman dan Fodio.

The religious questioning of the jihad of dan Fodio was therefore not completely original. It is his lasting political victory over a vast territory that ensured his long-term success.

The structure and economy of the caliphate

The first six years of jihad (1804-1810) were fundamental in the creation of a political and religious foundation for a state that was never an empire, but a collection of territories under the authority of the caliph in Sokoto. Indeed the Caliphate of Sokoto was a highly decentralised state ruled by the Caliph. The Caliphate itself was a novel phenomenon in the Hausa regions and conferred moral and political authority on dan Fodio and his successors. Companions of the caliph, Fulani scholars who had become jihadists, were thus placed as emirs at the head of each territorial subdivision who answered directly to the caliph. Because of its size, the caliphate became divided between the western emirates under the authority of Sokoto and the eastern emirates which remained more or less autonomous.

The different successors of dan Fodio had to carry out military campaigns to assert their authority, thus making jihad a virtually uninterrupted phenomenon until the mid-nineteenth century. Mohammed Bello, dan Fodio’s son and direct successor, took the title of sultan and led many campaigns which he likened to the conquest of the Arabian Peninsula by the first Muslims in the seventh century. Bello's policy consisted of appointing family members as heads of frontier towns, settling Fulani nomadic populations in villages and building fortified villages to monitor some borders. It thus became necessary to ensure the security of the caliphate at its borders but also in the buffer zones between each emirate. Thanks to soldiers recruited during the dry season, the troops of Sokoto could quash any rebellion or Tuareg incursion from the north.

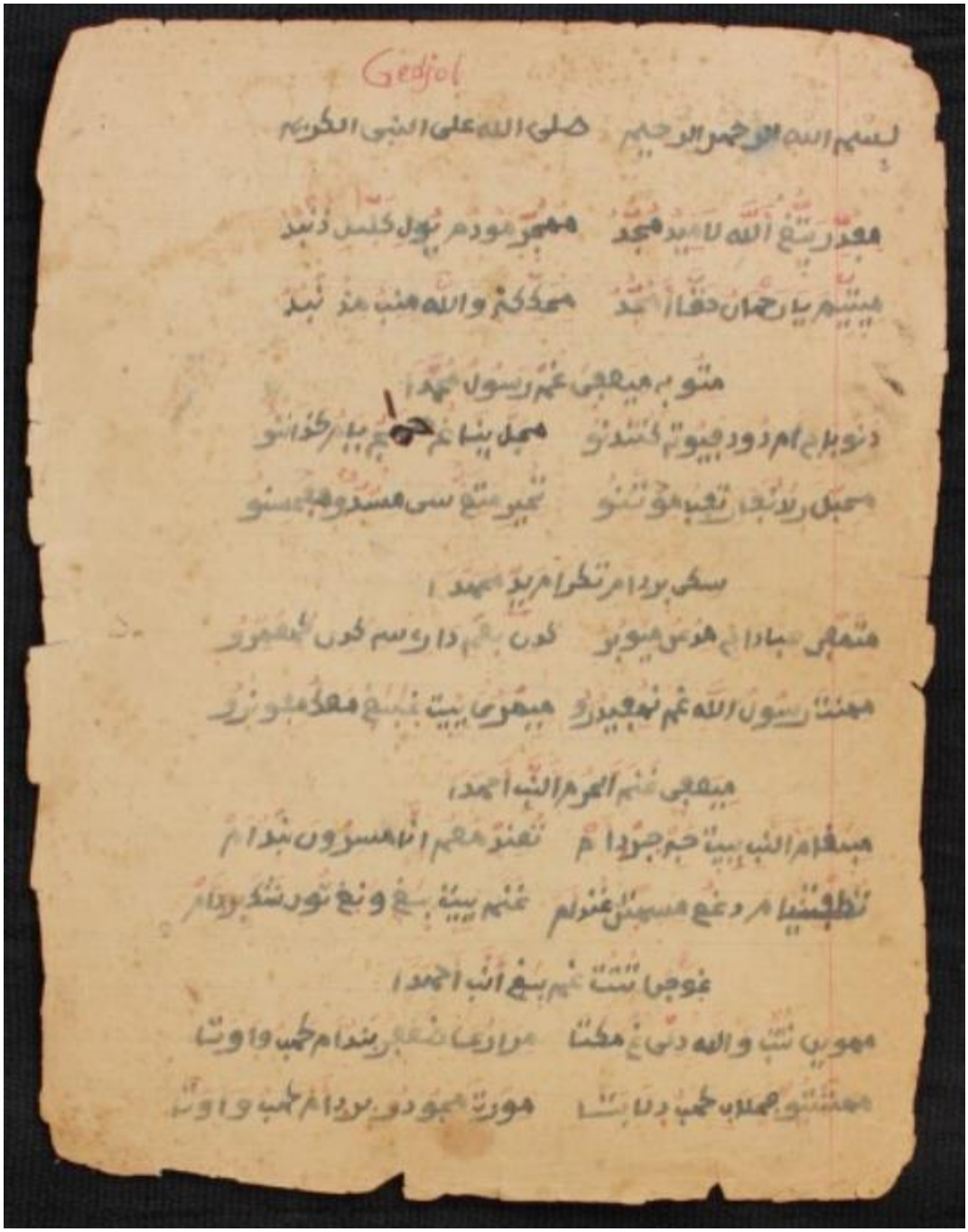
The caliph's authority derived from his ability to control his borders, redistribute spoils from military campaigns or taxes to allies and members of his family. In replacing the taxes of the Hausa leaders by Islamic taxes like the *zakat*, revenues of the Caliphate were in theory subject to Islamic law. However, these taxes depended largely on each emirate with, for example, the existence of a property tax in Kano or Zaria outside of the emirate of Sokoto. Sokoto's centralizing tendencies on the rest of the caliphate were therefore limited by the pre-jihadic structures of the Hausa cities as well as the impossibility of reaching large parts of the population in the countryside.

The caliphate of Sokoto, faithful to the original intentions of the jihad, looked to establish Islamic law in the courts of the whole caliphate. The need for educated men encouraged the emergence of schools in urban centres, even though the first years of the Caliphate were

marked by a shortage of qualified personnel. Indeed, a defining feature of the Caliphate of Sokoto was the literate staff working in the administration of each emirate. Born free or in slavery, these men formed part of a functioning bureaucracy.

It was once again the lack of labour which provoked the numerous expeditions with the aim of capturing slaves to either sell or to make work in the plantations and other places of production of the caliphate. Thus, work in the salt mines of the north of the caliphate was based on slave labour. The same applied to the iron, cotton, indigo, or leather industries of the central regions of the caliphate. The wealth of the state was therefore based on a servile economy fuelled by wars or raids. North African merchants provided a number of slaves in the town of Kano of the 1820s: for every freeman there were thirty slaves in the city.

Islam, which had penetrated the Hausa regions during the fourteenth century via travellers / traders from neighbouring Borno and regions north of the Sahara, spread through jihad. The pre-Islamic religions, often called 'traditional' religions, persisted but the Islamic culture permeated the whole region through books written by the family of dan Fodio or sold through the Sahara. Whether through the pilgrimage to Mecca, trade or the dissemination of brotherhoods, the Hausa regions became more and more integrated with the Muslim world. While the phenomenon of integration within the Muslim world may have existed before, the jihad greatly accelerated the process.



Poem written by Nana Asma'u Fodio, daughter of Usman dan Fodio. Gedjol, 19th century, British Library, EAP387/1/2/6, https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP387-1-2-6

The fall of the caliphate

Following a brief British military campaign, the Sokoto Caliphate was incorporated into the protectorate of northern Nigeria in 1903. This date marks the defeat of the Sokoto Sultan against the British armies and the beginning of the colonial period. The British troops, as in was often the case in Africa, were essentially composed of Africans with European officers at their head. Involving predominantly Hausa soldiers, the British conquest might therefore also be understood as the result of an internal war in the Sokoto caliphate. Nevertheless, the Caliphate did not quite disappear entirely in 1903, as the British used the Sokoto Caliphate to build upon their theory of Indirect Rule.

Factbox:

The phrase ‘caliphate of Sokoto’ was not used by the inhabitants of the state created by the jihad in the nineteenth century. In fact, the term ‘caliphate’ was first coined by anthropologist Murray Last in 1967 in his seminal work, *The Sokoto Caliphate*. Last roots the term in the title assumed by Mohammed Bello and his successors. As *amir al-Muminin*, the sultan of Sokoto was the de facto caliph; a title that was also used by the rulers of neighbouring Borno between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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AL HAJJ UMAR TAL AND THE OMARIEN DYNAMIC IN WEST AFRICA

If Alhaji Salim Suwareh did not raise the sword to spread Islam, Al Hajj Umar Tal (1797-1864) did and with as much success as the Jakhanke missionaries. Before we examine his eventful life, we might as well start our discussion with his swift jihads in present day Mali and Guinea Conakry which lasted from 1848-1864. His first target was the gold states of Bambuk and Bure then ruled by and inhabited by animist Malinke. Within a short period of six years between 1848-1854, he conquered and forcibly converted the Malinke of Bandjogou, Bougary and Farabana all in present day Republic of Guinea Conakry. He raised the flag of Tijaninya sect of Islam and pitched his tent at Jalafara, his first capital. His success pushed him to attack the Bambaras of Kaarta and Segou, and the animist Fulani of Macina, in present day Republic of Mali. By 1854 Tal had established a huge Muslim state which included aarta, Segou, Macina, and Khasso. He had brought the only well organized fighting force in this part of the Sahel, the Bambara, into submission under his Tijaniya sect. The eminent Malian historian Sekene Mody Cissokho commented 'Al hajj Umar brought Islam to the Western Sudan' a worthy accolade to this brilliant scholar turned jihadist and empire builder.

But this success was apparent even in his early year. At the age of 23 in 1820, he had finished his studies and was awarded the title 'alfa' or scholar. In the same year, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca and stayed in Arabia for 13 years, and was ordained the Kalifa or emissary of the Tijaniya sect in West Africa. He had now gotten the recognition and stamp of approval to lead the jihads in the Sahel. He briefly passed through Kanem Borno, Sokoto where jihads had just been completed and must have learnt some lessons on how to prepare his own in the Sahel.

Cissokho tells us that Umar's aim was less to destroy existing polities but more to convert their rulers and people from animism into Tijaniay Islam or from Qadriya into Tinjaniya. But we must not attribute his quick success to the sword of the Jihad alone; Umar's version of Tijaniya was also pro poor, and socially uplifting. He was quick to free slaves for example in conquered territories and assisted the poor and down trodden to meet their basic needs.

Until he met his demise at Dinguiray in 1864 after a bloody encounter with the French, he remained the popular jihadist turned empire builder. His son Amadou Seku replaced him but struggled to wield together the vast Imamate his father had wrought.

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4 - European Contact with West Africa

European sailors first reached sub-Saharan Africa in 1442, when Portuguese ships reached the Senegal river. The Portuguese had been sailing the coasts of Morocco and Western Sahara since 1413, when they captured the Moroccan city of Ceuta [still a Spanish city today]. Between 1413 and the 1440s, the Portuguese established several fortified settlements along the Moroccan coast, especially at Arzila, Mogador (now Essaouira), Safi, and Tangier; they retained a strong presence in Morocco until 1578, when the Portuguese King Sebastião I and much of the Portuguese nobility were killed at the Battle of Alcácer-Quibir. By 1471, West African leaders between the coasts of Senegal and Ghana had established commercial and diplomatic connections with Portuguese traders [major early sites of trade and settlement were on the Gambia river, Bugendo on the São Domingos river in Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone].

For the next 150 years, West African rulers and traders came across the Portuguese more than any other European nation. [There were also smaller trading missions led by the English and the French, but these were less frequent]. In the beginning, the Portuguese main motivations were: 1, an interest in the extensive gold production of Bono-Mansu and the Akan states; 2, competition with the Ottoman Empire to access this gold [the Ottomans had captured Constantinople in 1453, prompting a crisis in Christian Europe]; 3, the desire to find a trade route to markets in India around the Cape of Good Hope; 4, ever increasingly, the trade in enslaved persons.

By the 1590s, the Dutch began to rival the Portuguese as the major European trading nation in Africa. Their ships were bigger and better, and the goods they traded with African political leaders were of much higher quality. The Dutch had captured many of the main Portuguese trading stations in West Africa by 1650, especially at Gorée in Senegal (in 1621), at Elmina in Ghana (in 1637), and at Luanda in Angola (in 1641). Initially the Dutch were mainly interested in textiles, animal hides [for the leather industry], and ivory, but by the middle of the 17th century they too turned to slave trading. The Dutch interest in slave trading dates to the 1620s and the capture of half of the Brazilian colonies from the Portuguese. From 1630 to 1654 the Dutch controlled the northern part of Brazil, and the associated sugar plantations which used the labour of enslaved persons; their growing colonial interests drove their interest in slave trading, which took over in the second half of the 18th century.

In the second half of the 17th century, other European nations would follow this pattern. Danish, English, French, German, and Swedish traders established factories at various points in West Africa, and this pattern of African-European trade and interaction deepened.

This chapter looks especially at the early period of African-European interaction, to 1650, before the trade in enslaved persons came to predominate in trade. The chapter on the trans-Atlantic slave trade then looks at that historical aspect in more detail.

I: Immediate Causes of Portuguese Sailings to Africa

Europe in the 14th century was in a bad way. It is estimated that the spread of Plague between 1346 and 1353 led to the deaths of between 30 and 50% of the European population. Some archaeologists also believe that this Plague had an impact in West African populations [the evidence for this remains challenged, but it is an interesting hypothesis; the archaeologist Gérard Chouin has been the strongest proponent of this idea].

With the population collapse, European nations such as Portugal faced many problems. Their workforce had more than halved, which meant that much farming land was taken over by forests and plants. Interestingly, one of the first sources available on the West African presence in Portugal, from the Portuguese *Cortes* or parliament at Évora in 1471, says that African labourers were vital for clearing wastelands in the country: this suggests a strong labour shortage in Europe after the Plague, and the role of African labour in addressing this. Many of the nobles had lost their labourers [known as serfs], and civil wars resulted in Portugal in the 1380s. There was both a shortage of wheat to make bread, and very high inflation of the Portuguese currency [known as the *escudo*]. Both of these factors prompted the Portuguese interest in Morocco, since, 1, Morocco was a fertile country and a grower of wheat; and 2, the Portuguese hoped that through sailing along the coast of West Africa, they might find access to West African gold supplies and protect their currency.

By contrast to the situation in Europe, many states in West Africa in the 15th century were in a process of expansion and growth. Mossi was established in the 15th century in Burkina Faso, Kano became a major power, and Songhay rose to usurp the power of the Mali Empire. Much of this growth came with increased gold production in the Akan states of Ghana. So much gold was produced that the trans-Saharan trade did not bring enough goods to exchange at Kano, and many gold traders left empty-handed [this is according to the early 16th-century Muslim traveller from southern Spain known generally as Leo Africanus].

The Portuguese were aware of this growth through a number of channels. The Catalan Atlas of c.1375 was a map drawn by a Majorcan Jew called Abraham Cresques, which showed the power of Mali and its gold production in detail.

Catalan Atlas, by Cresques Abraham, Wikicommons; Mansa Musa at bottom - Unknown, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=670189

The Atlas showed good trade connections between Spain and West Africa via the Sahara, often undertaken by Jewish traders. These traders spread news about West Africa in Spain and Portugal. There were Jewish communities in Saharan settlements such as Tuat, and after riots against Spanish Jews in 1391 more settled in Morocco and worked in the carpet and textile trade to and from the Mali Empire.

Knowing something of the conditions in Africa, therefore, Portuguese leaders were keen to make connections with West African gold producers [Portugal also had a large Jewish population]. They also hoped to meet with a Christian King who they called Prester John, and who they believed lived somewhere in Africa. They wanted a Christian alliance against the Islamic Ottoman Empire, which was growing in power; and to divert some of the gold supply. Prester John probably referred to the Christian King of Ethiopia, but this was not known at the time.

All of these factors shaped the Portuguese voyages to West Africa, and their arrival at the Senegal river in 1442.

II: *Portuguese voyages: key dates, patterns, and timelines*

After reaching the Senegal river in 1442, the Portuguese voyages continued. By 1448, some of their people had sailed up the Gambia river as far as the major trading town of Kantora, not far east of what is today Basse Santa Su [in the far east of the country; Kantora was then a major centre for the trans-Saharan trade]. By the mid-1450s, there was trade with the

Wolof state of Kajoor on the coast, and the Bijagós Islands off the coast of Guinea-Bissau had entered discussions with European traders. The initial language of communication was probably Arabic: Arabic speakers were many in Portugal in the 15th century, where Granada was still as Islamic kingdom in Spain, and of course was widely spoken in many parts of West Africa. One sailor described in 1456 how the Bijagós was the last place where the African peoples shared a language with the Portuguese sailors, and so this was also probably the southernmost extent of Arab and Trans-Saharan trade at that time. The Cape Verde Islands were first reached probably in 1456 [a lively discussion exists among Capeverdean historians as to whether there was already a population; archaeological evidence is inconclusive, but the islands may have been a salt depot for Saharan states], and the coastline of Ghana followed in around 1471.

The coastline of Ghana was different because it was so close to the gold mines of the Akan forests. Soon Akan traders sold gold informally to the Portuguese. The Portuguese state wanted its share, and so the Portuguese sent a large fleet in 1481 and negotiated with Kwamena Ansa, ruler at Edina [now called Elmina], to build a fortress. When the negotiations were concluded [after a highly tense stand-off, which began when the Portuguese tried to build their fort at the site of a holy shrine], the fortress at Elmina was built, and still remains on what became known as the Gold Coast. It would later change hands and become a Dutch fortress in the 17th century; and in time the Dutch and English would be the main European nations trading in Ghana.

Because there was so much commerce on the Gold Coast, many different Akan rulers were keen to expand their trading connections. The Portuguese built forts in other locations along the Gold Coast, such as Axim and Komenda, many of which were completed by 1500. In time there would be many more forts, almost every few miles along the Gold Coast; some would be specialists in the gold trade, and others, such as Anishan, in exporting the corn which was also in high demand from European ships. It would not be until the 18th century that the slave trade would come to predominate on the Gold Coast.

Meantime, other rulers from West and West-Central Africa were making contact with the Portuguese. Oba Ozolua of Benin received Portuguese visitors in 1485, and the Atlantic trading post of Gwatón was founded around 1490. Benin initially sold malaguetta peppers to the Portuguese, but after the sea route to India was established in 1499, Benin's peppers became less in demand in Europe. The Portuguese tried to establish a trade in enslaved persons from Benin to the gold suppliers in Elmina, but the Oba refused. Over the 16th century, Benin's relations with the Portuguese declined, until in the early 17th century the Obas renewed links with European traders given the Dutch demand for the cloth produced in Benin. Throughout the 17th century cloth remained the main export of Benin, and the *ambassy* cloths were traded regularly to Elmina, and as far afield as Brazil. However demand fell in the late 17th century, as imports of luxury cloths from India grew. This meant that by the 18th century Benin's Obas had finally to turn to the trade in enslaved persons to preserve and renew the power of Edo and the Benin state.

The Portuguese continued to voyage south after Benin, reaching the mouth of the Kongo river and establishing relations with the manikongo at Mbanza Kongo [the capital of Kongo], Nzika Nkuwu. The island of São Tomé was settled by 1485, and many BaKongo peoples were

taken there as enslaved persons to work on the sugar plantations. In 1491, Nzika Nkuwu converted to Christianity and took the name Joao I. This led also to connections between Kongo and Elmina through São Tomé, which traded with both. Indeed, by the 1510s, traders from Benin were mentioned as present at the Kongolese port of Mpinda in a letter written in Portuguese by the new manikongo Afonso I (1509-46).

By the 1510s, therefore, many different peoples of West Africa and their rulers had established connections with the Portuguese. Some, such as those at Benin and Elmina had connections further south, to Kongo. African rulers hoped to expand their trading contacts; and at times to obtain military support against rivals, as was the case with both Benin (who fought a major battle with Portuguese support against Nupe, in 1516) and in civil wars in Jolof and Kongo.

III: Exchanges of ambassadors

Diplomacy and royal exchanges characterised the first decades of West African relationships with Portugal. It was common for princes of Benin, Jolof and Kongo to spend time studying in Portugal, or to be sent by their royal elders as ambassadors to the Portuguese court. This continued into the 17th century, when Kongo sent ambassadors to the Dutch colonial court in Brazil, to the home of the Catholic Church at the Vatican, as well as to Portugal. In the 1650s, Allada also sent ambassadors to the Spanish court. This pattern continued later, when Dahomey sent ambassadors 5 times to the Portuguese in Brazil and Portugal between 1755 and the 1810s. Indeed, when Brazil declared independence from Portugal in 1811, it was Dahomey which was the first state to recognise its independence.

The Portuguese also saw these relationships as diplomatic. Under the reign of João II (1481-95), the Portuguese sent ambassadors to many royal courts in Africa: to Benin, Kongo, and to the court of the Mandimansa, the emperor of Mali [one envoy was sent as far as Timbuktu, but it is not certain that he arrived]. Letters sent by the Portuguese kings to West African rulers conceived of them as fellow monarchs. In both Africa and Portugal, kingship was a divine gift, creating some commonality.

Fortunately some portraits survive of these ambassadors. The most important were painted in Brazil by a Dutch artist [probably Jasper Beckx], and were of Dom Miguel de Castro. Miguel de Castro was the ambassador of the court of the *manikongo*, Garcia II Ncana a Luquini nzenze atumba, who sent him as an envoy to the Dutch court in Brazil, probably in 1643:

Dom Miguel de Castro, by Jaspar Beckx, sometimes attributed to Albert Eckhout, public domain

The aims of these embassies were quite varied. They can be broadly summarised in three categories:

1) The quest for a military alliance. Two good examples can be given of this.

:- The first dates from 1488, when the Jolof prince Bumi Jeléen came to Portugal. He claimed rightful possession of the throne of Jolof, but had been unseated by his brothers/rivals, and had come to Portugal for assistance. He was received at court by João II, who sent a military fleet to support Bumi Jeléen on his return to the Senegal river. However, Bumi Jeléen was treacherously murdered by the leader of the fleet when they reached West Africa [this individual, Pero Vaz de Cunha, claimed that he suspected Bumi Jeléen of betraying them]. This was an ignominious episode; many of the leaders of this plot against the Jolof prince were put to death by João II, and the followers and relatives of Bumi Jeléen moved to the Cape Verde islands [which by then were under Portuguese control].

:- The second relates to this expedition by Dom Miguel de Castro. In the 1640s, the Kingdom of Kongo had allied with the Dutch against the Portuguese. The Dutch seized Luanda in 1641, and then Kongo armies fought against Portuguese troops stationed at their forts [Ambaca and Massangano] in the interior of Angola. In this embassy, Dom Miguel de Castro had been sent by the *manikongo* to discuss military strategy and how to throw the Portuguese out for good from West-Central Africa. However this alliance was finally defeated in 1648.

2) Interest in Christianity

Another factor in these embassies was the interest which some African peoples had in Christianity. Princes from Benin studied in Portuguese missions, as did those from Kongo. While the interest in Christianity waned in Benin, in Kongo it did not, and ambassadors were sent to the Vatican repeatedly asking for more priests and missionaries, long into the 17th century. In the 1670s, over a dozen members of the Ndongo royal family spent many years studying in a variety of monasteries and convents in Portugal [as new research by the historian José Lingna Nafafé is showing]. Allada, too, sent requests to Spain for missionaries in the middle of the 17th century; by this time the climate was becoming unpredictable, and there were frequent floods, so the king of Allada hoped that the Christian priests might be able to intercede with divinities and prevent these.

3) Commercial activity

Trade was often a motivation in the despatching of ambassadors by West African kings. Access to Atlantic trade was an important way of expanding supplies of money. Just as today there is the Cedi, Dalasi, Leone, and Naira, so in the past many types of money were in use in different parts of West Africa, such as cowries, iron bars, and cloth strips. More specifically, these were: 1, gold, especially on the Niger Bend and in the Akan kingdoms of the Gold Coast; 2, cowries, in Benin, Oyò, on the Niger Bend, and later in Hueda and Dahomey; 3, copper rods, on the Gold Coast and in Calabar; 4, iron bars, in Senegambia, and on the Gold Coast; 5, strips of cloth, used widely in Senegambia, Sierra Leone, and in parts of the Gold Coast and Oyò. These currencies had all been in use before the arrival of European traders. The Atlantic trade then expanded the money supply that was available, and thus also helped to grow market exchanges. By negotiating with European monarchs, many West African rulers hoped to grow their access to currency, and thus the size of their tax revenue, and the power of their state. In the 1620s, this saw smaller kingdoms along the Gold Coast sending embassies to the Dutch; while this was also a clear motivation in the embassies sent by Allada in the 1650s. Five embassies sent by Dahomey to Brazil and Portugal in the later 18th and early 19th century all had commercial aims.

By this time, the royal family of Dahomey had become experts in fine living in the capitals of Brazil and Portugal. The embassies sent in 1795 are a good case in point. Ttravelling first to Salvador, in Brazil, the two ambassadors spent large sums on fine silk and damask clothing and hats all of it paid for by the Portuguese crown. They then moved on to Lisbon late in the year, and when they arrived they visited the theatre and the opera every night.

The diplomatic element of African-European relations shows that these took place on a scale of grand politics, as well as at a local level. West African rulers' interests were those of many leaders anywhere: commercial and military success, and religious belief. Yet while the Portuguese crown also despatched many embassies initially, by the 1530s the European presence was becoming increasingly "informal", as small-scale traders took over.

IV: European Trading Communities in West Africa

There were two main types of European trading community in West Africa: 1, informal communities, where Europeans settled, married women from the area, and with them formed African families who often became important in local trade networks; 2, more

formal communities which grew up in the fortified trading posts along the coast, or factories [from the Portuguese word *feitoria*] that were especially found along the Gold Coast, in Hueda, and also in the rivers around Gambia and Bissau [especially the Gambia, Casamance, São Domingos, Corubal, Nunez and Pongo rivers].

The fortified factories were often modelled on Elmina, which was the first, oldest, and biggest of these trading posts. This shows the importance of the gold trade to begin with, dating to the 1480s, when Elmina was built. However apart from Elmina and other smaller forts on the Gold Coast, in the 1500s the informal model of trade was more usual. Male Portuguese traders came to areas such as Senegambia, the rivers of Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Benin. Here they married, and often acted as trading intermediaries with local rulers, as they, their wives (and their children) were able to speak both African and European languages.

One of these traders became quite famous in Senegambia in the 16th century. Known as "Ganagoga", this Portuguese man had originally been called João Ferreira. He married the daughter of the ruler of Fùùta Tòòro [on the Senegal river]. His name "Ganagoga" meant "he who speaks all the languages" in the Biafada language of Guinea-Bissau, which shows how important this ability was.

It seems that relations with daughters of the ruling families was not unusual for these traders. In another case in the early 17th century, one Dutch Jewish trader got into problems after having had an affair with the daughter of the *Buur* of Kajoor in Senegal.

Some historians think that these early traders also often took on religious roles. The Portuguese called those of their nation who settled in Africa "*tangomãos*" in the 1500s. This word derived from the name of a shrine in Sierra Leone, *tunguma*. According to one writer in 1506, one of the earliest Portuguese men to settle in Sierra Leone [in the 1480s] had officiated at this shrine at the request of the Temni peoples there [though Sierra Leone's human communities changed a lot in the 16th century, with the arrival of a wave of Mande-influenced warriors called the Manes, who defeated the warriors of existing communities and then intermarried with them by 1600]. "Tangomão" therefore meant a European person who both settled in West Africa, and adopted West African beliefs and practices.

In many of these communities, it was the African women married to these male traders who ran the trading networks. Their male European spouses were often ill with malaria and other diseases to which they had no physical resistance. These men looked awful, and spent much of their time in bed before dying young. Female traders spoke African languages much better, of course. They could form trading and human networks with their home communities, and run the day to day aspects of the business while their male spouses fought weakly with disease [some historians think that the strong role of women traders in these areas influenced the powerful place that women took in some independence movements against colonial rule in the 20th century, especially in Guinea-Bissau and parts of Nigeria].

A good example of one of these cases comes from Guinea-Bissau in the middle of the 17th century. In the factory of Cacheu, the most powerful traders in the 1660, 1670s, and 1680s

were two women called Bibiana Vaz and Crispina Peres. Peres was married to a Portuguese trader, but he was so ill that she ran the couple's business. She made so many enemies through her business acumen that she was eventually captured by the Portuguese Inquisition and deported to Lisbon, where she was tried in 1664 for "fetishism" as a crime against Catholic Christianity. Vaz, meanwhile, was so powerful that she kept the Portuguese Governor of Cacheu prisoner in the passageway of her house in Farim for 18 months in the 1690s.

These mixed communities were more influenced by African than by European practices and behaviour. It was important to be able to speak European languages and to write to get the best trade terms with Europeans, but marriage and inheritance was carried out according to the local practice of wherever the European had settled. This encouraged the Portuguese to settle where inheritance passed through the female line [matrilineal societies]. In these places, such as Guinea-Bissau and on the Gold Coast, the children which a European had with his African wife would inherit rights, social status, and property according to the laws of that society. However, where inheritance passed through the male line [patrilineal societies], the children of these marriages would inherit no social or property rights, since their fathers had been born with none, being Europeans [a good example is in Senegambia, where very few European men settled after the 1550s].

These informal communities concentrated on trade. They helped African rulers to expand their trading connections. They could help to negotiate with European traders and ships who stopped only for a while, and to get the best price. Some of these families retained the connection to Europe, sending children to study in European countries into the 18th century, and becoming rich merchants of the coastal towns. Most more or less shook off their European past, and became fully integrated into the African societies, where their male European forefathers had settled as stranger-guests of their African landlord kings.

As noted, these informal settlements were in the majority in the 16th century. However, towards the end of that century and in the early 17th century fortified European trading posts became common, especially on the Gold Coast and in Hueda. In Casamance and Guinea-Bissau, they were formed in settlements such as Cacheu (1589), Ziguinchor (1645), and Bissau (1687). The 17th century also saw the establishment of the fort at James Island (1651), at the estuary of the Gambia river. Along the Gold Coast, the Dutch presence saw increasing number of castles being established, the most famous being at Cape Corso (Cape Coast, built in 1610 and expanded in 1652) and Sekondi (1642), as well as those already mentioned at Axim and Elmina.

The huge expansion of the Atlantic slave trade in the late 17th century saw the growth of this model of European settlement. European factories at Offra (1660, the port for Allada) and at Hueda were fortified. By the middle of the 18th century, these communities of European settlers had become more important than the informal ones noted above; by this time, members of these informal communities had by and large settled and fully integrated into their host African communities.

Although these communities were protected militarily, they relied very heavily on African intermediaries in their trade. The military captains of these forts also often attended and

participated in royal ceremonies of the local African state (as often happened in Dahomey, for instance), and also would send gifts for the funeral rites of any deceased person of importance. In practice, this meant that they had to accept and participate in African religious practices, associated with these funerals.

Nevertheless, the communities which grew up around these fortified trading posts were quite different to the informal communities noted above. The military aspect was vital. Although European traders rented the land for their posts, they were as much occupiers as they were tenants. They had armed militias, and often allied with one local ruler or another, which could create problems between them [it is important to remember that by the 18th century, guns were one of the larges imports from the Atlantic trade to Africa; this had changed a lot from previous centuries, where copper, iron, and cloth had also been important]. They were accustomed to slavery, and brought with them the racial animus which became especially bad in Europe from around 1650 onwards. They were therefore used to having "castle slaves" [an idea imported from Europe, via the experience in the New world plantation societies], something which influenced practices of service and dependence in local communities.

Many of the European officials in these forts had families with African women, and their children who grew up around these forts often became traders, as their dual heritage gave them access to both the worlds of their African and European parents. Some of these families became important figures in local politics. In this sense there was a continuity from the more informal communities discussed above. However the military presence and the growth of slavery meant that in many important respects these communities had become very different by the 18th century.

V: The Nature of Trade

Europeans came to Africa mainly for trade, and this was the almost exclusive cause of their coming. By and large they arrived hoping for a short stay and to become rich. Some then realised the many riches to be found beyond material wealth, and stayed to form families who became part of their host communities. But even then, the commercial aspect was always important.

For African rulers, trade brought many opportunities. In the first two centuries, they demanded especially currency materials. Cloth was one of the largest items imported, from India and Europe; some cargoes of Dutch ships in the early 17th century consisted almost entirely of cloth, shipped to Senegambia and the Gold Coast. Indeed, cloth remained important through the 18th and 19th centuries; the so-called *pièce de guinée*, an indigo-dyed blue cloth made near Pondichéry in India, was imported by the French to Senegambia and used as a currency on the Upper Senegal River throughout this time. Cloth was used as money in Senegambia, and also as a currency in parts of Angola and the Gold Coast. Copper was also a major import, especially to Benin and the Gold Coast, and iron bars were also significant [in both the Gold Coast and Senegambia, iron bars needed to be branded with the mark of the European trading company, such as the OWIC (Dutch West Indian Company) or RAC (English Royal African Company), otherwise African traders would give them less value]. Cowries were imported from the Maldives to Benin from as early as 1505.

This period also saw the import of jewels, and some manufactured goods like mirrors and basins. But the value of each imported cargo consisted mainly of goods which could be converted into currency. Evidence suggests that the imported metals such as copper and iron were brought in specific dimensions for trade: copper rings (or manillas) and iron bars of a specified length [especially in Senegambia] which were used then as mediums of exchange. The metals were then melted down by smiths for use in agricultural tools, weapons, and artistic works (in the case of Benin, the Benin bronzes) [there was a large increase in production of the bronzes in the 16th century, when copper imports grew; the bronzes had been important from before, but their production expanded then].

Brass Plaque from Benin depicting Court Official Holding two Copper Manilla. Wikipedia. Public domain.

It is important to recognise the shift that then happened in the second half of the 17th century, when currency imports declined, and were replaced by especially luxury items of consumption such as alcohol and tobacco (especially from Brazil), and also by guns and gunpowder. The Nigerian historian Joseph Inikori sees this change as accompanying a slowing down in African economic growth. The lack of currency imports was symptomatic of a market which had stopped growing, and did not need so much money to function in exchange.

One can say by contrast that until the second half of the 17th century, the trade between Africa and Europe was quite balanced. Until then, while African rulers wanted increased supplies of currency, Europeans did not only focus on the slave trade, as later became the case. They also wanted to import gold and ivory. Places such as Allada, Benin, Cape Verde, Loango, and the rivers of Cameroon and Gabon all exported cloth, and some of this was sold as far afield as Brazil, Curação [a Caribbean island near the coast of Venezuela, belonging to the Dutch] and the United States in the 17th century [indeed Oyò cloth was traded to Yorubà communities in Brazil throughout the 18th and into the 19th century, and marketwomen of Yorubà ancestry in Brazil worked as "cloth sellers" (*vendedoras de panos*) into the 19th century in Salvador, Brazil]. When the Dutch invaded Portuguese colonies in Brazil in 1630, the Portuguese colonists formed an army which included many Africans from the Gold Coast and Angola; the Gold Coast contingent demanded particular cloths as part of their payment and apparel, which was sent specially from the Dutch fortress at Elmina.

It was not just the West African textile industry which found markets overseas in the 16th and 17th centuries. Basketwork made by Gold Coast communities was highly prized in Holland in the early 17th century. Ivory carvings made by the Sape peoples of Sierra Leone were found in different parts of Europe, turned into everyday items such as salt cellars and candle holders which were part of the export trade from this part of West Africa [in the 20th century colonial era, some European art historians assumed these ivories came from Benin; however it has now been established by the American art historian Peter Mark that they came from Sierra Leone].

Ivory Salt cellar from Sierra Leone, from the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (Lisbon), public domain.

In sum, the Europeans who settled in Africa did so as part of a commercial enterprise. Their trading presence in West Africa began as one which was more or less between equal trading partners. As the diplomatic embassies show, each party saw the others as kings and rulers of their lands by divine power. Each, too, imported money from the other (the Europeans importing gold, the Africans importing copper, cowries, cloth, and iron). There was an Atlantic slave trade, but it was not as important as it later became [the Atlantic slave trade remained quite minor in West Africa until the 1640s; it had expanded a lot in Angola after 1580, with a trade to Brazil and the rest of Latin America, but this is in West-Central Africa: it

was only in Senegambia that the slave trade was at all important in West Africa until the 1640s, when it began to grow in Allada and Calabar].

However the later 17th century saw a change, and with that a different pattern in European settlement and trade in West Africa. By this time, the slave trade was dominating, and Europeans were settling in fortified trading positions, and not informally with their African hosts. The economic terms of trade were in general less equal, and that remained the case through the 18th century.

VI: Environmental Change, Competition and Changes in the European Presence

The first half of the 17th century saw many changes in these patterns, as we are seeing. These changes were vital in West Africa. They were also part of changes that were taking place around the world, which saw wars and revolutions in places as different as China and Europe, as well as in Africa.

The main causes of these transformations were: (1), Environmental pressures brought on by the "mini ice age" (reaching a peak in the 1640s); and (2), Political competition brought on by the emergence of the capitalist world system.

(1), The environmental pressures were part of a big change in the world's climate, generally known as the "mini ice age". From the 1570s onwards, there was a major cooling in the world's temperatures. This produced climatic difficulties. In Africa, there were droughts in Angola (from around 1600) and Senegambia (from around 1640), and floods in Yorubà-speaking areas of Nigeria and Benin (in the early 17th century). There were heavy snows in Morocco. When the King of Allada sent ambassadors to Spain in the 1650s, he said that one of the reasons was an attempt to stop the terrible storms which Allada had been experiencing.

Major problems occurred in other parts of the world. The freezing temperatures made harvests of wheat and other crops much worse than before, and food prices rose. Some of the coolest temperatures of all occurred around 1640. This was also when the biggest revolutions began. In China, a civil war began which saw the overthrow of the Ming dynasty. In Europe, Portugal declared independence from Spain also in 1640 and a civil war began which lasted until 1668; a civil war also began in England in 1641, when the King was deposed and executed, and there was also civil conflict in France.

What caused this fall in temperatures, and the political crises? European historians traditionally pointed to different patterns of the sun. A team of archaeologists based in Colombia have a new explanation. The European conquest of the Americas in the 16th century is usually thought to have caused a population collapse of indigenous Americans. Latest estimates suggest 90% of the Native American population died from disease and war – perhaps 10-15% of the entire world population. The fall in the indigenous American population led to, (a), increasing areas of forest taking over settlements and farmland, and (b), less deforestation and burning of fires; the growth of forest absorbed Carbon Dioxide pollution, and there was also less Carbon Dioxide created through the burning of fires [in keeping with today's analysis of causes of global warming in the 21st century, which

understands this as a relationship of carbon emissions and carbon capture]. According to the Colombian archaeologists, this led to the fall in temperatures.

(2), Political competition rose with growth in trade and the power of the states that could control it. In West Africa, it was becoming important to develop trading relationships with European partners. Those states which did so prospered, but there could also be a cost. With larger kingdoms, such as Jolof and Kongo, their coastal provinces [Kajoor in Jolof and Nsoyo in Kongo] became more powerful and broke away from central control [by the 1550s in Kajoor, and in the early 17th century in Nsoyo]. Meantime rival rulers sought to open trading stations, and struggled with one another for best access to international trade. This created both conflict, and increased demand for European trade, and led to the huge number of fortified trading posts built along the Gold Coast, and the coasts of Hueda and Allada in the second half of the 17th century.

At the same time, there was competition among Europeans, who often struggled with one another for the best access to African trade. It is worth noting that although there was fierce competition between different European nations to trade, this never led to direct military confrontations between them in Africa in this period. Wars fought by European nations were fought in Europe itself, where in Africa European traders were competing as part of a shared cooperative agenda and structure of trade. By the second half of the 17th century, Danish, Dutch, English, French and German trading companies were all seeking to establish a foothold in West Africa, bringing the best and most fashionable trading commodities and negotiating with one another to exchange what they had to make up the best "assortment".

The competition among European traders meant that African rulers could often strike better bargains. They could play off one against another to get the best price. But it also meant that they had to meet the demands of traders if these were not to move on elsewhere in search of captives, ivory and gold. Mutual dependence of African rulers and European traders grew; and the increasingly fragile environment, in Africa as elsewhere in the world, created frequent problems of food and resources which could often lead to conflict.

Conclusion

In sum, factors of environmental change and economic competition created a difficult situation in many parts of West Africa by the later 17th century. The terms of the European presence changed decisively towards one of slave trading based from fortified castles and trading posts, and away from mutual coexistence within African social structures. This was part of the shift towards the rapid growth in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Factbox

1413: Portuguese troops capture Ceuta in Morocco; their sailors begin to sail down the West African coast.

1442: Portuguese sailors first reach sub-Saharan Africa

1471: Portuguese reach the Gold Coast

1482: Elmina castle founded on the Gold Coast by the Portuguese

1485: Oba Ozolua of Benin received Portuguese visitors; the Portuguese trading post at Gwatón is founded in the kingdom of Benin in 1490

1488: Bumi Jeléen, a Jolof prince, comes to Lisbon in search of a military alliance from the Portuguese against his rivals to the Jolof crown

1491: Nzika Nkuwu, *manikongo* (ruler of Kongo) converts to Christianity

1589: Cacheu founded by the Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau, a fortified post; followed by Ziguinchor (1645) and Bissau (1687).

1621: Gorée (Senegal/Dakar) captured from the Portuguese by the Dutch

1637: Elmina captured by the Dutch from the Portuguese

1641: Luanda and São Tomé captured by the Dutch from the Portuguese; re-taken by a Brazilian army in 1648

1642: Sekondi castle founded by the English

1651: English found a fort at James Island, at the mouth of the Gambia river

1652: Cape Coast castle on the Gold Coast expanded by the English

Toby Green

5 - Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

The Atlantic slave trade began in 1442 when African captives from the Senegal river were taken to the port of Lagos in southern Portugal and sold as slaves. After the Spanish reached the Americas in 1492, the direction of the trade became trans-Atlantic. The trade ended in 1866, when the last voyage crossed the Atlantic Ocean to Cuba.

The Atlantic slave trade was a significant part of the historical experience of West African peoples throughout this period. It influenced political change, religious practice, farm production, and other aspects of daily life. It was also a main cause of the growing European presence in West Africa; and it influenced the global connections which many West African rulers developed over the course of these four centuries.

Most areas of West and West-Central Africa were influenced by the Atlantic slave trade in this period, as well as what is now Mozambique. There were many different phases of the Atlantic slave trade. Some of the most important were the following:

1) 1442-1492: The first fifty years saw the trade almost solely from Senegambia to Portugal, Seville, and other ports in Spain and Portugal.

2) 1492-1575: The Spanish arrival in the New World under Columbus saw the beginning of a change. In this era, the trade in enslaved persons remained quite low, as Europeans were more interested in gold. Most Africans going to the New World came from Senegambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Sierra Leone, often via the Cape Verde islands [which were a Portuguese colony already]. There was a growing trade from ports of Kongo and Angola, mainly to the sugar plantations which had been founded on the island of São Tomé.

3) 1575-1640: In 1575, the Portuguese founded a colonial fort city at the harbour of Luanda, in Angola. This undermined the Kingdom of Kongo, since the major currency used in Kongo was the *nzimbu* shell, which was found at Luanda – by seizing Luanda, the Portuguese had in effect seized the bank of Kongo. Meantime, in Brazil, the number of sugar plantations near the colonial capital of Salvador da Bahia was growing, while the Native American population declined. This saw the volume of the slave trade increasing, especially from Angola; it also remained significant from the Greater Senegambia region, but was not yet important elsewhere in West Africa.

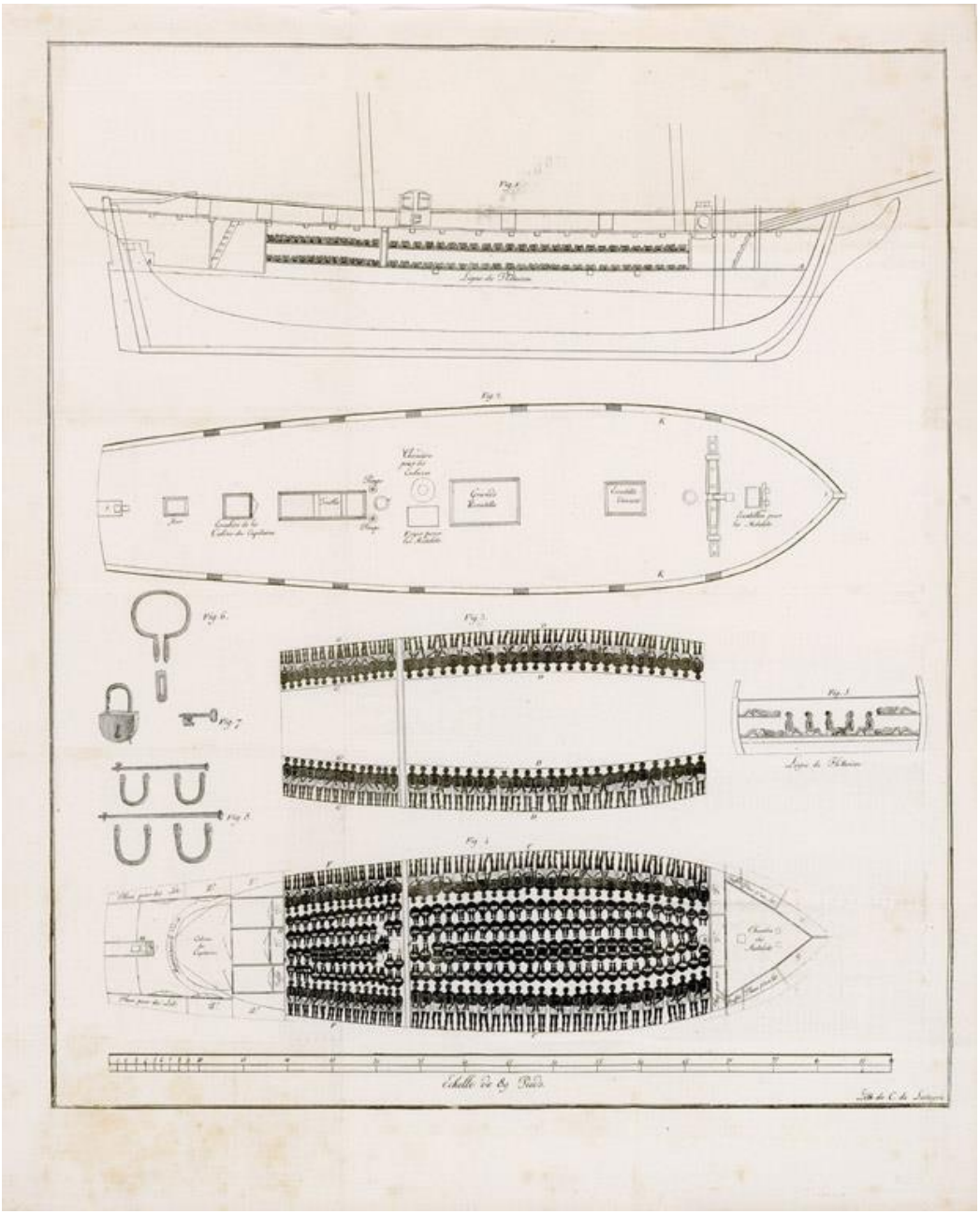
4) 1640-1675: This was a very important period. It was in these decades when the Dutch, English and French began to compete in earnest with the Portuguese for the slave trade, opening their own fortress-factories, especially along the Gold Coast, at Calabar and Bonny in the Niger Delta, and further south at Loango. Meanwhile droughts in Senegambia and the effects of decades of war in Angola saw population declines there. By 1675, the old Brazilian connection to Angola was changing, and Brazilian traders in Salvador opened a direct trading link with the Yorubà and Ajà rulers around Hueda, Dahomey, and Lagos.

Cape Coast Castle (Ghana) in 2017, courtesy of Eric Nana Kesse.

5) 1675-1700: This period saw the consolidation of the trade in these ports, and the expansion to areas which had hitherto been unimportant in the trade, especially Benguela in southern Angola and the Gold Coast [owing to the population decline around Luanda, Benguela had grown in importance for the Brazilians, and developed a direct link to Rio de Janeiro in the 18th century].

6) The long 18th century (c. 1700-1807). This was the century which saw by far the largest number of enslaved Africans taken in European and New World ships to the Americas. Almost every region of Atlantic Africa was affected. Areas which saw a particular expansion included Sierra Leone [shaped in part by the rise of the theocracy of Fuuta Jaalo in Guinea-Conakry, and the slaving wars led by this polity]; the Gold Coast [influenced by the rise of the Asante empire in the 18th century, and the switch from gold exports to enslaved persons]; Loango [in what is now Congo-Brazzaville] and Benguela.

7) The era of abolition (1807-1865). The British parliament passed an Act to Abolish the slave trade in 1807, though Denmark had been the first European nation to do this in 1792. However the 19th century was still very significant in the slave trade, with the major slave trading nations being from the New World, especially Brazil, Cuba, and the United States of America. The areas worst affected by this time were Angola and Mozambique. The loss of the South in the American civil war (1861-65) and pressure from England on Brazil saw the atmosphere change, and the slave trade ended in 1865 [Brazil had finally ceased direct slave trading in 1851].



Plan of the Slaver 'Vigilante'. The Brig 'Vigilante' was a French slaver captured in the River Bonny, at the Bight of Biafra, on April 15th, 1822. She departed from Nantes, in France, and carried 345 slaves from the coast of Africa, but she was intercepted by anti-slave trade cruisers before sailing to the Americas and taken to Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1822, Affaire de la Vigilante, batiment négrier de Nantes (Paris, 1823), following p. 8, http://slavevoyages.org/resources/images/category/Vessels/1

When considering this chronological overview of the slave trade, some important factors should be noted, though of course there are many others of great relevance:

1) Historians have often emphasised what they call a “triangular trade”. Ships would leave Europe with textiles, manufactured goods made of copper and iron, cowries, alcohol and

weapons; would sell these in Africa, and travel to the New World with a cargo of enslaved persons; and then exchange these for colonial produce (sugar, coffee, tobacco, etc.). However there was also often a direct trade from the Americas, especially from Brazil, Cuba, and the United States.

2) The effects of the slave trade became especially important from around 1675 onwards. Until then, it was mainly Greater Senegambia that was affected in West Africa.

3) Historians often disagree as to the impact of the slave trade on West African societies. Some aspects of history are worth noting, and were relevant to the slave trade, especially:

:- Migration of communities to better-defended areas such as hilltops, forests, creeks

:- Development of buildings and town designs which saw good defences and a maze of streets; this made it hard for hostile outsiders to find their way out.

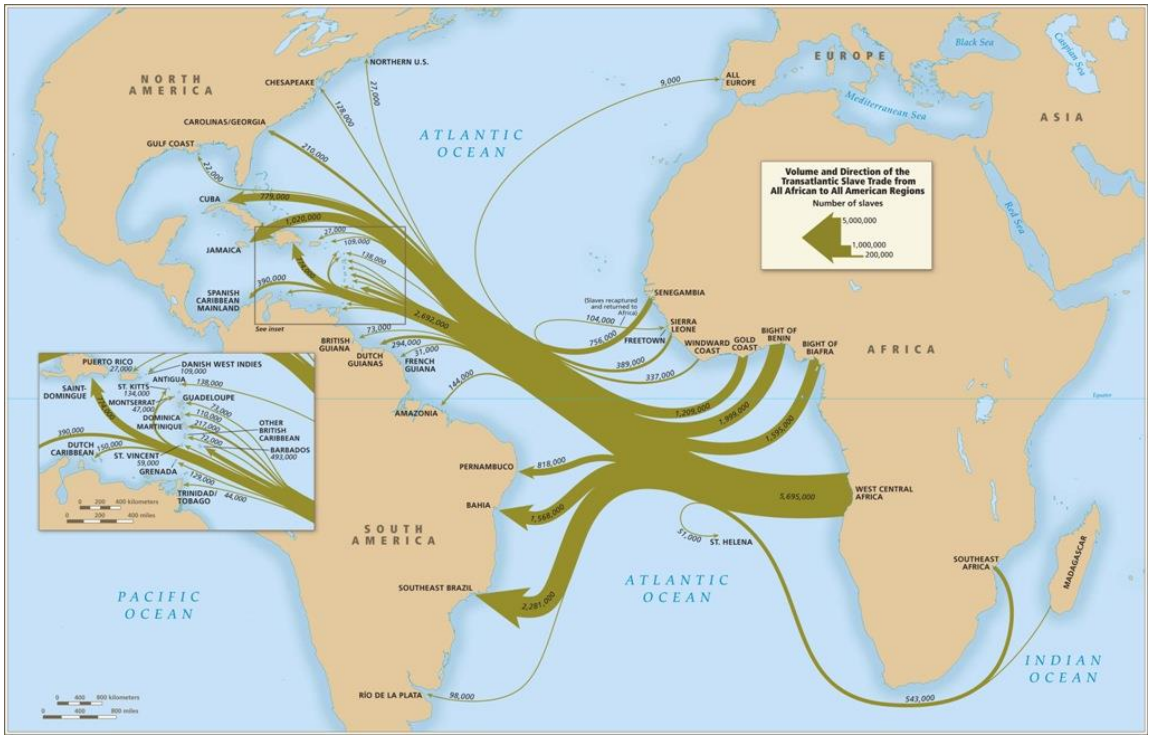
:- Formation of powerful armies and states; this was also the case of course in Europe, where the growth of organised armies and states also depended on economies connected to the slave trade

:- Changes in religious practice; some shrines required offerings of goods which could only be acquired through trade, and kings' association with the trade and with shrines made people in some areas more willing to adopt other religions, such as Islam and Christianity.

The www.slavevoyages.org database

The www.slavevoyages.org database is a powerful tool for historians who want to understand the quantities of Africans forcibly embarked on slave ships by Europeans. Historians have been systematically collecting evidence on the trans-Atlantic slave trade since the 1960s. Computing technology enabled them to gather and compare data for different aspects of the slave trade more easily. An international team of historians decided to create www.slavevoyages.org, a database giving details about each voyage recorded in newspapers, trade ledgers, ships' logs and the different sources still available at the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century. These sources are written in multiple languages and are disseminated over three continents. This collaborative database is constantly updated and remains a work in progress.

This database is an excellent tool to analyse the number of slaves captured between 1514 and 1866 and gives the estimate of around 12,500,000 Africans who embarked on slave ships.



Volume and direction of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from all African to all American regions, www.slavevoyages.org

The database is an excellent tool to learn about:

- the number of Africans who died during the Middle Passage. The number of slaves who embarked on slave ships (around 12,500,000) is substantially larger than the number of Africans who arrived as slaves in America (around 10,700,000). Historians were able to conclude that mortality rates on slave ships were extremely high.

- the number of enslaved Africans for every slaving voyage out of a total number of 36,000. Details about the slaves themselves are sometimes vague and we rarely know their gender, age or names.
- the chronological phases of the slave trade. The database contains exact dates for many voyages. As a result, historians are now able to analyse the fluctuations of the transatlantic slave trade year by year.
- The seasonal patterns for the slave trade. Sailors followed precise patterns which corresponded to the navigation conditions of the Atlantic ocean but also to the supply of African coasts and demands of American ports.
- the ports where enslaved Africans were shipped to America. Historians were able to determine the exact location where the slaves embarked but the database does not provide the slaves' region of origin because many of them were actually enslaved inland.
- the identity of the slave-traders and their ships. In many cases, it is possible to determine the port where they sailed from. The database enables us to determine which traders, ports and countries benefited the most from this lucrative trade.
- the number of slave revolts on European ships. Historians were able to show that there were African riots on one ship out of ten.
- the destination of the ships. Many sources mention where the slaves disembarked and were sold. It does not mean that the slaves could not be sold again after their arrival in America.

However, the database has also been criticised:

- The database does not give details about the nature of the slave trade itself.
- Nor does it give the reasons behind the trans-Atlantic slave trade or the consequences it had on African societies.
- In many cases, the data is not accurate and some researchers have found notable differences with the original documents which contained the data.
- In addition, some historians criticise the database for reproducing the ideas of the slave traders themselves, in treating slaves as statistics, and because the documents used to produce it were all written by slave traders.

West African Resistance to the Slave Trade

One of major factors that led to the abolition of the slave trade in West Africa was West African resistance. West Africans resisted slavery in four major ways:

1. The resistance by everyday West Africans on West African soil
2. The resistance of the West African ruling elite
3. The resistance of West African abolitionists abroad
4. Overt resistance by West African slaves en route to, and in, the New World

1. Resistance by everyday West Africans on West African soil

A number of West African people kept out of slave trade, refusing to negotiate with Europeans at all. For instance, the Jola of Casamance (Senegal), and the Baga (modern Guinea)—who were unbeatable in battle—did not participate in the slave trade.

Other West Africans devised short and long-term mechanisms to resist the slave trade including:

a) Resettling to hard-to-find places.

In the Sokoto Caliphate (Nigeria), the landscape of mountains, caves, underground tunnels, and marshes was cleverly used by the inhabitants for protection. They reinforced these, by building ramparts, fortresses, other architectural devices, and planting poisonous thorny bushes and trees. The peoples of southern Togo, central and northern Cameroon used mountain ranges to hide away from slave traders.

b) Building fortresses and fortifications to protect people against the slave trade.

The people of Gwolu (Ghana) built a protective wall to guard against slave raiders. Their Paramount Chief Koro Liman IV describes the walls:

I am standing in front of the inner wall of the Gwolu protective wall, which protected the great Gwolu from slave raiders and encroachments into Gwolu city in ancient times. We have two walls and this is the inner wall.

In ancient times when slavery was rampant, our great, great, ancestor King Tanja Musa built the wall to ward away slave raiders and slave traders from coming into Gwolu to enslave our people.

The reason we have the inner and outer wall is that between the two walls we had ponds and farms, so that the inhabitants would be protected from being kidnapped by slave raiders.

First, there was only the inner wall. Then they realized that people who went to farm, find firewood, and fetch water were kidnapped by slave raiders. The king found it necessary to construct a second wall and that is why it is a two-walled city. And I know that in the whole of Ghana there are only two such walls.

c) Evolving new, more rigid styles of leadership.

The Kayor and Baol of Senegal aristocracy utilized mechanisms of domination and submission for their own protection by imposing new forms of habitat and land occupancy which functioned to shield the powerful.

d) Transforming the habitat and the manner in which land is occupied.

In Ganvié city (Dahomey), people built small towns on stilts on the edge or middle of Lake Nokoué. This allowed them to see approaching raiders. The city of 3,000 homes, was founded in the 16th century by Tofinu people. In the Tofinu language, Ganvié means, "we are saved." The people built it as a refuge from Dahomey kingdom slave raiders. The lake was too shallow for European slave ships to anchor, and religious custom prevented the Fon of Dahomey from venturing across water to capture them.

The Musugu of Southern Lake Chad built dome-shaped houses, with material made of clay mixed with animal dung, dry grass, and water. These dome shaped houses, when seen from afar, looked like termite nests and created a camouflage from the slave raiders.

e) The creation of maroon societies in the Upper Guinea Coast.

f) Secret societies, women's organizations, and young men's militia redirected their activities toward the protection and defense of communities.

In Igboland, Nigeria, for instance, Olaudah Equiano indicates that he had undergone military training, including shooting and throwing javelins in order to become a member of local militia.

g) Children were turned into sentinels throughout West Africa.

h) Venomous plants and insects were turned into allies.

In northern Cameroon and Chad for instance, fences were created from branches of thorny and poisonous trees, and these provided effective defense against slave raiders. The people also used thorny plants to reinforce the rock walls.

The peoples of present-day Chad Republic adopted new agricultural methods to fight the slave trade. They stopped planting millet and sorghum which made them particularly vulnerable to slave raiders because these were grown in large cleared fields, visible to passersby, and signaling the presence of farmers. Moreover, the crops demanded considerable care during growing season. Thus, the people stopped growing sorghum, relying more on hunting and gathering. They also started cultivating manioc or cassava. Manioc was particularly well suited, because the tubers were buried deep within the grounds, the foliage could be chopped off, thus requiring little or no attention.

i) Priests created spiritual protections for individuals and communities.

This happened throughout Igboland, Nigeria. For instance, the Idoha community of Nsukka, eastern Nigeria, created the Efuru goddess who served to protect the community against the actions of slave raiders.

j) Resources were pooled to redeem those who had been captured and held in factories along coast. People of the Futa Jallon (Guinea's northern border with Senegal) were known to have adopted this strategy.

k) Individuals and states traded people to access guns and iron for better weapons to protect themselves. For instance, the Balanta of Guinea Bissau defended themselves by producing and selling their captives in order to obtain guns and iron bars which they needed to forge powerful weapons and tools.

l) Some free people attacked ships and burnt down factories.

For instance, in the 17th and 18th century, written records document at least 61 attacks on ships by land-based West Africans. There were several conspiracies, and actual revolts by captives which erupted in Goree Island. One such revolt, resulted in death of governor and several solders.

When all else failed, men and women revolted in barracoons and aboard ships. In Sierra Leone, for instance, people sacked the captives' quarters of slave trader John Ormond; and the level of the fortification of forts and barracoons attests to European distrust and apprehension.

West Africans also revolted on slave ships. Crews of several slave ships were killed in the Gambia River, while many enslaved West Africans either jumped overboard or let themselves starve to death.

2. Resistance of African ruling elite

a) In the 1530s, the King or Oba of Benin saw that slave trafficking was draining his kingdom of male manpower. He therefore banned sale of slaves, but, kept domestic slaves. By 1550, there was no slave trade in Benin. Pepper and elephant tusks became the main

exports. Even up to the 17th century, the Kings of Benin still refused to cooperate with European slavers.

b) In 1670, King Tezifon of Allada rejected French request for permission to establish a trading post in his territory. Hear his clear-sighted statement:

You will make a house in which you will put at first two little pieces of cannon, the next year you will mount four, and in a little time your factory will metamorphosed into a fort that will make you master of my dominions and enable you to give laws to me.

c) The 1670s Muslim leader and reformer, Nasr al-Din, denounced slavery to the people of Senegal. This resulted in Marabout war and the Toubenan movement (from word tuub, meaning to convert to Islam), whereby the sale of slaves to Christians was banned, thus, undermining the French trade in slaves.

d) In 1724, King Agaja of Dahomey attacked his Ouidah and Ardrah neighbors to stop trade in slaves.

e) In 1787, the Almamy of Futa Toro forbade the passage of slaves for sale through his domain. At the time, several French ships were waiting in anchor in Senegal for slaves to board. The French, as result, were not able to fill ships with human beings. They thus sent presents to the Almamy to appeal to him to rescind his order. The Almamy returned all gifts presented to him, declaring that all the riches of the Senegal company would not divert him from his design. Traders therefore had to stay away from Almamy's vicinity on Senegal River and look for another route to coast.

3. Resistance of West African Abolitionists Abroad

Many West African abolitionists were campaigning against the slave trade in Britain or in the Americas. As freed slaves, their personal experience leant poignancy to their arguments. Two ex-West African slaves, Oladauh Equiano and Ottobah Cugaono, were involved in the 18th century abolitionist movement in England. Both wrote books in 1780s publicizing the evils of the slave trade.

Quobna Ottobah Cugoano (John Stuart), was a Fante, born in present day Ghana, and captured at age of 13. He wrote, Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Humbly Submitted to the Inhabitants of Great Britain by Ottobah Cugoano, a Native of Africa. The book was published in 1787. In it, he argued eloquently and passionately for an immediate end to slave-owning and trading.

. . . kings are the minister of God, to do justice, and not to bear the sword in vain, but revenge wrath upon them that do evil. But if they do not in such a case as this, the cruel oppressions of thousands, and the blood of the murdered Africans who are slain by the sword of cruel avarice, must rest upon their own guilty heads.

He also proposed that the British naval squadron should patrol the West African waters in order to suppress the trade. It would take the British another 30 years before Cugaono's idea was put into practice.

Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa) was an Igbo of eastern Nigeria. His first name Olu uda, means, loud voice, and his surname Equiano is a short form of Ekwe anyi ino (someone who does not agree to stay). Equiano's family was from Essaka, Iseke in present-day Olu Division, Igboland. He published a bestseller in which he offers a vivid and detailed account of his life from early childhood to enslavement. The Interesting Narrative of the life of Oluadah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African was published in 1789.

This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.

Portrait of abolitionist Olaudah Equiano (c. 1745 - 1797), by Daniel Orme (c. 1766 - 1832). Wikipedia. Public domain.

4. Overt resistance by West African slaves en route to, and in the New World

Revolts aboard ships were common. Therefore, sailors had to be heavily armed and constantly on guard. Once in the Americas and Caribbean Islands, West Africans resisted their bondage. They seized every opportunity to escape. Some formed maroon societies, including the biggest maroon society of all, Palmares, in Brazil.

During the Haitian Revolution of 1791 in St Domingue (Haiti), over 400,000 enslaved Africans rose up against, and killed, their white French masters to establish the Republic of Haiti in 1804. They were led by Toussaint L'Ouverture who originally hailed from West Africa.

Haitian Revolution - Battle of San Domingo, also known as the Battle for Palm Tree Hill, by January Suchodolski (1844).

In mainland North America, there were a number of prominent revolts as well, including, the 1831 Nat Turner Revolt and the treks to freedom led by Harriet Tubman and her Underground Railroad.

Reparations to Subjugated Societies

Reparation is an idea that seeks for compensatory payment to suppressed group of people in a society. Most societies across the globe had fell victim of some sort of subjugation from more powerful societies/class. One can talk of situations like Colonialism, the Jewish

Holocaust in the Second World War, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (TAST) among others. After the Suppressed have been able to liberate themselves from the shackles of such conditions, there is always a quest for reparation. This form of reparation can be in kind or materialistic. The most known and controversial of them of is the reparation for slavery in Africa; the argument is that some form of compensatory payment needs to be made to the descendants of Africans who had been enslaved as part of the TAST.

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade which led to displacement of Africans into the New World had commoditized humans rather than other trading items like gold and ivory among others as goods. Africans were taken by European merchants across the Atlantic Ocean after the discovery of the New World to provide the needed labour power in plantations. This trade had devastated African society at home and in the diaspora as well. African slaves were obtained through warfare, kidnapping and as sale product from the market among other sources. These slaves suffered severe conditions through the Middle passage, on the plantation system and psychological trauma after emancipation. It is based on these injustice against slaves and their descendants in the Americas that African-Americans and members of the Caribbean diaspora are increasingly questing for reparation.

WHO SHOULD BE COMPENSATED IN RELATION TO THE TAST?

Reparation for harm caused Africans both home and the diaspora as the result of the slave trade need to be considered with care. Because, the slaves suffered all sort of humiliation in the plantation system and subsequent segregation policies directed toward them, particularly in the United States, Brazil, and in the Caribbean. The nature of slavery in the New World disallowed slaves to own property. As a result, life after the emancipation was almost as the same as living in slavery. In line with this, the descendants of the former slaves in the diaspora need to be compensated sufficiently in order for them to rehabilitate themselves, especially as to this day they suffer the economic and social consequences of the enslavement of their ancestors, through the prison system, inequality of access to healthcare and education, and relative poverty compared to those not descended from the enslaved.

Also, Africans at home equally suffered the consequences of the slave trade and need reparation as well.

· For instance, resourceful human power was taken away to the New World to the detriment of the homeland. This extracted valuable labour power which could have gone in to developing African economic systems, and contributed to economic disempowerment.

· The desire for slaves by the Europeans plugged the continent into war, as guns and gun powder was introduced to the indigenous Africans to wage war against one another. This had led to displacement of people and loss of life and property. It also helped to create a predatory state model which may influence some modern problems in the continent.

Henceforth, reparation for the slavery needs to encompass both the homeland and the diaspora.

FORMS OF REPARATION FOR THE SLAVERY

Compensation through Money: The former slaves in the New World especially in the US demanded some sort of money after the liberation in order to alleviate themselves to a better condition.

Compensation through Housing: The slaves after being liberated were stranded. No place to live, hence, they demanded provision of housing facilities to accommodate themselves.

Compensation in Kind: Various countries and institutions have apologised for their involvement on the deadly slave trade across the Atlantic Ocean. On June 18, 2009, the Senate of the US passed a resolution apologizing for the institution of slavery and all sort of discrimination against the Black race.

Nevertheless, reparations have not been fully granted, and not all slave trading nations have apologised for the slave trade. Questions to be resolved may include:

:- Who will make payments – direct descendants of known slave traders, or the states which allowed the slave trade?

:- Who will receive the payments – is it best for this money to be allocated according to class boundaries (which might prove longstanding effect of the slave trade) or to the governments of postcolonial states?

:- What role might there be for companies who benefited from the slave trade, should they also be paying compensation? A good example would be the Tate & Lyle Sugar Company, derived from Caribbean sugar plantations who founded the Tate Museums in London.

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6 - Christian Missionary Activities in West Africa

The expansion of the missionary movement into Africa was part of the growing conception of Christian responsibility for the regeneration of African peoples. The anti-slavery issue and the humanitarian conscience also played a vital role in stimulating European interest in Africa and gave an impetus to mission work. It included the opening up of Africa to forces of change namely commerce ("legitimate commerce", i.e. non-slave trade), Christianity, Civilization and Colonization. The others included the Christian responsibility for the regeneration of African peoples.

The achievement of the purpose of these Christian Missions came with some costs. Several missionaries died at a youthful age due to the unfriendly tropical climate. Again, in West-Africa, the efforts to go beyond the coast to reach those inland with the gospel coincided with the southwards expansion of Islam which posed some threat to the expansion of the work of Christian evangelizing missions. The work of the missionaries also had little success initially. The people received the message with indifference. It was however in the coastal territories filled with mulattos and other European trading communities that Christianity won some of its early success.

The first Europeans arrived at the West-African Coasts at the end of the fifteenth century. For several years they paid attention to slave trade rather than evangelization and Christianization of the people of West-Africa. However, by the turn of the Nineteenth Century there was systematic efforts by churches of Christian Europe, namely: Anglicans, Methodists, and Baptists who were active in Sierra Leone and, with Presbyterians, in Nigeria, while Methodists also set up missions in Ghana, Gambia, and Dahomey. In the 19thh century, too, Afro-Brazilians returned to Benin and Nigeria with Catholicism.

A new era began with the settlements of Black Christians from Nova Scotia in Sierra Leone in 1787 and the missionary advance inland from Cape Town beginning with the arrival there of J. T. van der Kemp in 1799. New missionary societies (the LMS, the CMS, the Holy Ghost Fathers, the White Fathers, etc.) began work in many parts of Africa.

The CMS began to work in the freed slave villages in Sierra Leone in 1804 and the Methodist in 1811. The early success of the missionaries included areas like Freetown and surrounding villages. Some early success included the Liberian coast where Afro-Americans and freed slaves were converted. The others include the French trading posts at Grand Bassam (Ivory Coast), Assinie and Libreville in Gabon.

Apart from the extreme south and the Horn, the interior was hardly touched by Europeans before the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Evangelical Revival began to bring to Africa an influx of missionaries whose laoburs would produce the first fruits of an enduring Christian presence in Sub-Sahara Africa.

In the later 19th century, the immense African interior remained the principal object of the Catholic Priests, and from 1867 until his death in November 1892 Cardinal Lavigerie planned

the planting of churches in Africa South of the Sahara. It is important to emphasize that the modern history of the Christian Mission in Africa started from the late Eighteenth Century, the Catholics had been there earlier in the first centuries of the Christian era especially during the first Portuguese adventures. Therefore the period for the rise of Christianizing Missions in the late Nineteenth Century has been considered as reprise. The late Eighteenth Century witnessed the rise of Christian groups in Europe that resorted to the evangelization of Africa. For instance, on 2nd October 1792, the Baptist Missionary Society was formed followed by the interdenominational London Missionary Society which was established in 1795. The others include the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804, which was tasked with the responsibility of promoting the translation and printing of the Holy Bible. Initially, a majority of the missionary journeys was done with English-Speaking Protestants and later, in the 1820s and 1830s, they were joined by continental Protestantism from Germany, Switzerland and France. There were related organizations that sprang up in Scandinavia, Holland and the USA.

West Africa owes to the Christian missionaries not only a new religious faith which has changed the beliefs and life of millions of people, but also the foundation of western education. The Portuguese were the first to introduce the Christian faith into West Africa but following their departure from the West Coast in the mid-seventeenth century, the Christian religion survived only in Upper Guinea where a bishop was maintained in the Cape Verde Islands serving also a part of the mainland. It was not until the nineteenth century, that the new religion was really established in West Africa.

In this chapter, we shall examine how Christianity and Western-style education influenced West Africans values, attitudes and life-styles.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE FRENCH COLONIES

As a predominantly Roman Catholic country, France encouraged Roman Catholic missionaries' right from the start of her colonial activities in West Africa. The Church had its strongest hold in the Senegambia area. Unlike the Portuguese, the French colonial officials encouraged the Christian missionaries in the promotion of formal education and social services, notably health. In the field of education, however, the missionaries had to adjust their programmes to fit in with the policy of assimilation.

EVANGELICAL MOVEMENTS AND MISSIONARY SOCIETIES IN THE ENGLISH COLONIES

From the second half of the eighteenth century, a fervent wave of evangelical spirit developed in the United Kingdom, Europe and the New World which inspired men and women with the missionary fervour to found religious societies whose members would go out to Africa and the other lands. They were to spread the message of the Gospel, render social services to the people and to assist in the suppression of slavery and the slave trade. These new movements considered such ventures to be their contribution to Europe's reparation for centuries of exploitation of Africans, reparation for the centuries of exploitation which the Trans Atlantic slave trade had caused to African society.

Among the early Protestant evangelical societies founded in Great Britain were the Baptist Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Wesleyan Missionary Society and what became known as the Presbyterian Missionary Society of the Church of Scotland. Similar organizations were formed in several other European countries. These included the Basel Missionary Society, founded in Switzerland, and the Breman Mission formed in Germany. The evangelical societies founded in the Americas included the Baptist Missionary Board and the Nova Scotian Methodists, whose members went to work among the Maroons, who had settled mainly in Liberia.

While the protestant evangelical movements were gaining ground in West Africa, similar movements were being promoted by the Roman Catholic Church in Europe. With the support of the Propagation of the Faith within the Vatican, whose Cardinal Secretary became Pope Gregory XVI, various Roman Catholic missionary societies were founded. Among these were the Congregation of the Holy Ghost (commonly known as the Holy Ghost Father), the Society of African Missions (SMA), the Society of Missionaries of Africa, popularly known as the White Fathers because of the white Muslim-like clothing which the Fathers wore, and the society of the Divine Word (SVD, abbreviated from its Latin name). These missionary societies laid the foundations of the Roman Catholic Church in West Africa, which lasted through to the independence period when African clergy replaced the white pastors.

Establishment of Christian Churches In The Gambia

The vast majority of the people of The Gambia are Moslems; but a sizeable percentage of the population, especially in and around the capital Banjul, are Christians. Early missions conducted by Roman Catholics were short-lived. A new attempt to spread Christianity was made when the Church Missionary Society (CMS) arrived from Britain in 1821. They were followed in turn by the Methodists and the Roman Catholics. Within a short time the missionaries spread their activities inland. Barely ten years later, after the first missionaries arrived, the Methodists, for example, had started a station as far inland as MacCarthy Island. As happened in other territories, the Christian missionaries did not confine their work to the spread of the gospel alone. Besides education, they cared for the sick. Thus, as early as 1823, the Roman Catholic sisters started a clinic for the sick and for children in Banjul.

Establishment of Christian Churches In Ghana

After earlier unsuccessful attempts by the missionaries Chretien Proten, Henrick Huckuff and Jacobus Capitein, the Anglican, Rev. Thomas Thompson, arrived in Cape Coast in 1752. Among his pioneering achievements, he arranged for three youths to be sent to England for training as evangelists. One of them, Philip Quaque, returned in 1765 as an ordained priest. He worked zealously as an evangelist and schoolmaster in the Castle School until his death in 1816. His work, however, did not extend much beyond Cape Coast and the neighbouring area.
Renewed evangelisation started when the Basel (later known as Presbyterian) missionaries

started work at Osu (Accra). Soon after, in 1835 they moved up to Akropon on the hills in Akuapem, where the pioneer missionary the Rev. Andreas Riis, assisted by a team of West Indian evangelists, laid the foundations of the Basel Missionary Church in the country.

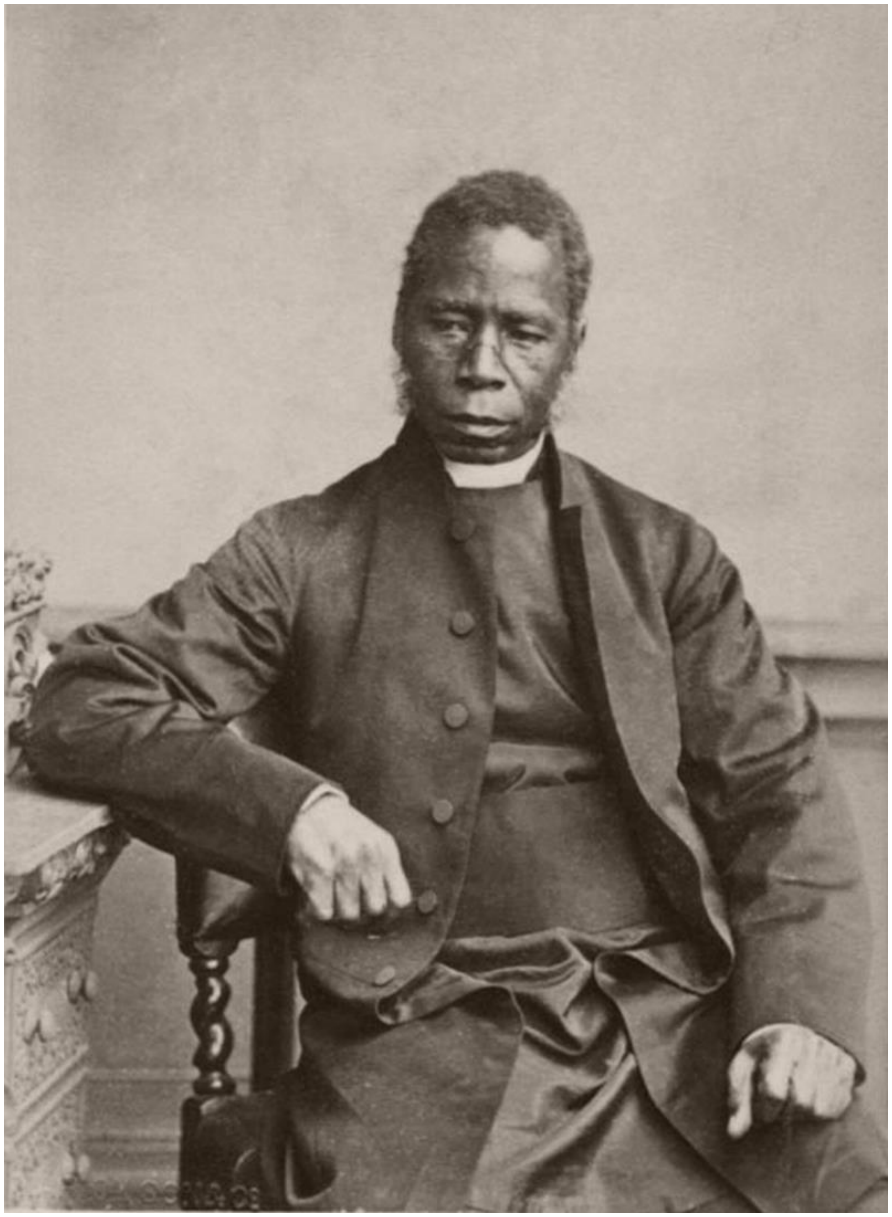
Thomas Birch Freeman, Wikicommons.

In the same year as the Basel missionaries settled in Akuapem 1835 the Wesleyan (later Methodist) Church was established at Cape Coast by the Rev. Joseph Dunwell. He was followed, three years afterwards, by the Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, son of a London-based West Indian father and an English mother. He introduced the Methodist Church in Asante in 1839, and won the support of the Asante king.

In 1880, two Roman Catholic priests of the Society of African Missions (S.M.A.), Father Auguste Moreau and Father Eugene Murat, arrived at Elmina and revived the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana. The American Episcopal Evangelical (A.M.E.) Zion Church owes its foundation in Ghana to Bishop J. Bryan Small, who started work first at Keta in 1898.

Establishment of Christian Churches In Nigeria

In the days of Portuguese contacts with Nigeria, Catholic priests had established missionary stations in Benin and the neighbourhood. But despite the work of Portuguese missionaries based on the island of Sao Tome and later of Spanish missionaries in Benin, it was not until the nineteenth century that the Christian religion was firmly established in Nigeria.
It started first among the Yoruba recaptives who had embraced the Christian faith while in Sierra Leone (freed from slave trading ships by the British Royal Naval Squadron), and who returned home between 1839 and 1845. The pastors of the Church Missionary Society, from Badagry and later from Sierra Leone, visited these Christian communities in Abeokuta and other towns. Among the first missionaries was the Rev. Henry Townsend who went from Sierra Leone to Badagry in 1842 in his company was the Rev Ajayi Crowther.



Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, photograph by Ernest Edwards, Wikicommons.

Success followed the efforts of the pioneer missionaries. C.M.S. churches were firmly established in several important towns, such as Abeokuta (1846), Lagos (1851), Ibadan (1853), and Oyo (1856). Next, branches of the C.M.S. church were founded in south-eastern Nigeria, the chief centres being Bonny and Brass. The effects of work done by Bishop Ajayi Crowther, assisted by the Igbo recaptive the Rev. J. C. Taylor, in these parts of southern Nigeria can still be seen today.

Other missionaries opened mission stations in the country. These included the Baptist missionaries who under the American evangelist, Thomas Bowen, started work from Ogbomosho in 1855. About the same time, the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) headed by the Rev. Hope Waddell started pioneering work, in 1846, in Calabar. Hope Waddell was later joined by the Rev. Hugh Goldie and William Anderson. Another missionary whose memory is

revered in Nigeria was Mary Slessor, she arrived in the country in 1876, and for many years worked assiduously as a missionary nurse. She succeeded in stopping the killing of twins in the areas where she served.

The story of the planting of Christianity in Nigeria would be incomplete without a mention of the Italian Roman Catholic priest, Father Berghero. Operating from Whydah in what is today the People's Republic of Benin (formerly Dahomey), Father Berghero, in 1860, visited Abeokuta and Lagos where freed Catholic slaves from Brazil welcomed him warmly. A permanent station was established in Lagos in 1868, soon followed by others at Lokoja, Abeokuta and Ibadan. Within ten years of Father Berghero's visit, the Roman Catholic Church in Nigeria had become so well established that it ceased to be under administration from Dahomey. By 1885, the church had spread further inland, thanks to Father Joseph Lutz who started work around Onitsha in 1886 and spread the gospel in many parts of the present day Imo and Anambra States. Another important Catholic missionary in this area was the Irishman, Bishop Shanahan.
Although Lokoja had a small C.M.S. station in 1858, it was not until 1889 that the missionaries entered Hausaland, which was predominantly Muslim. Their converts, for many years, were confined to the people of southern Nigerian extraction resident in the north, and to the-large non-Muslim population of the north.

Establishment of Christian Churches In Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), offshoot of the Anglican Church, was the first to become firmly established chiefly among the freed – captive and freed – slave settlers from Britain, Nova Scotia and other parts of the New World. They were followed by other major missionary bodies, including the Methodists and the Roman Catholics. As they could not recruit British missionary volunteers initially, the Church Missionary Society sponsored the services of German missionaries, who were Lutherans, to come out to Sierra Leone. The first batch, who came out between 1804 and 1806, included pioneer missionaries like Renner and Nylander. Another important German missionary was Wilhelm Johannson, better known by the English version of his name, William Johnson, who is revered in the history of the CMS in West Africa.

The Methodists, known as the Wesleyan Missionaries (after their founder), arrived in Freetown in 1811. Their converts increased steadily in numbers until 1821 when a section broke away to form the first independent African, Christian church in West Africa, called the West Africa Methodist Church. In spite of the division, the parent Methodist missionary church played an important role in the history of Christianity in Sierra Leone. The next major Christian missionaries to go out to Sierra Leone were the Roman Catholics. After an unsuccessful beginning by the society of African Missions (SMA), this missionary body moved into other territories in what is now Liberia, Ghana and Nigeria. They were replaced in Sierra Leone by the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1864, who made converts in large numbers not only among the 'pagans' but also among the members of the then competing Christian churches. Like the Methodists, the Roman Catholic missionaries spread the faith notably in the interior, which later became Protectorate.

CONTRIBUTION OF CHRISTIANITY TO WEST AFRICA

The impact of Christianity on West African society has persisted to this day. While it has brought undoubted benefits, it has also harmed the traditional way of life.

The blessings which Christianity has brought to West Africa are many. Apart from giving to the converts a new religious faith which they consider is superior to the traditional religions, the Christian missionaries did pioneering work in introducing new crafts, industries, Western education and modern health services.

1. **BELIEF IN GOD**

The Christian religion teaches the doctrine of one supreme God and is opposed to the worship of any other forms of deity. Its message was that of love and the universal brotherhood of mankind. In this respect the Christian religion therefore differed from the traditional religions of West Africa, which along with an acceptance of one Supreme Being worshipped a hierarchy of gods.

2. **TERMINATING OBNOXIOUS PRACTICES**
   Some of the traditional religious beliefs advocated certain practices such as human sacrifice and the killing of twins whose birth was regarded as an evil omen. Christianity stood firm against such evil practices.
3. **THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS**

Without denying that prior to the introduction of Christianity in West Africa the people had developed their own crafts, one must admit that it was Christian missionaries who introduced modern forms of crafts such as carpentry and masonry. The early missionaries set up craft centres as part of their educational programmes. Also the missionaries set up model farms where scientific agriculture was taught and new crops were introduced for the people, to go alongside longstanding indigenous production. A notable example, in Ghana, was the Methodist experimental farm near Cape Coast whose crops included cotton, coffee, black pepper, mango, ginger, cinnamon and olive trees.

4. **THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AND VERNACULAR LITERATURE**

Another valuable contribution of the Christian missionaries in West Africa was the development of literature in the local vernaculars, this included the translation of the Bible into some of the important local languages.

In Ghana the Presbyterians were pioneers in reducing Ga and Twi into writing. In 1858 the Rev. Johannes Zimmermann wrote a grammar of the Ga language, and in 1874 the Rev. J. G. Christaller produced a Twi Grammar and Dictionary. In Fanteland, the Methodists and Roman Catholics pioneered similar works. While the Evangelical Presbyterian missionaries were the First to develop literature in Ewe, the Roman Catholics were responsible for Nzima literature.

In Nigeria, one of the lasting works of the C.M.S missionaries was the development of literature in Yoruba. Among several others, the native Bishop Ajayi Crowther produced the first translation of the Bible in Yoruba. In 1859, the first newspaper in Yoruba, called the

Iwe-Irohim, was published by the missionaries. Similar developments were carried out by the missionaries in other Nigerian languages, Efik, Kanuri, Igbo, etc.

In the Gambia, the Methodist missionary and first principal of what later became known as the Gambia High School, the Rev. James Fieldhouse, produced a Wolof Grammar in 1876.

5. **HEALTH SERVICES**

The missionaries also greatly improved the health services. Prior to advent of the Christian missionaries and indeed well into the pre-independence period, most sick people depended for cure upon concoction herbs and roots and barks of trees. Although modern scientific research has confirmed the medicinal properties of these concoctions, traditional medical practice had several shortcomings.
Preventive medicine was hardly known; the result was that epidemics of different kinds were frequent. Also, the traditional doctors more often than not could not diagnose illness accurately. They often attributed natural ailments to supernatural causes and resorted to mystic cults to appease the 'unknown' spirit, before applying medicine to the sick person. They also prescribed many taboos which, in the light of modern medical science, had no relation whatever with the illness being treated.
However, the early missionaries established medical centres, at first at their mission posts, and later far and wide, to attend to the sick. In due course leprosariums and orphanages were built to supplement their medical services.

For instance, in Nigeria, one of the first groups of missionaries to introduce organised medical services were the Roman Catholics. Father Jean Marie Coquard, operating in and from Abeokuta for forty years, was renowned among the Egba as a priest and surgeon in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1892, the Church Missionary Society opened the Iyi Enu Hospital in Onitsha which is today a leading hospital in Anambra state. In 1902 the Methodists opened a clinic at Igbo-Ora. Meanwhile, the Scottish missionary, Mary Slessor, had established a reputation in the Cross River area as a nurse. Through hard work and persuasion she succeeded in stopping the practice among the people of killing twins. Another important missionary doctor was J. R. Stephen who for many years headed a missionary hospital at Ilesha. As happened in other West African countries, many more mission-sponsored hospitals were founded in the course of the twentieth century.
Also, Christian missionaries in Ghana were as zealous as their counterparts in Nigeria in pioneering medical services. The Roman Catholic Sisters provided medical care in the Upper and Northern Regions of the country before the government started to provide hospitals and clinics in the regional and district headquarters. In the Western Region, the Catholic Sisters running a hospital at Eikwe specialized in maternity cases, and like Slessor in Nigeria succeeded in stamping out the practice of killing twins at birth. Other Roman Catholic hospitals were built in all the nine regions of the country; including those at Asikuma and Foso (Central Region), Akyem Swedru (Eastern Region), Berekum (BrongAhafo), Maase (Asante Region) and Anfoega (Volta Region). The Presbyterians, also, opened hospitals in several parts of the country, including the one at Agogo in Asante-Akyem. Among other missionary hospitals of long standing and reputation are those run by the Methodists at Wenkyi in the Brong-Ahafo Region, and by the Seventh Day Adventists at Kwahu Atibie in the Eastern Region.

6. **SUPPRESSED SLAVE TRADE**

Christian missions also took a leading role in the campaign to end the slave trade and to suppress slavery.

7. **EDUCATION**

Perhaps the greatest service of the missionaries was the promotion of western *education* and the development of vernacular literature.

Until almost the end of the colonial period education was still largely in the hands of the churches. It was only after the Second World War that the colonial governments started to show a real interest in the promotion of formal education in West Africa.

Development of Education in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, among the earliest higher institutions which the C.M.S. opened was the Christian Institute, established in 1814 for the training of teachers, catechists and priests. In 1827 it grew into Fourah Bay College. In 1876 the college became associated with Durham University in England, which awarded degrees to students of the college. This special relationship continued until 1960 when Fourah Bay became a college of the newly reconstituted University of Sierra Leone; the other constituent college located at Njala developed from a training college founded in 1920.

In 1845 the C.M.S. opened, in Freetown, the first boys' secondary school in the country and another for girls in 1849, later renamed the Annie Walsh Memorial School.

The Methodists founded the Boys' High School in 1874, and another high school for girls six years later.

The lead was followed by other missionaries, notably the Roman Catholic, whose first higher institution was St Edward's Secondary School in Freetown.

Secondary Schools in the Protectorate started later, following the establishment of Bo Government Secondary School in 1906.

In 1950 Albert Academy was founded in Freetown; for-a long lime it was the secondary school in the Colony serving largely children from the provinces, among them were the future heads of state, Sir Milton Margai and Dr. Siaka Stevens.

Development of Education in Ghana

As happened in other colonial territories, the government did not show great interest in the provision of education in Ghana until the missionaries had extended their services throughout the country and had set up primary schools and a few secondary schools and training colleges.

Up to Guggisberg's time, the church schools did not receive grants from the government. Public money was spent only on the small number of government schools, totaling nineteen when Governor Guggisberg assumed office in 1919. In 1925 the Governor introduced measures which helped the efforts of the missionaries. Among other things the regulations required that all teachers should be registered, and a minimum salary was fixed. The

government gave grants according to the strength of the staff and the efficiency of the school judged by inspection reports and the results of public examinations.

Before 1925, there were only three secondary schools and three teacher training colleges in Ghana. All the three secondary schools in Cape Coast were mission institutions. The Methodists founded Mfantsipim (1876) for boys and Wesley Girls' High School (1884). The third, St Nicholas Grammar School (now Adisadel College), was founded by the Anglican Church in 1910. The Roman Catholics established their first secondary school, St Augustine's, at Cape Coast in 1936. Two important private schools with strong Christian influence must also be mentioned: Accra High School, founded in 1923 and Accra Academy, established in
1931.

Teacher training colleges in Ghana did not expand as fast as the secondary schools. Nevertheless, the first higher institution in Ghana, now the Presbyterian Training College at Akuapem Akropon, was established in 1848, first as a centre for training catechists, and later to train teachers as well as ministers of the Presbyterian Church. In 1858 ten years after the founding of the first college, the Presbyterians opened a sister college at Aburi for the training of women teachers. It was not until 1909 that the government opened a teacher training college and a technical school in Accra. The training college later became part of Achimota College. Two other training colleges opened by the missionaries, in the early days, were the Wesley College in Kumasi (1922) and the Roman Catholic Training College at Amisano, near Elmina (1931) which in 1936 moved to the campus of the newly founded secondary school, St Augustine's College at Cape Coast.

Development of Education in Nigeria

The first school in Nigeria was started by the Methodist missionaries at Badagry in 1842. This was the work of the great missionary, Thomas Birch Freeman, who placed two missionaries, Mr and Mrs. de Graft, in charge of the school. Soon after the Methodist experiment, the church Missionary Society set up their own school at Badagry.

These pioneer mission schools met with a discouraging response. They were closed down in 1852 in favour of schools opened in Lagos which, in 1851, had one time British control. Earlier in 1846, the Rev. Hope Waddell of the Church of Scotland had opened a school at Duke Town, Calabar. Within ten years the C.M.S had opened twelve more schools in what is today Cross Rivers State. By the close of the nineteenth century the major Christian missionary churches had opened elementary schools in many part of southern Nigeria with an enrolment of about 74,000 by the First World War.
Soon after the start of elementary schools, the missionaries started opening higher institutions also. Important among these, all in Lagos, were the Baptist Academy in 1855, the C.M.S. Grammar School for Boys in 1859, St Gregory's College opened by the Catholics in 1876, Methodist Boys High School 1878 and Methodist Girls' High School 1879. Soon after secondary schools were opened in other parts of southern Nigeria, including Bonny High School, which was taken over by government in 1904.

To supplement these missionary efforts in the field of higher education, the government opened its own secondary school in Lagos in 1909, this was King's College. Following agitation by the people in 1934, the government opened the old Yaba Higher College and Medical School, which awarded diplomas acceptable only locally. This instruction in 1948 developed into the University College in Ibadan. The original Yaba College in Lagos has grown into a polytechnic.

Predominantly Muslim territory, the North received western education later than the South. By 1914 there were barely thirty schools in that vast area.

As happened in Ghana, the development of training colleges in Nigeria was slower than secondary schools, though the C. M. S. had opened the first training college at Abeokuta as far back as 1849.

Development of Education In The Gambia

In the Gambia, as happened in other territories, the Christian missionaries did not confine their work to the spread of the Gospel alone. Besides education, they cared for the sick. Thus as early as 1823, the Roman Catholic Sisters started a clinic for the sick and for children in Banjul. The churches opened primary schools both in the capital and in the rural communities. Their greatest legacy in the field of education was the foundation which the Methodist laid for what is today the Gambia High school.

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

The early European Christian missionaries in West Africa experienced a number of difficulties, some arising from factors outside their control and others of their own making.

1. **Unsuitable Climatic Conditions**

The tropical climatic condition in the country was not favourable to the early missionaries who came to the shores of West Africa. The high temperatures coupled with high rainfall patterns in some parts of the country experienced during the daytime, made the missionaries stay indoors, which slowed down their activities.

2. **Language Barrier**

Other difficulties they faced were the problems of the many languages and dialects and their ignorance of the true meaning of the various cultures, beliefs, values and ways of life of the people whom they set out to convert to Christianity. For the West Africans, the acceptance of Christianity meant the total rejection of most of the cherished institutions upon which their society rested.

3. **Misconception by the early Europeans**

The problems created by the white missionaries themselves arose largely from a misconception of what Africa represented. Europe in those days looked upon Africa as 'the Dark Continent' with very primitive civilizations, and most Europeans refused to adapt their religion to suit the local situation. And yet this was what earlier missionaries in pagan Europe had done when, for example, they had changed the Sabbath to suit the pagan Sun Day (hence Sunday), and had also adopted the dates of the pagan festivals to celebrate Christmas Day and the Easter festival.

4. **Despised African Culture**

The early African converts to Christianity, were made to abandon their ancestral culture and way of life as 'pagan' therefore to be shunned. Indeed, in some situations the converts were taught to feel that they were absolved from obeying their own traditional rulers and certain laws of the state. These trends occasionally brought kings into conflict with the missionaries and their converts.

5. **Health Problems**

The greatest problem faced by the early European Christian missionaries was, the tropical climate and health Hazards. Many missionaries died because of the climate and tropical disease. This single problem made the missionary work very difficult. However, the discovery of quinine and other curative medicines in the late 19th century made the history of the missionary work in West Africa a different thing altogether.

6. **Financial Problems**

Almost all the missions in West Africa faced financial problems in the early stages of their missionary work. They relied very much on their home churches for their funds. But the funds and other needed materials even when available could not reach their station in time. This was because all the ships that came to the coast at that time were owned by trading firms and companies whose interest were basically on trade. In such asituation, provisions and other things had to be sent into the country not in large quantities as would have been desired by the missionaries.

7. **Language Problems**

Other difficulties the early Christians faced were the problems of the many languages and dialects and their ignorance of the true meaning of the various cultures, beliefs, values and ways of life of the people whom they set out to convert to Christianity. It was difficult for the European missionaries to communicate freely with the local people. They had to speak through few interpreters who did not have sufficient education to interpret correctly. In such situations, the message sometimes appealed to the local people depending on the efficiency of the interpreter. Moreover, speaking through interpreters is a defective means of communicating one's thoughts to one's audience.

8. **Transportation Problems**

Lack of transport from the coast to the interior parts of West Africa was one of the major difficulties encountered by the missionaries. There were only bush paths, and no roads in the early times. Their luggage and other necessities had to be carried on heads and took a long time before reaching the missionaries. Besides, the missionaries had to travel longer distances to inland towns from their southern stations.

9. **Insufficient Christian Literature**

Another difficulty that the early missionaries faced in the spread of Christianity was insufficient Christian literature at that time. There were no Bibles in local languages, likewise grammar books were scant, so the missionaries had to spend time learning local languages, and translated the Bible and wrote series of grammar books.

For instance, in Ghana, it was in 1858 that Rev. Johannes Zimmermann wrote a grammar of the Ga language and translated the entire Bible and a Bible history into Ga. Then in 1874, the Rev. John G. Christaller (described as the "Father of Twi Literature") produced a Twi grammar and dictionary, a collection of Twi proverbs, a Twi translation of the Bible as well as prayers and hymns.

In Nigeria, one of the lasting works of the C.M.S. missionaries was the development of literature in Yoruba. Among several others, the native Bishop Ajayi Crowther produced the first translation of the Bible in Yoruba. In 1859, the first newspaper in Yoruba. Called the Iwe-Irohim, was published by the missionaries. Similar developments were carried out by the missionaries in other Nigerian languages, Efik, Kanuri, Igbo, etc.

In the Gambia, the Methodist missionary and first principal of what later became known as the Gambia High School, the Rev. James Fieldhouse, produced a Wolof Grammar in 1876.

10. **Food**

Lastly, the missionaries were not used to eating our local foods. This made it difficult for the early missionaries to stay in the country for long. However, with time, they brought some crops, which they cultivated and which sustained them.

EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN GHANA

1. **Damage of culture**

As an institution introduced by agents with radically different values, the Christian religion damaged the culture and traditional beliefs of the people of West Africa. Instead of adapting the teachings and practices of the 'new' religion to suit indigenous values, as it did when the same Christian religion adopted Greek, Roman, German and Anglo-Saxon native practices, the early Christian missionaries condemned totally as 'pagan', and to be avoided by their converts, whatever they considered strange.

1. **Harm to Traditional institution**

Being ignorant of the significance of certain institutions and practices of the people of West Africa, and occasionally being misled by their over-zealous followings into wrongly interpreting the people's heritage, the missionaries compelled pupils in their schools and docile adult converts to shun their own ancestral practices. A notable example was the Asafo Company, a purely military and social organisation of the peoples of Ghana, which was condemned by the early missionaries because of its presumed connection with fetish practices. And yet the Asafo provided most of the services which a community needed: protection against military attacks, communal services, etc.

- **Adoption of Christian Names**

Christian converts were indoctrinated to frown upon the use of indigenous first names in favour of 'Christian' ones. Often drumming and the harmless songs and dances of the people were condemned.

1. **Superiority of western culture**

The education provided in schools in early days also tended to place great emphasis on the superiority of western culture. Textbooks were heavily biased towards western ideas and values. History books tended to exaggerate in achievements of Europeans, making no reference to African's own great past.

1. **Creation of Salems**

Groundless fears that the converts would become contaminated with 'paganism' led some of the Christian missionaries, notably the Presbyterians, to separate the Christians from the rest of the township.

1. **Involvement in local political**

As happened in parts of Yorubaland in the last century, some of the Christian missionaries often engaged in local politics and took an active part in helping the colonial authorities in their wars of territorial expansion.

In conclusion, the converts tended to look down upon many things in their ancestral culture. It would be wrong, however, to blame all these ills on the Christian missionaries alone. Some progressive Europeans, like the first principal of Achimota College, Rev. A.G. Frazer, did much to encourage the promotion of indigenous culture, but by and large the colonial authorities contributed to dwindling a good deal of our cultural heritage.

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Samuel Adu-Gyamfi And Benjamin Kye Ampadu

7 - Scramble for and Partition of West Africa

1. The Scramble for Africa

The Europeans had frequented the coasts of West Africa since the fifteenth century and established settlements along the coast in order to facilitate trade, in particular the transatlantic slave trade. There was, however, little interest in driving colonisation inland before the 1870s except in the Cape region (South Africa) and in Algeria that the French had turned into a settler colony, i.e. a colony where waves of European migrants often violently dispossessed the inhabitants of their lands. Forty years later, the situation would be radically different; in 1910, only Liberia and Ethiopia escaped European rule. What were the reasons behind Europe's Scramble for Africa and why did it happen so rapidly at the end of the nineteenth century?

- The Industrial Revolution

Many historians and economists have argued that the colonisation of Africa was the direct consequence of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. During the nineteenth century, most European powers experienced a dramatic growth of productivity caused by a number of technical innovations such as steam engines, steel furnaces or electric power. It meant that European countries produced more goods than they could sell. They were constantly looking for new markets because the Europeans did not consume enough to absorb the vast quantity of products made possible by new manufacturing techniques. This is the theory of European under-consumption.

This under-consumption led companies and states to look for trading opportunities around the planet. For them, the continent that they knew the least, Africa, needed to be open to trade. In exchange for tropical products in high demand in Europe, Africans would receive their manufactured products. The British, for example, wanted to obtain palm oil, cotton and rubber from the Gold Coast or groundnuts from the Gambia. Palm oil was used to create industrial lubricants, cotton to produce clothes, rubber to manufacture tyres and groundnuts were transformed into soap and wax. African products were thus at the centre of the Industrial Revolution.

Powerful capitalistic interests were therefore among the reasons which pushed the Europeans to send expeditions along the rivers of Africa in the second half of the nineteenth-century. This explains why the colonisation of Africa was often driven by chartered companies, i.e. European private investors receiving privileges from their government to trade in territories outside of Europe. Some of these companies were

instrumental in the creation of colonies as was the case for the Royal Niger Company in Nigeria. After years of transatlantic slave trade, industrialisation and what former slave trading European nations called “legitimate commerce” had thus become a strong motive reason for the European colonisation of the continent. This was then justified according to other pseudo-explanations, as we shall see below.

- European Scientific Developments

It could be argued that the Europeans could have invaded Africa before for the same commercial reasons. So why then did the colonisation of the continent take place at the end of the nineteenth century and not before? The reason might come from new technological developments of the Industrial Revolution.

New weapons enabled the Europeans to conquer vast swathes of lands in a very short period of time whilst African societies did not have the tools to fight efficiently. The British army’s Martini-Henry breech-loading rifle could hit a target nearly a mile away, and could be fired 12 times a minute. The Maxim gun could fire 600 rounds a minute. In comparison, many Africans were fighting with single-shot muskets. Superior weaponry did not mean that many Africans were not able to defend themselves in a series of localised conflicts. Indeed many resisted European troops. For example, in modern-day Guinea, Sierra Leone, Mali and Ivory Coast, Samori Ture fought against the French until his capture in 1898. The Asante in modern-day Ghana also chose to fight against the British to defend the Golden Stool. The Bijagó of Guinea-Bissau resisted formal colonisation and hut taxes until the 1930s.

Samori Ture (c. 1830 – June 2, 1900). Wikipedia. Public domain.

Other tools also facilitated the European invasion at the end of the nineteenth century. The steamboat and the telegraph accelerated the pace of the colonial conquest as faster travel and communication meant that European armies could easily distribute troops in different corners of Africa for short periods. Tropical diseases were brought under control by scientific discoveries. Before 1860, Europeans in West Africa were 75% likely to die within 2 years, but the treatment of malaria with quinine saw the risk fall to 8% by 1900.

- Humanitarianism and Racism

Beyond material causes, the scramble for Africa required an ideological justification. The colonial conquest was based on the religious idea of a 'mission', the ethical idea of 'ending slavery', all inspired by racist ideas.

After being responsible for the enslavement of more than twelve million Africans between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Europeans ironically justified their African conquests in the name of the abolition of slavery. At the end of the nineteenth century, the

slave trade became considered inhumane, and contrary to Christian values in the case of Britain and Republican values in the case of France. The 1889-90 Brussels anti-slavery conference perfectly illustrates this new vision of Africa where the Europeans considered themselves as the saviours of Africa – a vision which prefigures modern-day humanitarian interventions in Africa after natural or political upheavals.

For the British, Civilisation, Commerce and Christianity (often known as the 3 Cs) were the main reasons behind colonialism. For secular France, it was the 'civilising mission'. It had become a duty to bring peace to Africa to educate the Africans as they would be freed from the ills of war, disease and famine.

According to racist theories developed in Europe by the end of the nineteenth century, Africans were supposed to belong to an inferior race which had to be enlightened by Europeans. This racist justification of colonialism was backed up by pseudo-scientific theories which situated Africans at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. Therefore, it was the 'white man's burden' to educate an inferior race. These theories materialised again as justification for Apartheid in South Africa.

- European internal politics and rivalry

Internal European politics might be responsible for the beginning of the Scramble for Africa. In 1870, newly-created Germany won a war against France. After this France tried to restore its national pride by competing with the Ottoman Empire and Italy for domination in North Africa and with the United Kingdom for commercial influence in West Africa. The new French colonial empire in West Africa presented an opportunity to show the strength and the values of the French Third Republic.

For the British, the Suez Canal was a crucial bridgehead for the sea route leading to India. Egypt was officially under the control of the Ottoman Empire but was experiencing a series of political and economic upheavals in the 1870s. Afraid of losing control of such an important economic and strategic asset, the British invaded Egypt in 1882. For the British, the occupation of Egypt marked the transition between the period of informal empire, i.e. the period when empires dominated strategically or commercially non-European regions without claiming the territories as their own and high imperialism, i.e. the period when European powers invaded non-European territories.

The rivalry between European powers was also one of the main drives behind the Scramble for Africa. In order to prevent each other from acquiring more territories, the Europeans carved up the African continent into colonies. Acquiring prestige by invading new territories was particularly important and the competition between the British and the French was responsible for the creation of most borders in West Africa.

2. The Partition of West Africa

Most African borders were created rapidly between c. 1900 and the end of the First World War by the Europeans. Why did it happen so quickly and how was West Africa partitioned?

- African territories at the end of the nineteenth century

Europeans imagined Africa as *terra nullius*: a vast land belonging to no none. *Terra nullius* was a legal invention of the Europeans to justify their encroachment on non-European lands. This was of course an absurdity which took no heed of the realities of complex African states and historical changes dating back to distant times. It was an invention of racist historians who knew nothing of Africa.

During the nineteenth century, there were many well-organised states in West Africa. For example, following the jihad of Usman dan Fodio at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Hausa-Fulanis created a caliphate which was the largest state in Africa at the time, and which had extensive textile industry and long distance trade. Meanwhile, the neighbouring kingdom of Borno was the heir of the sixteenth-century of the empire of Kanem-Borno, while in Guinea the Fuuta Jaalo state spread over a large area and conquered Kaabu's longstanding empire in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau in the 1860s.

While these larger states may have been the exception during the nineteenth century, smaller communities in West Africa also had a long history of trade and contact with the rest of the world. In the nineteenth century, West Africans lived in complex and varied political systems where authority could be exerted by men and women alike.

- The African reaction to the arrival of European troops

The difference between societies living in organised states and those living in non-centralised polities might explain why African men and women reacted differently to the arrival of colonial troops. Historians have tried to explain why some of them chose to fight while the large majority of them did not make or were not offered the same choice. In societies with little tradition of centralised government, traditions of local autonomy made submission to a colonial empire inconceivable (for example, the relatively small communities living in the Niger Delta, Nigeria or the Bissagos Islands, Guinea-Bissau).

Other larger societies in contact with the European for longer might have known the superior European firepower and accommodated themselves to the prospect of foreign rule

accordingly; their subjects were also used to accommodating to political power, so the larger states were easier to conquer – as the Spanish had found in the Americas in the sixteenth century.

Other societies were also profoundly divided and used the Europeans in their internal struggle. Africa like other continents was not a monolithic block and the idea of a continental-wide African resistance to colonialism would be anachronistic. Africans were thus divided when European troops conquered the continent. For example, the British became players in a civil war in Northern Nigeria and backed one side against the other. This was the pattern of divide and rule which had long been used by European imperialists, since the sixteenth century. In 1903, the conquest of Kano was thus undertaken with the help of its own inhabitants, just as the conquest of Mexico City by the Spanish had been undertaken with the help of Native American allies from Tlaxcala.

- The military conquest of West Africa

The conference of Berlin in 1884-85 set the rules for the partition of the whole of Africa. Strangely, it recognised the Congo Free State as the personal possession of Leopold II, the king of Belgium. Leopold II had been one of the instigators of the formal European land and power grab, and was personally rewarded for this role; the result would be the creation of one of the most inhumane of all the European colonial systems established in Africa.

The Berlin Conference by Gartenlaube, 1884. Wikipedia. Public domain.

Otherwise, the conference did not create borders in West Africa. Rather it allowed free navigation on the Congo and Niger Rivers.

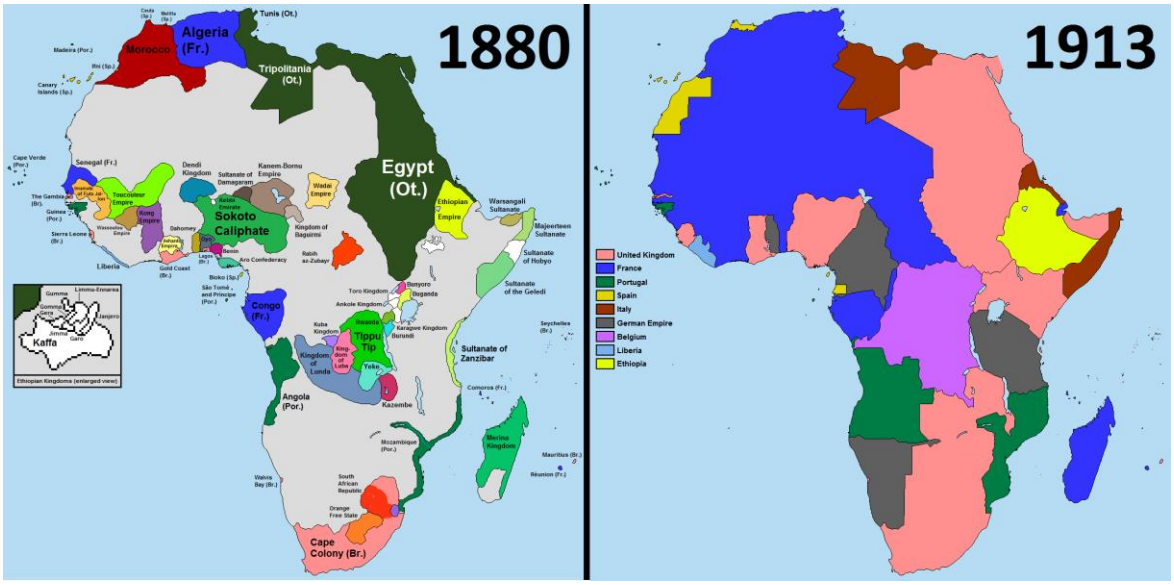
The conference of Berlin stipulated that in order to claim a colony in Africa, treaties needed to be signed with local rulers. The years following the conference of Berlin saw the multiplication of expeditions which aimed at signing treaties. However, these treaties were often misunderstood by local rulers who did not know that they would lose their authority. These were also expeditions backed by strong military force, which gave the rulers little choice other than to agree.

To have their conquests recognised by the other colonial powers, the Europeans introduced the concept of effective occupation. Effective occupation meant that the Europeans needed to send troops to different corners of Africa to occupy 'spheres of influence'. The concept of 'effective occupation' resulted in a series of localised conflicts in West Africa which can be described as regional scrambles instead of a general Scramble for Africa. These regional scrambles unfolded rapidly between the conference of Berlin and the First World War.

For example at the end of the nineteenth century, the Portuguese wanted to link their colonies of Angola and Mozambique across the continent. Their dream of a united empire was broken by the British businessman Cecil Rhodes who wanted to connect the British Cape Colony to Cairo and ultimately created the colonies of Southern and Northern Rhodesia. These opposing visions of empire could also be found in the Lake Chad area which was heavily disputed between France, Germany and the United Kingdom at the end of the nineteenth century. The three countries sent troops to the region and only reached a final agreement in 1902.

Beyond these military escapades, the African participation to the European colonial conquest is significant. The continent was indeed conquered by European armies but most soldiers came from different regions of Africa. Centuries of the slave trade and the creation of powerful warrior aristocracies had created deep divisions. The Europeans were ready to exploit the internal divisions of the continent and recruited soldiers in their colonial possessions in order to invade and control their newly-conquered colonies. It was the classic imperial strategy of divide and rule.

- The creation of boundaries



Comparison of Africa in the years 1880 and 1913. CC BY-SA 4.0. Wikipedia.

Africa was divided without consideration of local populations or pre-existing cultural groups. The result was that most African borders were the products of European geopolitical rivalries rather than West African history. This explains why most West African borders were created in European chancelleries and followed astronomical, mathematical or geographical lines (see factbox).

It was not the first time that the Europeans created boundaries outside of Europe. In Latin America or South-East Asia, the Europeans had already created boundaries between their colonies. When African boundaries were negotiated in Europe, they were considered as part of a large-scale bargain for territories. The British and the French, for example, traded territories in West Africa (Los Islands in Guinea and upper Gambia), South-East Asia (rights to colonise territories surrounding Thailand), the Pacific (Vanuatu), and fishing rights in the Atlantic to seal their alliance called the *Entente Cordiale* in 1904.

Most boundaries were created to satisfy the geopolitical ambitions of European diplomats who wanted to protect or affirm their respective spheres of influence. Rivers were considered especially worthy economic resources during this period, which explains how the borders of a colony such as Gambia were carved along the Gambia River.

The Portuguese who had been present on the coasts of Africa since the fifteenth century played a particular role in the creation of borders. They collected and published numerous documents on the history of their possessions in order to justify their presence in Africa. Historical precedents were particularly sought after in a period where written documents were used as legal evidence.

The border treaties signed between Europeans were often very vague and needed to be adapted on the ground. The lack of geographical knowledge of Africa on the part of the Europeans meant that precise borders needed to be delimitated with the help of African populations. So, at the scale of West Africa, most borders were traced in Europe but, at a

local level, African populations could influence the creation of the colonial borders. This can be seen in the boundary between the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno which were used by the British and the French in their negotiations to separate Nigeria and Niger.

After the defeat of Germany during the First World War, its West African colonies of Togo and Cameroun were divided between the British and the French under the aegis of the League of Nations. It was an opportunity for the Ewe populations of Togoland to be reunited with other Ewe speakers in the British colony of Gold Coast. The First World War was thus the last opportunity to redraw borders in West Africa.

Conclusion:

At the end of the nineteenth century, no one knew that colonial rule would last until the 1950s in the case of Togo and Ghana, the 1960s for most other colonies in West Africa or the 1970s for the Spanish colony of Western Sahara or for the Portuguese colonies of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. For many Africans at the turn of the twentieth century, the European presence was only temporary.

The Scramble for Africa had tremendous political, economic and cultural consequences for African men and women. Even if it lasted two or three generations, the colonisation of the continent had an enduring effect on African peoples and societies.

At the moment of their creation, African borders were not conceived as rigid state boundaries but as administrative colonial limits. They have become the symbol of the colonial past for many twenty-first century Africans, who often call them the scars of colonisation.

Factbox:

In 2018, African borders are 83,500 kilometres (51,884 miles) long. Apart from the cases of Liberia and Ethiopia, most African borders were defined in Europe in a very short period of time between the end of the nineteenth century and the end of the First World War. Nearly 44% of them were defined after astronomical lines (meridians and parallels), 30% after mathematical lines (arcs and lines) and 26% after geographic landmarks (mainly rivers and mountains). France is behind the creation of 32% of African borders, the United Kingdom 26.8%, Germany 8.7%, Belgium 7.6%, Portugal 6.9%, the Ottoman Empire 4%, Italy 1.7% and Spain 1.5%.

Vincent Hiribarren

8 - Colonial Rule in West Africa

The European scramble for Africa culminated in the Berlin West African Conference of 1884-85. The conference was called by German Chancellor Bismarck and would set up the parameters for the eventual partition of Africa. European nations were summoned to discuss issues of free navigation along the Niger and Congo rivers and to settle new claims to African coasts.

In the end, the European powers signed The Berlin Act (Treaty). This treaty set up rules for European occupation of African territories. The treaty stated that any European claim to any part of Africa, would only be recognized if it was effectively occupied. The Berlin Conference therefore set the stage for the eventual European military invasion and conquest of African continent. With the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, the entire continent came under European colonial rule. The major colonial powers were Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal.

The story of West Africa after the Berlin Conference revolves around 5 major themes: the establishment of European colonies, the consolidation of political authority, the development of the colonies through forced labor, the cultural and economic transformation of West Africa, and West African Resistance.

European Penetration and West African Resistance to Penetration

Effective Occupation was a clause in the Berlin Treaty which gave Europe a blank check to use military force to occupy West African territories. 1885-1914 were the years of European conquest and amalgamations of pre-colonial states and societies into new states. European imperialists continued to pursue their earlier treaty making processes whereby West African territories became European protectorates. Protectorates were a loaded pause before the eventual European military occupation of West Africa. Because protectorate treaties posed serious challenges to West African independence most West African rulers naturally rejected them. West African rulers adopted numerous strategies to forestall European occupation including: recourse to diplomacy, alliance, and when all else failed, military confrontation.

Recourse to Diplomacy

The British found few people as difficult to subdue as the Asante of Ghana in their quest to build their West African colonial empire. The Asante Wars against the British, which began in 1805, lasted a hundred years. Although outmatched by superior weaponry, the Asante kept the British army at bay for a short final period of independence.

The 1874 burning of Kumasi by British troops (James Grant). Wikipedia. Public domain.

To understand the Asante wars, one has to look at role of King Prempeh I, who firmly resolved not to submit to British protection. When pressured in 1891 to sign a protection treaty which implied British control of Asante, Prempeh firmly and confidently rejected idea. Here are his words to the British envoy:

The suggestion that Asante in its present state should come and enjoy the protection of Her Majesty the Queen and Empress of India, is a matter of very serious consideration and I am happy to say we have arrived at this conclusion, that my kingdom of Asante will never commit itself to any such policy. Asante must remain [independent] of old . . .

In 1897, King Prempeh was exiled, and the Asante were told that he would never be returned. He was first taken to Elmina Castle. From there, he was taken to the Seychelles Islands.

In 1899, in a further attempt to humiliate the Asante people, the British sent British governor Sir Frederick Hodgson to Kumasi to demand the Golden Stool. The Golden Stool was a symbol of Asante unity. In the face of this insult the chiefs held a secret meeting at Kumasi. Yaa Asantewa, the Queen Mother of Ejisu, was at the meeting. The chiefs were discussing how they could make war on the white men and force them to bring back the Asantehene. Yaa Asantewa saw that some of the bravest male members of nation were cowed. In her now famous challenge, Yaa Asantewa declared:

How can a proud and brave people like the Asante sit back and look while white men took away their king and chiefs and humiliate them with a demand for the Golden Stool. The Golden Stool only means money to the white man; they searched and dug everywhere for it . . . If you, the chiefs of Asante, are going to behave like cowards and not fight, you should exchange your loincloths for my undergarments.

That was the beginning of the Yaa Asantewa War. The final battle began on September 30, 1900, and ended in the bloody defeat of the Asante. Yaa Asantewa was the last to be captured, and subsequently exiled to the Seychelles, where she died around 1921. With the end of these wars, the British gained control of the hinterland of Ghana.

Around the same time, Behanzin, the last king of Dahomey (1889-94), told the European envoy that came to see him:

God has created Black and White, each to inherit its designated territory. The White man is concerned with commerce and the Black man must trade with the White. Let the Blacks do no harm to the Whites and in the same way the Whites must do not harm to the blacks.

In 1895, Wobogo, the Moro Nabaor king of the Mossi told French Captain Restenave:

I know the whites wish to kill me in order to take my country, and yet you claim that they will help me to organize my country. But I find my country good just as it is. I have no need of them. I know what is necessary for me and what I want: I have my own merchants: also, consider yourself fortunate that I do not order your head to be cut off. Go away now, and above all, never come back.

Alliance

When West African leaders struck alliances with the imperialists, they did so in an attempt to enhance their commercial and diplomatic advantages. King Jaja of Opobo, for instance, resorted to diplomacy as means of resistance to European intrusive imperialism. Mbanaso Ozurumba, a.k.a Jaja was a former slave of Igbo origin. He was elected as king of the Anna Pepple House in Bonny, Niger Delta, in 1863, following the death of his master. Soon a struggle between the Anna Pepple House and Manilla Pepple House led to the outbreak of civil war in Bonny in 1869. The war resulted in King Jaja's migration and founding of the inland kingdom of Opobo which lay in the palm oil producing hinterland.

Jaja was an avowed nationalist and determined to control the trade in his political domain. He was determined to prevent European incursions into the interior. He also wanted to ensure that Opobo oil markets remained outside the sphere of foreign traders. To this end, King Jaja signed a trade treaty with the British in 1873. Part of the treaty reads as follows:

After April 2, 1873, the king of Opobo shall allow no trade established or hulk in or off Opobo Town, or any trading vessels to come higher up the river than the Whiteman's beach opposite Hippopotamus Creek. If any trading ship or steamer proceeds further up the river than the creek above mentioned, after having been fully warned to the contrary, the said trading ship or steamer may be seized by King Jaja and detained until a fine of 100 puncheon [of palm oil] be paid by the owners to king Jaja . . .

By signing the treaty, the British acknowledged Jaja as the king of Opobo and dominant middleman in the Niger Delta trade. However, the ensuing scramble for Africa of 1880s upset the understanding. The British merchants and officials were no longer in the mood to respect Jaja's preeminence in the Niger Delta hinterland. They instead penetrated the hinterland to open up free trade and therefore a confrontation with Jaja became inevitable. In 1887, the British consul Harry Johnson enticed Jaja to the British gunboat for discussions; but then exiled him to West Indies where he died in 1891.

Military Confrontation

Some decentralized West African societies equally resisted European penetration.

The Baule of Ivory Coast and Tiv of Nigeria stiffly resisted colonial occupation. The Baule fought the French from 1891-1911. The Tiv fought the British from 1900-30; and Igbo resistance was particularly widespread and prolonged. Because of the egalitarian nature of their society, the British found it extremely difficult to subjugate them. The British literally had to fight their way from Igbo village to village, from town to town, before they could finally declare their imperial authority over the Igbo people. Igbo elders challenged the British imperial penetration and invited the British to: "Come and fight: if you want warm, come, we are ready." The British waged wars from about 1898-1910.

While West Africans fought gallantly against their European intruders; everywhere but Ethiopia, the Europeans were triumphant.

European Political Policies in their West African Dominions

The British in West Africa

The 19th century British colonial policy in West Africa was a policy of assimilation.

Their grand plan was to have Africans assimilate into European civilization and culture. The policy created a western class of black Englishmen who were supposedly British partners in religion, trade and administration. These African "British men," especially Creoles, rose in colonies of Freetown, Bathurst, southern Ghana and Lagos to important positions in the church, commercial firms and the colonial government. However, with the growth of European racism, western educated Africans (elites) found that they were increasingly discriminated against in administration. The British now imported European administrators to fill positions previously held by Africans. Western educated Africans like the Creoles were even forced out of the civil service.

In 1910, the British colonial office expressed the opinion that Englishmen naturally expected to enjoy fruits of their conquests, therefore they should be preferred over Africans in senior positions. The problem however was that there were not enough Englishmen prepared to serve as colonial administrators in Africa. Therefore, the British soon adopted the policy of Indirect Rule.

Indirect Rule was the brain child of Lord Lugard. He presented the principles of the system in his book *The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa*. In it, he identified the two most important administrative principles to employ in ruling alien people. The first was the principle of decentralization, in which he stressed importance of recognizing and ruling people through their indigenous authorities. He argued that the role of the British officers, except in critical areas such as taxation, military forces and the alienation of land, was to advise, not demand. The second principle, was the principle of continuity. Lugard argued that the British should utilize indigenous institutions and authorities, thereby preserving "continuity" with the past, while laying foundations for what he saw as the progressive improvement of indigenous society.

Indirect Rule which begun as administrative expedient in Northern Nigeria, would eventually be imposed throughout their territories of British Africa.

Administrative Policies

The British set up separate administrative machines for each of their colonies. At the head of each colony was the governor, who was responsible to the Secretary of State at the colonial office. He administered the colony with assistance of a partly nominated legislative council and executive council of officials. Most of the laws of the colony were drawn up by the government or his council.

Each colony was divided into regions under a regional or chief administrator. The regions were divided into provinces which were controlled by the provincial commissioners. Each province was divided into districts under leadership of a district commissioner. Each district was divided into one or more traditional states which were ruled by traditional rulers.

Features of Indirect Rule

Indirect Rule saw to the mapping out of relatively large areas which were subject to single authority: Smaller ethnic groups were included in the jurisdiction of their larger, more highly organized neighbors. And district heads, especially in Igbo and Ibibiolands, Nigeria, were appointed to defined areas without much consideration to their relationship with the populations under their authority.

Indirect Rule sustained tyrannical and corrupt governments and promoted divisions in populations: In Northern Nigeria, the system strengthened the emirates, therefore increasing the possibility of revolution by the oppressed peasantry. In Igboland and

Ibibiolands, warrant chiefs were created to fill the leadership positions, because the Igbo and Ibibios had no chiefs, instead they had egalitarian systems of government which recognized authority as coming directly from the people. These warrant chiefs were corrupt and miniature tyrants. Therefore, in 1929 when the British tried to impose direct taxation on Igboland, Igbo women challenged government and the Women's War or *Ogu umunwanyi* ensued. The warrant chiefs were the main targets of the women's attack.

Indirect Rule weakened traditional rule: The traditional paramount ruler in British West Africa was not really the head of social and political order. Rather, he was a subordinate of the British overlord who used him to implement unpopular measures such as compulsory labor, taxation, and military enlistment. Moreover, the British had the power to dispose of traditional rulers and replace them with their own nominees. And the British often interfered with existing paramountcies by breaking them up and raising subordinate chiefs to the status of paramount chiefs.

The British District officers dictated to traditional rulers and treated them as employees of government rather than supervising and advising them. Members of ruling families were not encouraged to attend new schools that were introduced for fear they may become denationalized. In northern Nigeria and northern Ghana, the people as a result were not given the sort of education that would enable them cope with new problems of colonial society, thus making them even more dependent on District Commissioners and British Technical Officers.

The greatest fault of the Indirect Rule system, however, was its complete exclusion of the West African educated elite from local government: the educated elite were excluded from both Native Administration and colonial government, and thus became transformed into an alienated class.

In conclusion, Indirect Rule was implemented because it was cheap and practical. It preserved old conservative authorities who were ill equipped by education and temperament to cope with the changing environment.

The French in West Africa

Administrative Policies

The French had a policy of assimilation which sought to "civilize" indigenes and gradually turn them into *petits Français* or junior Frenchmen. The highest-ranking of these juniors were the *évolués*, or evolved ones. They were colonial subjects trained to work in administrative positions.

Évolués served two purposes. First, to cut down on costs by replacing French manpower. Second, to create an illusion that colonials were profiting from their becoming "civilized." Both the junior Frenchmen or *petits Français* and the evolved ones or *évolués* were to serve

the grandeur of France and in the far, far, future, they would become "civilized" enough to be considered fully French. This would never really happen however. When independence came, these well-positioned *évolués* often ended up running their countries.

In French West Africa, the colonies were integral parts of the metropolitan country, and were also considered overseas provinces. West Africans were regarded as subjects of France, and like children were expected to have patriotic duties to their mother country. The French believed that the first duty of civilization to the savage was to give them "a taste for work" on the grounds that as beneficiaries of civilization, they should contribute to expenses of the country which brings them benefits. In keeping with this philosophy, the primary role of the "native" therefore was to fight and produce for mother country. The French believed that the "native" will inevitably be civilized by this process, so that in helping France, the "native," in fact, helps him- or herself.

West Africans that were deemed civilized were rewarded by conferring the privileged status of French citizen on them. To become a French citizen, the West African would have to have been born in one of the four communes or municipalities in Senegal: Saint-Louis, Gorée, Rufisque, and Dakar. They must also have a merited a position in the French service for at least ten years; and have evidence of good character and possess a means of existence. They must also have been decorated with the Legion of Honor, a military award.

The advantages of French citizenship were many. Once a West African became a Frenchman, they were subject to French law and access to French courts. The black Frenchman was exempted from *indigénat*, which is a legal system which enabled a French administrative officer to sentence any African for up to two years forced labour without a trial. A West African Frenchman could commute compulsory labor for a monetary payment. The person could be appointed to any post in France and in colony. For example, Blaise Diagne of Senegal was the first black African elected to French National Assembly and Mayor of Dakar, which was the capital of the Federation of French West Africa. He would however fall out of favor with West Africans because the French colonial government used him to forcibly conscript West Africans to fight for the French army during WWI.

However, the assimilation policy was abandoned as impractical. By 1937, only eighty thousand of the fifteen million French West Africans had become French citizens. Seventy-eight thousand of those had because French citizens because they were born in one of the communes.

Thus, in the 1920s, the policy was changed to the policy of association, which was advocated as the most appropriate for French Africa. On paper, association reorganized the society supposedly to achieve maximum benefit for both the French and the West African. In practice however, scholars have argued that this policy was like the association of a horse and its rider, since the French would at all times dictate the direction that the development should take and determine what would be of mutual benefit to themselves and West Africans.

The colonial belief in the superiority of French civilization was reflected in the judicial system, their attitude toward indigenous law, indigenous authorities, indigenous rights to

land, and the educational program. They condemned everything African as primitive and barbaric.

Actual Administration

The French employed a highly centralized and authoritarian system of administration. Between 1896 and 1904, they formed all of their eight West African colonies into the Federation of French West Africa (AVF), with its capital at Dakar.

At the head of Federation was governor-general who answered to minister of colonies in Paris, took most of his orders from France, and governed according to French laws. At the head of each colony was the Lt.-governor who was assisted by a council of administration. The Lt.-governor was directly under the governor-general and could make decisions on only a few specified subjects. The French policy of assimilation, was a policy of direct rule through appointed officials. Like British, they divided their colonies into regions and districts. The colonies were divided into *cercles* under the *commandants du cercles. Cercles* were divided into subdivisions under *Chiefs du Subdivision*. Subdivisions were divided into cantons under African chiefs.

Distinguishing Features

1. African Chiefs were not local government authorities. They could not exercise any judicial functions. They did not have a police force or maintain prisons.

2. African chiefs were not leaders of their people. Rather, they were mere functionaries, supervised by French political officers.

3. African chiefs were appointed, not by birth, but rather by education, and familiarity with the metropolitan administrative practice.

4. African chiefs could be transferred from one province to another. The French policy actually went out of its way to deliberately destroy traditional paramountcies.

The Portuguese in West Africa

Administrative Policies

Portugal, one of the poorest of the European colonist nations in Africa operated what amounted to a closed economic system in their African colonies. They created a system which welded their West African colonies to mother country, Portugal, both politically and

economically. As such, their territories in West Africa were considered overseas provinces and integral part of Portugal.

Actual Administration

One underlying connection of all West African Portuguese colonies was the presence of relatively large numbers of Portuguese in the colonies, especially after 1945 when there was a full-scale emigration program from Portugal, especially to Angola. The Portuguese operated a very authoritarian and centralized system of government. At the top of government was the Prime Minister. Under him were the Council of Ministers and the Overseas Ministry, which was made up of the Overseas Advisory Council, and the General Overseas Agency. Then there was the Governor General, a Secretariat and Legislative Council. All of these offices were in Portugal. There were also Governors of Districts, Administrators of *Circumscricoes*, *Chefes de posto* and at the very bottom of the governmental hierarchy, the African Chiefs.

As in the British case, the Portuguese corrupted the systems of chieftaincies. They sacked chiefs who resisted colonial rule in Guine, and replaced them with more pliant chiefs. Thus, the historical authority of chiefs and their relationships with subjects was corrupted to one of authoritarianism which reproduced the authoritarian system of government in the *Estado Novo* dictatorship (1926-74).

Real authority was held by the Portuguese council of ministers, which was controlled by the prime minister. The direction of colonial policy was determined by the overseas ministry, aided by the advisory overseas council and two subsidiary agencies. The governor-general appointed the chief official resident for the colony. The chief official of the resident for the colony had far reaching executive and legislative power. He headed the colonial bureaucracy, directed the native authority system, and was responsible for the colonies' finances.

The *Circumscricoes* and *Chefes de posto* roughly corresponded to the British provincial and district officers. They collected taxes, were judges and finance officers. West African chiefs were subordinate to the European officers with little power to act on their own. Moreover, they could be replaced at any time by a higher Portuguese power.

The political policy adopted in Guinea Bissau, São Tomé, Principe, and Cape Verdes, Portugal's West African territories was a system of *assimilado*. The *assimilado* policy held that all persons, no matter their race, would be accorded this status if they met the specific qualifications. Similar to the French policy of assimilation, the Portuguese West African had to adopt a European mode of life; speak and read Portuguese fluently; be a Christian; compete military service; and have a trade or profession. However, only a small number Portuguese West Africans became *assimilados* because of the difficulty in achieving this station.

Additionally, the Portuguese did not support education in their colonies. They built few secondary schools, and almost entirely neglected elementary education. Most of their emphasis was given to rudimentary levels of training where Portuguese West African students were taught moral principles and basic Portuguese; making it almost impossible for the Portuguese West African, even if she or he wanted to, to achieve the status of *assimilado*.

The Germans in West Africa

Administrative Policies

The Germans had two territories in West Africa—Togo and Kameroon. German colonialism was too short-lived to establish a coherent administrative policy. German African colonial experience essentially amounted to thirty years (1884-1914) and was characterized by bloody African rebellions. However, their harsh treatment resulted in intervention and direct rule by German government. The German colonialists envisioned a "New Germany" in Africa in which colonialists would be projected as members of a superior and enlightened race; while Africans were projected as inferior, indolent, and destined to be permanent subjects of Germans.

Actual Administration

The Germans had a highly centralized administration. At the top of government was the Emperor. The Emperor was assisted by the Chancellor, who was assisted by Colonial Officers**,** who supervised the administration. At the bottom were the *jumbes* or subordinate African staff. These men had been placed in the stead of recognized leadership.

European Economic and Social Policies in their West African Dominions

The cardinal principles of the European colonial economic relationship in West Africa were to: (1) stimulate the production and export of West African cash crops including palm produce, groundnuts, cotton, rubber, cocoa, coffee and timber; (2) encourage the consumption and expand the importation of European manufactured goods; (3) ensure that the West African colony's trade, both imports and exports, were conducted with the metropolitan European country concerned. The colonialists thus instituted the Colonial Pact which ensured that West African colonies must provide agricultural export products for their imperial country and buy its manufactured goods in return, even when they could get better deals elsewhere.

To facilitate this process, the colonialists therefore forced West Africans to participate in a monetized market economy. They introduced new currencies, which were tied to currencies of the metropolitan countries to replace the local currencies and barter trade. Railroads were a central element in the imposition of the colonial economic and political structures. Colonial railways did not link West African economies and production together. They did not link West African communities together either, rather they served the purpose of linking West African producers to international trade and market place; and also connecting production areas to the West African coast. Moreover, railroads meant that larger amounts of West African produced crops could be sent to coast. All equipment used to build and operate the railroads were manufactured in Europe, and brought little to no economic growth to West Africa beyond reinforcing the production of West African cash crops for the external market. What was more, thousands of West African men were forced to construct these railroads; and many died doing so.

The key to the development of colonial economies in West Africa, was the need to control labor. In the colonies, this labor was forced. There were basically two types of forced labor in Africa. The first, was peasant labor. This occurred in most parts of West Africa where agriculture was already mainstay. In East, Central, and South Africa, Africans performed migrant wage labor on European owned and managed mines and plantations.

The colonial masters also imposed taxation in West Africa. By taxing rural produce, the colonial state could force West Africans to farm cash crops. West Africans had to sell sustenance crops on the market for cash. Then use cash to pay taxes. Taxes could be imposed on land, produce, and homes (hut tax). The requirement to pay tax forced West Africans into the colonial labour market.

West African Response and Initiatives

The imposition of foreign domination on West Africa did not go unchallenged. West Africans adopted different strategies to ensure survival. Some West African people living outside the cash crop areas found that they could get away with very little contact with the Europeans. Others exploited the system for their own gain by playing on the colonial government's ignorance of specific regions' histories. Still others pursued Western education and Christianity while holding strong to their identities. West African people struggled against the breaking up of their historical states as well as any threat to their land through petitions, litigations, uprisings

Early Protest Movements

West Africans organized protest against colonialism in form of the assertion of the right to self-rule. Some of the most notable movements included: (1) The Fante Confederacy (1868-72) of the Gold Coast, which recommended British withdrawal from all of her West African colonies; (2) The Egba United Board of Management (1865) of Nigeria, which aimed to

introduce legal reforms and tolls on European lines**,** establish postal communications in Lagos; (3) The aborigines Rights Protection Society (1897) of the Gold Coast was formed to oppose government proposals to classify unoccupied land as crown land (meaning that the land belongs to government). In the 1920's colonial administration succeeded in breaking alliance by supporting chiefs against the elite; (4) The National Congress of British West Africa (1920). The Congress was formed in Accra in 1920 under the leadership of J. E. Casely-Hayford, an early nationalist, and distinguished Gold Coast lawyer. Its aims were to press for constitution and other reforms**,** demand Legislative Council in each territory with half of members made up of elected Africa. They opposed discrimination against Africans in civil service, asked for a West African university**,** and asked for stricter immigration controls to exclude "undesirable" Syrians (business elite).

J.E. Casely-Hayford, archive of Northwestern University, 2013.

The African Church Movement or Ethiopianism

In the religious sphere, the Creoles played an important role in Christianizing many parts of West Africa including, Sierra Leone, Lagos, Abeokuta, and the Niger Delta. However, they soon met with the same kind of British racial arrogance encountered by West Africans in the colonial government. The British replaced Creole archbishops and superintendents with Europeans. A European succeeded Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, and no African was consecrated to this high office again for next sixty years.

The West African response to this was to break away from European churches and form new, independent West African churches. These churches included: the African Baptists, United Native African Church, African Church, United African Methodists—all in Nigeria, the

United Native Church in Cameroon; and the William Harry Church in Ivory Coast. By 1920, there were no less than 14 churches under exclusive African control. In Fernando Po, Reverend James Johnson was leading figure of the African church movement until his death in 1917.

The Independence movement among churches demanded that control be vested in West African lay or clerical leaders. Many churches incorporated aspects of West African ideas of worship into their liturgies, showing more tolerance for West African social institutions like polygamy.

The Prophetic Church Movement also emerged during this time, propelling the establishment of at least three prominent churches in West Africa which related Christianity to current West African beliefs. These prophets offered prayers for the problems that plagued people in villages, problems which traditional diviners had previously offered assistance in form of sacrifices to various gods. The Prophet Garrick Braide movement Began in 1912, ending with imprisonment in 1916. The Prophet William Wade Harris movement began in 1912, reached its height in 1914-15, spreading his gospel in the Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Gold Coast. The Aladura (people of prayer) Movement in Western Nigeria, began during the influenza epidemic (1918-19), achieving its greatest impact during Great Revival of 1930.

The African Church and prophetic movement was represented a nationalist reaction against white domination in religious sphere, whim encouraged Africans to adopt African names at baptism, adapt songs to traditional flavors, and translate the bible and prayer books into West African languages.

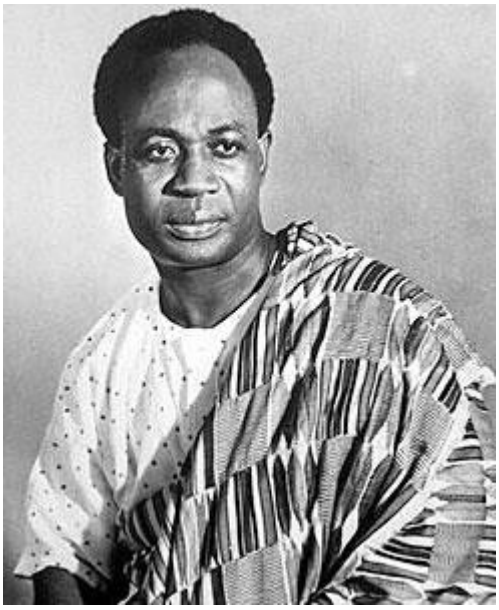
Despite the rapid spread of Christianity in West Africa, Islam was spreading even more rapidly. West Africans embraced Islam as a form of protest against colonialism because it offered a wider world view devoid of the indignity of assimilation to the colonial master's culture.

The Role of West African Newspapers

The emergence of African owned presses and newspapers played an important role in sowing the seeds of early nationalism. The West African elite, through their newspapers and associations, acted as watchdogs of the colonial government, protecting their citizens against its abuses. Isaac Wallace Johnson and Nnamdi Azikiwe, for instance, were active in the West African press; and the press served as an important element in keeping the elite united. The *Sierra Leone Weekly News* was founded in 1884, and the *Gold Coast Independent* first published in 1885. In Nigeria, the *Lagos Weekly Record* was established in 1890 by John Payne Jackson. He propagated racial and national consciousness in Nigeria during the period. All worked to spread nationalism among West Africans. The press was in fact the single most important element in the birth and development of nationalism in British West Africa.

West Africans Abroad

Many of West African's future nationalist leaders, including, Leopold Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah, and Nnamdi Azikiwe studied abroad. They obtained necessary education to fight white domination effectively. The fact that they often suffered from white racism while abroad made them far more militant. Azikiwe and Nkrumah studied at the Historically Black College, Lincoln University (United States of America).



Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972). Wikipedia. CC BY-SA 3.0.

In London, the West African Student Union was founded in 1925 by Nigerian law student, Ladipo Solanke. Solanke, one of fathers of Nigerian nationalism, toured West Africa to raise funds for union which published its own journal. Members stressed cultural nationalism and emphasized the greatness of the African past. One of members, Ghanaian J. W. de Graft-Johnson, published book called *The Vanished Glory*. Members believed that West Africans should seeks their independence in near future.

The Ethiopian Crisis, 1935

West Africans were jolted towards radicalism by Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. Ethiopia held a special significance for colonized Africans. It was an ancient Christian kingdom, an island of freedom in a colonized continent. Ethiopia was taken as symbol for

African and African Christians. Nkrumah who was in London at time later recalled, “at that time it was almost as if the whole of London had suddenly declared war on me personally.”

Effects of WWI, 1914-1918

WW1 had far reaching political and economic impact on West Africa. French West Africans were more affected than those in the British colonies. It is estimated that 211,000 Africans were recruited from Francophone Africa. Of these 163,952 fought in Europe. Official figures say that 24,762 died, but this number is assumed to be low, and did not account for Africans missing in action. Compulsory military service was introduced in 1912. From 1915, French West Africans actively resisted, as wounded and mutilated Africans began to return home. It soon became obvious that no adequate provision made for families of absent soldiers. Few Africans fought in British Africa. They took part in the conquest of Togo and Kameron. 5000 carriers were sent from Sierra Leone, and over 1000 Nigerians and Ghanaian were killed or died of disease there.

Effects of the War

1. After war, following the decisions reached in the Treaty of Versailles, German colonies were taken away and handed over to Britain and France to be administered by them on behalf of League of Nations. Thus, the British and French occupied German Togo and Cameroon. Colonies consequently converted into mandated or trusteeship territories.
2. WW1 influenced African Nationalism: African soldiers from both French and English territories fought Germans in Togo, Cameroons and Tanganyika. During those campaigns African soldiers gained some knowledge of outside world which widened outlook. They fought side by side with Europeans and discovered their strengths and weaknesses. They returned home with experience which deeply influenced desire for freedom and liberty
3. WW1 led to the arbitrary division of Togo and Cameroon between France and Britain as result of Treaty of Versailles: The division was made without reference to peoples, and this offended the latter’s sense of justice and fair play. Thus, the people developed a strong hatred for colonialism. For instance, the Ewes of Togo were split by division, and thus, organized “Ewe Union Movement” to appeal for remerging of their ethnic group.
4. WW1 allowed West Africans access to external wartime rhetoric, which had tremendous impact upon the thoughts and aspirations of literate West Africans. Woodrow Wilson (US) and Prime Minister Lloyd George of Britain made statements about principles of self-determination. West Africans believed that these principles were just as applicable to the colonies as to occupied territories of Europe.
5. WW1 led to tremendous decrease in West African import trade and revenues from customs declined.

Negro World Movements

The 1st Pan African Congress was held in Trinidad in 1900 and attended mainly by West Indians. Like early nationalistic movements, this Pan African Congress was elitist and concerned with issues such as the disabilities of black civil servants. The 2nd Pan African Congress was held in Paris in 1919 under the initiative of W. E. B. Dubois, the founder of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who hoped that the problems of black people would be included in discussions of the Peace Conference at the end of WW1. Resolutions made at this congress were moderate. Few delegates from English West Africa attended. Later congresses in 1921, 1923, and 1927 were even weaker and less influential.

W.E.B. DuBois in 1918, by Cornelius Marion (C.M.) Battey (1873–1927). Wikipedia. Public Domain.

Marcus Garvey (1887-1940)

Marcus Garvey was the founder of Universal Negro Improvement Association. A Jamaican resident in New York, he influenced West Africans profoundly. He spoke of pride in black identity and said that to be an African was a matter of joy and pride, and that black men

everywhere would gain their rights by militancy and not by supplication. Branches of the movement were established in Lagos and Gold Coast. Garvey urged black people in the New World to return to Africa and fight or what was their own. Liberia was going to be the launching point for this return. He founded a shipping company called the Black Star Line to strength links between Africa and Afro-Americans.

Youth Movements of the 1930s

In the 1930s, a series of new movements sprang up in Nigeria, the Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone. They called themselves Youth movements, not because their members were youth—they were often middle aged—but because the word, youth, was often used in West Africa to symbolize one's rejection of the past. One such movement was the Gold Coast Youth Conference (1930), organized by J. B. Danquah. It was not a political party, but a discussion center which brought together larger numbers of debating clubs to discuss issues of national importance. In 1934, the Lagos Youth Movement was founded by a group of young men led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya, Dr. J.C. Vaughan formed. In 1936, it changed its name to the Nigerian youth movement. The movement was restricted first to Lagos, then Nnamdi Azikiwe and H. O. Davies joined on their return to Nigeria in 1937 and 1938 respectively, and the movement became nationalistic in its outlook. The West African Youth League was formed in 1938. Organized by Sierra Leonean, Isaac Wallace-Johnson, it favored Marxism. Wallace-Johnson had international background. He had visited London and Moscow and had worked for communist newspaper in Hamburg. On his return to the Gold Coast, he was jailed for sedition.

Effect of WWII

WWII accelerated the growth of nationalism and shook the foundations of imperialism. The economic impact of the war on West Africa was tremendous and far reaching, resulting in (1) an increased economic importance of West Africa to the world market. Europe began to depend more on tropical Africa to supply rubber, cotton, cocoa, palm produce, and groundnuts. Thus, West African colonies increased the production of these cash crops. In Nigeria for instance, value of exports rose from 10,300,00 pounds in 1931 to 24,600,00 pounds in 1946. Imports rose from 6,800,00 pounds to 19,800,00 pounds during the same period. (2) West African workers developed grievances as a result of the colonial government introducing price control, controlling marketing of export crops, introducing wage ceilings, and pressuring for more production, Moreover, African businessmen were excluded from the import and export trade which was now reserved only for European firms. (3) The rise of trade unions emerged as a result of the rise of the cost of living without corresponding rise in wages. This provided stimulus for organizational activity among the labor class. In Nigeria the number of trade unions rose from 5 to 70, and the Nigerian Trade Union Congress (1943) became central coordinating body. Trade unions cooperated closely with nationalist leaders in pressing for the end of colonialism. (4) War resulted in speedy growth of cities as result of people flocking into cities to take up new jobs. Many West

African cities more than doubled their population. Lagos rose from 100,000 in 1939 to 230,00 in 1950. Accra rose from 70,000 in 1941 to 166,00 in 1948. Towns became overcrowded with discontented job-seeker and workers who witnessed whites living in comfortable, spacious European reservations with paved streets and beautiful lawns and gardens, while they were living in slums. The people therefore became receptive to nationalist appeal and would become the first willing recruits into militant nationalist movement. (5) War gave impetus to education in West Africa. Because of increased prosperity resulting from war time economic boom, more parents could afford to send children to school, literacy spread, and newspaper readership increased. Newspapers became a powerful tool in hands of nationalists to push for political, economic and social development. (6) In spite of more job opportunities, thousands of school-leavers remained unemployed. For the first time, West African cities developed a new class of unemployed people especially in cities. They became disgruntled and blamed colonial government and European firms for their plight. They were easily won over by nationalist agitators. (7) The most decisive factor that accelerated the growth of nationalism was however the return of ex-servicemen. Over 176,000 men from British West Africa served in British colonial army during war. After war, large numbers of survivors returned. About 100,000 returned to Nigeria, and 65,000 retuned to Ghana from the Middle East, East Africa, Burma and India. Ex-service men had seen life in more developed countries and enjoyed high living standards in army. They had seen the strength of nationalist movements in Asia and fought side by side with Europeans and seen weaknesses which exposed the myth of European racial superiority. They came home with burning desire for better life for themselves and people and urgent demand for extension to Africa of freedom for which many of them had fought and died. Many joined ranks of militant nationalists.

The Impact of European Colonialism on West Africa

Belgium's King Leopold, speaking at the 1884 Berlin West Africa conference, was attributed with saying, "I am determined to get my share of this magnificent African Cake." Tragically, as history reveals, Leopold did get a considerable share of the "magnificent African cake," which he exploited with unimaginable brutality. While European colonialism in West Africa lasted for a period of only about eighty years, the basic impetus for colonialism was to control existing West African markets, its mineral wealth, as well as to control its future economic discoveries. Portuguese dictator Marcelo Caetano put it this way, "[West African] Blacks are to be organized and enclosed in economies directed by whites." Indeed, European colonial rule took much more from West Africa than it gave it.

Colonialism was a double-edged-sword. While the European colonialists saw to the building of roads, railroads, ports, and new technology in West Africa, the infrastructure developed by them, and built with West African forced labor, was designed to exploit the natural resources of the colonies; and advance European colonial presence in West Africa. Effective

colonial government control demanded a more efficient system of communications that previously existed in precolonial West Africa. Thus, in colonial northern Nigeria, for instance, railroads were specifically built for this purpose. With the discovery of mineral deposits in areas of colonial Sierra Leone, railways were either extended or spur lines were built to facilitate the exploitation of these minerals. In addition to railroads, the colonialists also improved and expanded the road networks in their various West African territories. This they did, much like the railways, to link production areas to the coasts. These roads however had the added effect of providing the impetus for increasing urbanization in West African cities and towns.

A Section Chief in the building of the Dakar–Niger Railway, pushed by African workers, Kayes, Mali, 1904 - Robert Schléber, Kayes - Collection Jean-Pierre Vergez-Larrouy (1903).

As mentioned above, colonial investments in West Africa were concentrated, for the most part, on extractive industries and trade goods. In order to exploit these raw materials, the colonial governments had to control labor. They did this by encouraging large numbers of skilled and unskilled laborers to concentrate in given locales. This resulted in the tremendous growth of towns and cities in the vicinities of these industries.

Another reason for the growth of new towns and cities, as well as urbanization, was the need to service the new agricultural sectors imposed by the colonial governments. Seaports, in cities like Dakar, Lagos, and Abidjan, thus, registered remarkable growth rates in the fifty years of the twentieth century. The same was true of towns selected by the colonial government as sites for the headquarters of the various colonial districts and provinces.

The introduction of cash economies also had far reaching effects on urbanization in West African societies. By introducing taxation, Europeans could force Africans into the monetarized economy. Young men found it much easier to obtain European currency by working in government or civilian sector jobs in towns and cities, rather than working on the plantations, which many were forced to do. Thus, a greater mobility created by the roads and railroad networks, in addition to greater economic opportunities in certain colonial vicinities, combined to facilitate the rapid growth of West African cities. This growth in cities however had debilitating consequences on West African families. Migrant work encouraged the separation of families.

In addition, the emphasis on cash crops grown for export made West African societies dependent on European economies. Little was done by the European colonialists to develop trade between West African colonies; and as a result, many West African nations still trade more with European countries than with neighboring West African states. Moreover, the land on which the European colonialists established these cash cropping plantations was seized forcibly from West Africans, leaving households landless, and dependent on the Europeans.

While the various missionary societies proselytizing in West Africa, introduced schools of European learning in their West African dominions, as noted above, these for the most part, were far and few between. After the introduction of indirect rule, for instance, the British discouraged West Africans from acquiring higher education by denying them employment in the colonial administrations. They instead subsidized Christian missions to produce more clerks and interpreters. The French government on their part, limited the number of schools in their West African territories. Indeed, Senegal was the only colony that had secondary schools; and of these schools, the William Ponty school in Dakar was the oldest and most popular.

Nwando Achebe

9 - Problems of Independent West African States

Most West African leaders were very optimistic about their countries' future at independence. They hoped to transform their newly independent countries so that their citizens would enjoy the fruits of independence, as colonial rule had brought only few benefits to the majority of the people. And indeed, some started well. They formulated good policies for the social and economic development of their people. School enrolment, for example, increased substantially in the first decade of independence. The road network was expanded and hospitals and clinics were built. However, these impressive developments were soon overshadowed by many problems, some of which have still not been solved. We shall discuss below the major problems that have affected West African countries since the attainment of independence.

Problems of national unity and cohesion: Overview and Case Studies

West African rulers have faced serious challenges in trying to unite their people. These rulers inherited states that had been created by European colonialists which consisted of different ethnic groups, religions and interests. The colonial regimes had created national boundaries which brought peoples together who would otherwise be separated (for example, the Fante and Asante in Ghana) and separated peoples who would otherwise be together. Today, some of the Ewe live in Ghana, some in Togo and some in Benin. The Senufo are found in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. The Soso are in Sierra Leone and Guinea while the Kissi are now located in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.

Unfortunately, West Africa's leaders have not made greater efforts to unite the different communities in their countries. Thus, members of each group have tended to identify themselves more with their ethnic group rather than with their country and loyalty to the ethnic group is often more important than loyalty to the state. Sometimes political leaders even consciously promote ethnic discord in order to fulfil their selfish desires. Creating a viable nation-state (unity in diversity) from these different communities has been difficult for most West African leaders.

The political parties in most independent West African states have compounded the problem. These parties, especially those formed during the period of the nationalist struggle for independence, were mostly ethnic or regionally based organisations. Nationalist leaders had appealed mainly to their regions or ethnic groups for support. Even after independence, these parties continued to operate like regional rather than national parties. This has led to serious political problems, especially during election periods. The reason is that politics in post-independent countries centres around the distribution of resources, not on ideologies. Whatever party is in power tends to allocate huge resources to their strongholds and appoint people from their regions to strategic positions, to the detriment and annoyance of people from other regions. It undermines the unity and stability of these states and is sometimes the primary cause of internal conflicts.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's two main political parties, the All People's Congress (APC) and Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), for example, have suffered from being labelled regional parties. Although the parties have made efforts to expand their support base, the APC is still perceived as a north-western based party and SLPP as south-eastern. This problem is common in many other West African countries.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, ethnic/regional animosities resulting in part from perceived dominance of one group over the other led to a bitter civil war in 1966. Nigeria's three main ethnic groups, the Hausa/Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo, competed intensely for prominent positions in the post-colonial era. The Hausa/Fulani who lived in the north, were mainly Muslim and because of their large population, dominated Nigerian politics. The Yoruba in the southwest also had a significant Muslim population and were prominent in the economy. The Igbo in the southeast were mostly Christian and because of their superior Western education, occupied strategic positions all over Nigeria. This created resentment among especially the northerners and in January 1966, anti-Igbo sentiments erupted in the north when a group of mostly young Igbo military officers killed the Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, and established a military regime with an Igbo, General Aguiyi Ironsi, as Head of State. Bitterness mounted and many Igbo living in the northern towns were massacred. In July, a group of northern officers murdered Ironsi and installed Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon (a northerner but Christian) as Head of State. Thereafter, the military governor of the Eastern Region, Lieutenant-Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu (an Igbo), took steps to withdraw his region from the Nigerian Federation. Secession was formally declared in May 1967, when Ojukwu proclaimed the independence of the new state of Biafra.

Biafra contained almost all the oilfields which provided a substantial amount of Nigeria's wealth. Nigeria's military leaders were resolute to preserve the unity of the country and this led to a very bloody civil war from 1967-70. Ojukwu led the Biafran forces, while Gowon was in charge of the Federal army. After nearly four years of bitter fighting which resulted in many casualties on both sides, the Federal troops prevailed. Ojukwu fled to Côte d'Ivoire but later returned to Nigeria. General Gowon did not punish those who had sided with the rebel republic of Biafra. Strenuous efforts were then made to preserve Nigerian unity and it has been a shaky unity since.

Côte d'Ivoire: the 'west' vs the 'north'

Côte d'Ivoire has also suffered problems of national unity. During the long rule of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny (1960-93), he had encouraged the migration of foreign workers and labourers from the north of Côte d'Ivoire (including workers from Burkina Faso) to support

the expansion of cocoa plantations in the west of the country. This policy led to anti-immigrant feelings which were made worse as the global price of cocoa fell and the country entered a recession in the 1990s.

At the same time, Houphouët-Boigny bowed to pressure and opened up the political space. Laurent Gbagbo of the *Front populaire ivorien*–FPI (Ivoirian Popular Front) became his main rival. Gbagbo drew much of his support from groups in the cocoa producing areas. In the ensuing elections, which were characterised by vote rigging, Houphouët-Boigny won by 82 per cent. Following Houphouët-Boigny's death in 1993, Henri Konan Bédié became President. Bédié capitalised on the anti-immigrant feelings to build solid support. He introduced the idea of *Ivoirité* (Ivorianess) in order to exclude 'foreigners' from the north. He passed a law which prevented his main challenger Alassane Ouattara, who had once served as Prime Minister in Côte d'Ivoire and who was a northerner, from participating in the 1995 elections. Ouattara's exclusion from the political process marked the start of increasing political marginalisation and heightened regional tensions, which led to a military coup by General Robert Guéi in 1999.

Ouattara was again prevented from participating in the October 2000 elections. Guéi and Gbagbo contested and although it was widely thought that Gbagbo had won, Guéi refused to leave office. Massive protests ensued and eventually Guéï fled, bringing Gbagbo into power.

Gbagbo sought to consolidate his position by again marginalising the northerners. In September 2002, several northern army officers tried to overthrow his government. These officers, led by Guillaume Soro and their supporters, formed the *Forces Nouvelles de Côte d'Ivoire* (New Forces) and quickly gained control of the northern half of the country, plunging Côte d'Ivoire into a civil war. The war only came to an end in 2007 when Gbagbo and Soro signed the Ouagadougou Agreement. Soro was appointed Prime Minister.

Ouattara finally took part in the October 2010 elections against Gbagbo and defeated him. However, Gbagbo refused to accept the results and this led to violent clashes between Ouattara's supporters and those of Gbagbo. With the backing of French troops, Côte d'Ivoire's forces overpowered the Gbagbo loyalists. Gbagbo was eventually captured and thereafter, Ouattara became President. The conflict had greatly damaged Côte d'Ivoire's economy. It also led to the death of about 3000 people.

Pervasive influence of the former colonial powers

The European countries that had colonised West Africa namely Britain, France and Portugal, had grudgingly granted independence to their colonies, due to internal and external pressures. In spite of independence, these European countries and other Western nations still desired to influence in one form or the other the politics, economy and culture of their former colonies, and often in alliance with West Africa's rulers. The first Presidents of independent postcolonial nations, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Touré of Guinea (Conakry), were strongly against this practice. They wanted their countries to completely cut off the yoke of colonialism.

But this was to be achieved at a very high price. When Sekou Touré decided to reduce considerably his country's ties with France, the French practically destroyed Guinea. They damaged public infrastructure and took away to France whatever valuable property they could lay hands on. They also later refused to allo Guinea access to the common currency used across their former colonies, the CFA, which was tied in value to the French franc, as it now is to the Euro. Kwame Nkrumah offered a lot of material assistance to Guinea during that country's first few years of independence.

Nkrumah coined the term neo-colonialism to refer to the indirect political, economic and social control of African nations by their former colonial overlords. Some West African leaders tried to add political meaning to their country's independence and at the same time remove vestiges of colonialism by joining the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The NAM was formed by countries who did not want to be directly involved or connected with the intense Cold War rivalry between the post-war super powers, the Soviet Union and the United States of America.

In addition, some leaders formulated ideologies akin to socialism, which they believed would help their people. Nkrumah called his new ideology Nkrumaism. His Convention People's Party (CPP) stated that the guiding principles of Nkrumaism were: social justice, Pan-Africanism, self determination, African personality and, anti-imperialism.

In order to implement the Nkrumaism ideology, Nkrumah turned to Eastern countries in the Soviet Bloc for assistance. In this way, he became closely aligned to the Soviet Bloc. The USA did not like Nkrumah's close ties with the Soviet Bloc, because the Americans wanted West African countries and many others in Africa and elsewhere to be under the influence of the USA and its Western allies. It is believed that the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) may have played an important role in the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1996. It is significant that Nkrumah was overthrown by the Ghanaian army on 24 February 1966, when he was on a State visit to North Vietnam and China.

Neo-colonialism and economic underdevelopment

In spite of the abundant natural resources that most West African countries possess, they are still economically poor and under-developed. The living standards of the people are very low and basic social services are deplorable. The reasons for this unsatisfactory state of affairs are many and some of them will be discussed later in this chapter. However, certain people think that the roots of the major socio-economic problems facing West African countries today can be traced back to the colonial period and the influence of neo-colonialism.

During the colonial period, most West African countries concentrated on the production and marketing of one or two export (cash) crops: groundnuts in Senegal and Gambia; cocoa and palm kernels in Sierra Leone; palm oil and cocoa in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Gold Coast (Ghana); and palm oil and kernels and cotton in Nigeria. West African economies were also structured to be permanently dependent on Western nations. They were consigned the role

of primary producers for processing in the West. The terms of trade in the Western-controlled international market discriminated against African nations who were unable to earn enough to develop their economies. The World Trade Organisation (WTO), for example, draws trade rules between nations and these rules are generally more favourable to the developed countries. Obtaining better terms for West African products in the international market has been very difficult.

Also, the prices of agricultural goods have been falling in the international markets since the 1970s. For example, the fluctuating price of cocoa in the 1970s and 1980s nearly ruined the Ghanaian economy, which is heavily dependent on cocoa exports. Côte d'Ivoire, also a major cocoa exporter, experienced similar difficulties. At the same time, the cost of imported goods continued to rise when the price of primary products was falling. The mining sector has also been plagued with difficulties. Almost all the major minerals in West Africa are mined by foreign companies and these companies generally have very favourable concessions. They pay little tax to the government and there is hardly any linkage between the mining sector and other sectors of the economy.

West African countries have also been saddled with the debt burden. In their desire to provide needed services for their people and initiate capital projects, West Africa's leaders resorted to massive borrowing with high interest rates, from abroad. Nkrumah took huge loans from the World Bank, the United States and Britain for the Akosombo hydro-electric project. The costs of construction soared far beyond the estimates. The result was to cripple Ghana, which was just emerging from colonial rule, with a huge foreign debt. By 1992, Ghana's external debts stood at $30 billion. Practically every West African country has huge external and domestic debts and paying interest on these debts alone sometimes consumes an appreciable percentage of the country's revenue.

Authoritarian regimes

West African rulers have generally abandoned the high ideals they had pronounced on assuming power. All of them, without exception, promised to uphold democratic values and principles and the rule of law. Very quickly, most resorted to autocratic rule and were very intolerant of opposing political views and opinions. They saw dissent or opposition as a threat to stability and an obstacle to development. They undermined the governance structures left behind by the colonialists and some instituted one-party regimes.

Kwame Nkrumah, who had pioneered West African independence, led the way. Like many new African states, Ghana suffered from regional factionalism, and Nkrumah saw some strong economic groups like the wealthy farmers, who were regionally concentrated, as a danger to social unity. In 1964, faced with growing resentment and afraid of internal opposition, Nkrumah pushed a constitutional amendment that made Ghana a one-party state, and himself the life president. Thereafter, he became increasingly repressive and isolated himself from the common people.

In Francophone West Africa, Houphouët-Boigy of Côte d'Ivoire and Sékou Touré of Guinea installed near single-party regimes even before formal independence. By the mid-1960s almost all the Francophone countries had instituted single-party governments. In Anglophone West Africa, Sierra Leone followed Ghana in 1978. Supporters of one-party rule put forward interesting but unconvincing arguments.

1. Multi-party democracy was foreign to Africa. In precolonial Africa, they argued, people practised a single party form of government.
2. There were limited human resources in the newly-independent countries and it was necessary, therefore, for everyone to come together for rapid socio-economic and political development.

The political argument was not historically correct. There were no political parties in precolonial Africa. African kings and queens governed by consensus and there were several checks against tyrannical rule. These checks were totally absent in West Africa's one-party systems. In practice, one party became one-person rule, for the parliaments simply rubberstamped the actions of the Executive President.

Rather than promote inclusive politics, one party rule in essence fostered the politics of exclusion. It led to the marginalisation of whole groups and regions. One-partyism bred political injustice, disrupted the rule of law and corrupted principal state organs like the judiciary, military, police and the Civil Service. Under the one-party system, real or imagined enemies were eliminated by legal and extra-legal means. The system also rewarded sycophancy and punished honesty, hard work, patriotism and independent thought. One party rule thus contributed immensely to the underdevelopment of postcolonial West Africa.

The military as political rulers

Another major threat to development in West Africa has come from the military. Unlike Guinea-Bissau which fought a long war of independence against Portugal (1963-74), the armies in West Africa did not play any significant role in the liberation struggle. The colonialists had used the soldiers as instruments of suppression. They, together with the Police, often ruthlessly put down popular protests against colonial rule. Post-independence leaders generally viewed the military with some suspicion.

Post-colonial West Africa has had more than its fair share of military coups. The 1960s were called the decade of coups in the sub-region. Once coups started they became like a wild Harmattan bushfire, sweeping through the entire sub-region. The coup syndrome began in Togo in January 1963, when the army deposed and killed President Sylvanus Olympio and in October of that year, the Chief of Staff of the Dahomeyan Army Christophe Sogho overthrew President Hubert Maga in order to prevent a civil war. Then it was Upper Volta's turn. Following large-scale popular unrest in January 1966, Lieutenant-Colonel Sangoulé Lamizana deposed President Maurice Yaméogo. Nigerian army leader General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi seized power also in January 1966 and killed Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa. He

too was overthrown and killed by General Yakubu Gowon in July that same year. In Ghana, Lieutenant-General Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka and other senior army officers toppled President Nkrumah in February 1966, when he was on a state visit to China. Nkrumah sought refuge in Conakry, Guinea where his friend Sékou Touré made him honorary co-president of Guinea. Two years later in April 1968, lower-ranking military officers overthrew the National Reformation Council (NRC) junta of Sierra Leone and installed a civilian government headed by Siaka Stevens. In Mali, a young officer Lieutenant Moussa Traoré ousted the government of President Modibo Keita in November 1968. Since then, it has been one coup after the other.

Why has the military been so quick in toppling civilian governments? There are various reasons.

1. The failure of civilian governments to properly manage the affairs of state, which often results in severe political, economic and social problems for the people. Political repression including the arbitrary use of power, ethnic conflicts, economic mismanagement and corruption have sometimes been cited by the army for their intervention.
2. The ineffectiveness of the central government in the face of crisis situations, such as bitter party or inter–regional rivalry. The 1966 coup in Upper Volta led by General Lamizana is a typical example.
3. The refusal of governments to allow peaceful political change through the ballot box or through other constitutional channels.
4. When the army as an institution feels threatened by the actions of the central government. This perceived or real threat partly explains the motive for the 1997 military coup in Sierra Leone. Top army officers resented the right-sizing of the army and the high-profile role of the civil militia (especially the *Kamajors*) in the prosecution of the civil war, which began in March 1991.
5. Greed/selfishness on the part of the soldiers.

Results of military coups

1. *Little regard for the National Constitution*: As soon as a civilian government is overthrown, the military junta puts aside the Constitution, proscribes all political activities and rules by decree. This is a very undemocratic behaviour on the part of the military rulers.
2. *Human rights abuses:* Military rulers have little regard for the rights and freedoms of the individual. The arbitrary arrest, detention and killings of politicians and others connected with the ousted regime and massive destruction or looting of property are disturbing features of military rule.
3. *The fallacy of rescuing the state*: In the majority of the coups that have occurred, the military has sometimes deemed it a national and patriotic obligation to rescue the country from total collapse and restore lost national prestige. But this is not always the case. Most military regimes have turned out to be more corrupt, oppressive and self-seeking than the civilian governments they toppled.

4. *Broken promises:* Military regimes have tended to quickly forget their initial proclamations. These include cleaning up the mess the politicians left behind, improving the economic and social conditions of the people, and returning to the barracks within the shortest possible time. In the majority of cases, military leaders have converted themselves into civilian dictators through manipulation of the democratic system and flawed elections; a good example is the rise to power of Yahya Jammeh in The Gambia as an elected president, following the initial coup in 1994.

Two notable military junta leaders who attempted to save their countries from total collapse were Flight Lieutenant Jerry J Rawlings of Ghana and Colonel Thomas Sankara of Upper Volta. Rawlings staged a successful coup on 31 December 1981. His first coup attempt in 1979 had failed. The 1981 coup was staged in the wake of severe social and economic conditions in Ghana. Ruling by decree, Rawlings streamlined the economy and revived critical sectors like the transport system and the factories, which had become idle for many years. He achieved substantial economic gains, but at a considerable social price, in high unemployment, reduced medical and social services and cuts in educational expenditure, in line with the International Monetary Fund's prescriptions. These austerity measures hit especially the urban populace very hard. Students and workers protested, but Rawlings was resolute to push through his reform policies. Rawlings subsequently removed his military uniform and became a civilian politician. He formed the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in 1992, legalised political parties and organised presidential and parliamentary elections, which he won. President Rawlings retired in 2001 after serving two consecutive terms as provided for in the Ghanaian Constitution.

Thomas Sankara seized power in 1983 in a popularly-supported coup. He desired to eradicate corruption and French dominance in Upper Volta. He renamed the country Burkina Faso ("Land of Upright Men") and embarked on aggressive economic and social policies designed to make Burkina Faso self-reliant. A small but powerful class in Burkina Faso in league with outsiders, plotted Sankara's downfall. He was assassinated in a coup led by one of his close friends, Blaise Compaoré in 1987. Compaoré, who was very friendly with the French, reversed many of Sankara's policies and reforms.

Thomas Sankara (1949 - 1987) in 1987. Courtesy of Bruno Jaffré.

In general, military rule in West Africa has been disappointing. Apart from their inability to solve the political, social and economic problems the soldier-rulers set out to tackle in the first place, the behaviour of the military once in power, has not been very different from the civilian politicians they overthrew. Soldiers have been known to be more of wealth-seekers, property grabbers and bribe-takers. They have openly engaged themselves in self-enrichment activities through the barrel of the gun and through intimidation. General Sani Abacha of Nigeria was known to have embezzled millions of dollars of his country's money.

Problems of unemployment, under-employment and civil wars

All West African countries, without exception, have had serious employment problems and the youth have been the greatest victims. Between 60 and 75 per cent of the population of most West African countries consists of young people. The youth are able-bodied but unskilled, jobless and alienated. They pose grave security and political challenges because they are ready and willing to take up arms in exchange for cash, recognition, looted property and "wives". They live in appalling slum conditions in the vastly expanding cities of the sub-region and constitute potential material for mob action in times of political and economic crises.

West Africa's youths are also highly mobile and cross-border recruitment of young people for armed conflict is all too common. In the civil wars that have plagued West Africa since the last quarter of the 20th century, the youth have been the main perpetrators of violence and bloodshed. These deadly conflicts have resulted in:

1. the massive destruction of lives and property;
2. the internal displacement of people;

3. a region-wide refugee crisis, poverty and disease;
4. the proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
5. human and drug trafficking and
6. illegal exploitation of natural resources and banditry.

The causes of these wars include poverty, youth unemployment, human rights violations, bad governance and corruption, ethnic marginalisation and small arms proliferation. Two fairly recent internal deadly conflicts that have gravely impacted the overall development of their countries are the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The wars in Liberia

Liberia plunged into its first nasty civil war in 1989 with the invasion of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). The war had its origins in 1980 when Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe's ethnically-inspired bloody coup overthrew President William Tolbert's True Whig party government. The True Whig party, comprising predominantly of Americo-Liberians, had governed Liberia since independence in 1847, to the near exclusion of the other groups. The coup leader-turned-president Doe became increasingly authoritarian and corrupt. He quickly lost the support he had initially gained. Taylor, whose father was an Americo-Liberian, had held a very lucrative position in the Doe administration but was sacked in May 1983 for embezzlement. He later escaped from a prison in the USA, went to Libya and with support from Libya, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, launched a rebellion against Doe in December 1989.

Although Doe was eliminated by the leader of another rebel group, the civil war dragged on. With the active intervention of the West African peacekeeping force ECOMOG, which had been put together in the wake of the Liberian civil war, the violence abated, leading to a ceasefire and elections. Taylor won the 1997 elections and became President, but this seeming peace was short-lived as longstanding and simmering ethnic tensions, corruption, subjugation and abject poverty of the people thrust the country back into a second civil war in 1999. During the five-year war, the country was besieged by violent confrontations between Taylor's NPFL, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL).

The signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003 led to the attainment of appreciable peace and stability in Liberia. International pressure forced Charles Taylor to resign as President on 11 August 2003, as he was perceived to be the main perpetuator of the violence in his country. Taylor went on exile to Nigeria but was later apprehended and tried by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for his role in the Sierra Leone rebel war. The trial took place in The Hague (Netherlands). Taylor was found guilty and is currently serving a 50-year jail term in Britain.

Rebel war in Sierra Leone

Less than two years after the outbreak of the Liberian civil war, violent conflict erupted in neighbouring Sierra Leone in March 1991, and was led by a cashiered officer, Foday Sankoh, who desired to overthrow the APC civilian government led by Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh. Sankoh's rebellious group was called Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Sankoh received considerable military and logistics support from Charles Taylor, Libya and Burkina Faso. During the decade-long war, his fighters intermittently took control of the diamond mining regions. They sold the diamonds through Charles Taylor to buy more weapons (blood diamonds) to continue their war of annihilation. ECOMOG troops assisted the Sierra Leone army to put down the rebellion.

The Sierra Leone Army seized power on 29 April 1992 in protest against appalling conditions in the battlefield. They then set up a National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) with 26-year old Captain Valentine Strasser as Chairman. Under pressure from the international community and Sierra Leonean groups, the NPRC conducted presidential and parliamentary elections in 1996 and peacefully handed over office to a newly-elected government headed by a retired United Nations official Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP.

Despite the elections, the war dragged on. Lacking little national support but dangerously armed, the RUF resorted to committing gross human rights violations against defenceless Sierra Leoneans. After several peace agreements interspersed by another military coup from May 1997 to April 1998, the war was officially declared over in February 2002. Meanwhile, rebel leader Foday Sankoh and two of his key commanders, and civil militia and junta leaders had been apprehended and faced charges in the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Sankoh and a civil militia leader Hinga Norman, died in detention, while the other accused men were found guilty and given long prison sentences to be served in Rwanda.

The rebel conflict, arising from corruption, bad governance, social injustice, and breakdown of democratic institutions, resulted in the killing and maiming of about 50,000 people, and the wanton destruction of infrastructure and other important social services.

Other insurgencies

There have also been revolts affecting Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea Bissau and Senegal. The prolonged Niger Delta conflict in Nigeria first arose in the early 1990s over tensions between foreign oil corporations and a number of the Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups, particularly the Ogoni and Ijaw. The Niger Delta groups seemed to benefit very little from the oil economy, while their land was being polluted and their economic activities seriously disrupted by the operations of the oil companies. The conflict has led to several kidnappings of expatriates, casualties and the increased use of sophisticated weaponry by militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), thereby heightening insecurity within Nigeria and across the sub-region.

The Boko Haram insurgency which began in northern Nigeria in 2002 and which hinges upon religion and economic deprivation, has claimed many lives, displaced thousands of people

and posed security concerns in the sub-region. Ending wars and conflicts in West Africa has been very difficult, due to their complex multiple causes, multiple actors and the nature of the conflicts.

Unequal development within states and boundary disputes

One negative outcome of the artificiality and arbitrariness of the colonial divisions was that the states that were created were of different sizes with unequal natural resources and economic potentialities. Mali and Nigeria emerged as very large countries, in comparison to Gambia, Sierra Leone, Togo and Benin. Some, like Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, are landlocked and relatively poor and so economic and social progress is slow and difficult in these countries. The artificial boundaries have occasionally led to border disputes, for example, between Ghana and Togo, between Sierra Leone and Guinea (the Yenga dispute) and between Nigeria and Cameroon (in the Bakassi Peninsular) which have worsened the relations between the conflict countries.

Population explosion, diseases and drought

Uncontrolled population growth has proved to be one of the most important barriers to economic development in post-independent West Africa. It has contributed to massive migration to the urban areas. Cities like Lagos, Accra, Abidjan, Freetown, Dakar and many others have grown enormously since independence. These cities spread without planning and developed vast slums. They also lacked expanding industrial sectors able to utilise the rural migrants. Consequently, these migrants formed the urban underclass.

Another serious impediment to development in West Africa is disease. Tropical diseases like malaria and yellow fever prevail and they have seriously impacted the productive capacity of especially rural and poor people. In the 1980s, the AIDS epidemic was added to an already gloomy picture.

There is also the problem of drought in the Sahel countries, which began in the late 1960s. Drought has been caused mainly by the expansion of the Sahara Desert and human activities. Long periods of drought badly hit Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and northern Nigeria. With little or no rain sometimes for years, crops and animals perished. Drought led to famine. Many people died of malnutrition, lack of resistance to diseases and hunger. Coping with the drought situation diverted considerable portions of the already meagre resources of the drought-stricken West African countries to drought relief.

Corruption and mismanagement

Large-scale corruption and mismanagement of public funds have also been key barriers to progress and security in the West African sub-region. Corruption has thrived best in

countries where critical institutions like Parliament, the judiciary and civil society are weak, and where political patronage is standard practice. People engage in corrupt practices because of low salaries, poverty and greed. There are many types or manifestations of corruption.

Grand or political corruption

It involves higher level officials and larger sums of money. This may include kickbacks to win big public procurements or contracts, embezzlement of public funds, and companies paying thousands of dollars to government leaders or politicians to obtain business contracts. The main players of grand corruption are normally state ministers, governors, members of parliament, and even presidents.

State capture

State capture refers to a situation whereby some powerful individuals (called god fathers) support a political party so that they can influence the policies and decisions of that party (such as ministerial or ambassadorial appointments, or the award of big contracts) when it is in power.

Administrative or petty corruption

Administrative or petty corruption describes everyday low-level abuse of power that citizens and businesspeople experience within the state bureaucracy, such as demand for small bribes or gifts before certain services, which are supposed to be free, are rendered.

Effects of corruption

Corruption, whether grand or petty, is unethical and unacceptable as it affects the smooth running of society.

1. It undermines social values because people find it easier and more lucrative to engage in corruption than to seek legitimate employment.
2. It limits economic growth because corruption reduces the amount of public resources and impedes the efficient use of government revenue and development assistance funds.
3. It discourages private investment.
4. Corruption increases the costs of doing business and wastes resources. It also results in poor service delivery.

5. Corruption deepens poverty and makes it difficult for ordinary people to get ahead as the result of their own efforts. Corruption affects the poor badly, who not only suffer from the lack of services and efficient government, but who are also powerless to resist the demands of corrupt officials.
6. It perverts the cause of justice. Corruption in the police and the judiciary compromises the rule of law.
7. Corruption endangers the security of the state as corrupt border guards allow weapons and other dangerous goods to pass freely.

In the 1970s and 1980s especially, West African countries were forced to take huge loans from lending institutions like the IMF, in the face of severe economic and social conditions in their countries. The IMF was convinced at the time that economic and social progress in West Africa was slow because its leaders maintained a huge and unproductive workforce, wasted money on uneconomic projects and poorly managed their economies. A necessary condition for receiving IMF loans was for each recipient country to take concrete steps to right-size its work force, prudently manage the economy and drastically cut down on social expenditure. These reforms were called Structural Adjustment. One negative effect of reducing social expenditure was that the provision of social services like schools and hospitals declined massively, thereby negatively impacting the living standards of the people.

Conclusion

Post-colonial West African countries have made considerable progress since independence. They have improved social services and expanded the infrastructure considerably. However, most countries in the sub-region have not made as much progress as was expected at independence. There are still huge problems and until West Africa's leaders in concert with their citizens take strong measures to solve these problems, West Africa will find it difficult to catch up with the rest of the world.

Joe Alie

10 - West Africa and International Organizations

Since the end of the Second World the nations of the world have worked together to ensure that the catastrophe that this war brought to humankind is never repeated. It was out of such a context that international bodies such as the United Nations Organization (UN) were created to foster peace and stability in the world. The UN's mandate and structure has since the early 1960s also spawned similar associations in Africa including the continental Organisation of African Unity (OAU), its successor Africa Union (AU), and half a dozen other sub-regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its peace keeping arms, the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

It's also important to recognize other kinds of international organizations and the relationship of West Africa to them. These include big NGOs such as Oxfam and MSF, and also private foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. All these organisations together relate in different ways to West Africa's relationships to the world.

West Africa and the UN

The UN Charter which sets out the role, structure and vision of the body came into force in October 1945. The UN set out to 'maintain international peace and security'; 'develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples'; 'achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character' and be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends'. These are ideals which every member country has to abide by in theory and practice.

The links between the UN and West Africa started with Liberia's entry as a full member in November 1945. Indeed, in many ways Liberia can proudly regard itself as one of the founding members of the UN as it was the only African country at the time which was fully independent and sovereign. In 1957, Ghana was admitted into the UN few months after she gained her independence from Britain. Guinea-Conakry joined soon after she threw out the French colonial rulers in October 1958. Nigeria joined the UN in 1960, Sierra Leone in 1961 and Gambia in 1965.

Yet, West African countries soon made their mark on the UN in various ways. In 1960 for example, Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah made a poignant and highly praised speech at the UN General Assembly at which he stated clearly his wish for Africa to be treated as an equal partner in the comity of nations, suggesting that 'a permanent seat should be created for Africa on the Security Council in view not only of the growing number of African members of the United Nations, but also of the increasing importance of the African continent in world affairs'. Nkrumah was also instrumental in the UN sending a peace keeping force into the Congo in the summer of 1960 to help put an end to a secessionist movement in Katanga (southern DRC, rich in copper) instigated by the ex-colonial power

Belgium. Ghana, Guinea, Liberia were among the countries which contributed forces to that peace keeping force.

West African countries continued to contribute to the development of the UN in other ways such as diplomacy. Ghanaian diplomat Dr. Robert Gardiner was assistant UN Secretary General for many years; while Sierra Leonean diplomat and scholar Dr. Davdison Nicol also occupied such post in the 1960s. In 1964, Ghana's Alex Quayson Sackey became the first African to be elected President (chair) of the UN General Assembly and won much praise for the efficiency and decorum he brought to this apex body of the organization.

Other West African diplomats such as Ms. Angie Brooks (Liberia); Amara Essy (Ivory Coast), Joseph Garba (Nigeria) also had the singular honour of being elected president of the 25 member UN Security Council. To crown the achievements of West Africans in the UN, Dr Kofi Annan from Ghana was elected UN Secretary General in 1996 and served two full terms.

Angie Brooks (1928-2007). First African female President of the United Nations General Assembly. https://www.un.org/ga/55/president/bio24.htm

West African countries also benefit from the UN through the multilateral support offered by UN bodies such as United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization(UNESCO), especially for support in teacher training and cultural activities; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in seed variety improvement and irrigation; and the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) which supports child care activities.

West Africa and the OAU/AU

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed in May 1963 by the independent African countries to serve as a platform where African states could enhance unity and cooperation, stand together to remove the vestiges of colonialism in the continent and to end apartheid (racial segregation) rule in South Africa, minority rule in then Rhodesia, and Portuguese colonial rule, which continued in its colonies until 1974. These were noble objectives and at the time also very appropriate and timely because the newly independent states were drifting apart into numerous power blocks which threatened to bring disunity among them.

For example, at independence in the 1960s the continent was divided into political blocs namely the:

Monrovia group: Liberia, Nigeria, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Ethiopia, Senegal

Casablanca group: Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Morocco, Egypt, Libya,

Brazzaville group: Congo (Brazzaville), Ivory Coast, Senegal, Mauritania, Upper Volta, Niger, Dahomey (Benin), Chad, Gabon, the Central African Republic, Cameroun and Madagascar.

Each of these groupings pulled in different directions and their rulers were not hesitant to pour vitriol on one another in public, including at the UN General Assembly.

The Congo conflict of September 1960 to 1965; Nigerian Independence in 1960 which led to the start of the unhealthy Ghana-Nigeria rivalry for regional dominance, and the Mauritania-Morocco border dispute of 1960, were some of the factors for this fissure. Neo-colonial intrigues were of course also at full play as the ex-colonial masters sought to exert overt control over their former colonies.

Indeed by October 1960, all of independent Africa was divided into these blocs. There was a great risk of further Balkanization of the continent instead of unity as espoused by the Pan African spirit sowed a few years earlier. Add to this cleavage collapse of the Mali Federation in 1960, which brought together Senegal and Mali in short-lived unity, and the despair mounted among Pan Africanists of Africa ever uniting.

The political blocs persisted and of course pleased the detractors, mainly former colonial masters, who revelled in the looming prospect of a divided and weakened Africa unable to take its proper place as a powerful counter force to neo-colonialism and imperialism. For the spirit of Pan-Africanism to be restored, these blocs had to be merged into one super continental organisation dedicated to building a single African voice.

Hope was restored albeit gradually. In 1961 independent African countries met with other emerging Third World countries in Yugoslavia to form the Non Aligned Movement, a strong body which sought to clear away from either the western or eastern blocs involved in the Cold War. The new organization became a meeting point for all the three main African blocs, and helped nudge African states to form a united front, especially against colonialism and apartheid.

Other factors why African leaders decided to end the bloc system was the spate of foreign inspired coups against newly independent African states, the rise and strengthening of apartheid in South Africa, and the emergence of anti-colonial wars in Portuguese colonies. The rise of the Civil Rights movement in the USA and diplomatic efforts of Emperor Haile Sellasie of Ethiopia also helped to coalesce African leaders into one group called the OAU formed on May 25 1963.

A second achievement of the Pan African spirit, aside ending colonial rule on the continent, is therefore the establishment of the OAU. Soon the OAU became the single most important vanguard towards realising the aims and aspirations of the Pan African project. The OAU soon established a Liberation Committee and Fund which sought to assist liberation movement to remove all forms of colonial rule in Africa. Indeed, by 1975 all of Africa except South Africa,Namibia and Zimbabwe was free of foreign rule. The OAU also united Africans in the fight against apartheid in South Africa by requiring its member states to have nothing to do with South Africa and insisting on economic and cultural boycott of the apartheid state, in addition to the assistance it gives to the ANC and other anti apartheid forces through the Liberation Fund. The release of Mandela in 1990 and the end of White minority rule in 1994 were indeed the apotheosis of OAU success.

But the OAU was unable to achieve its prime objective of forging unity leading to the proverbial United States of Africa which is why in 2000, African leaders met in Sirte Libya to re-orient the OAU into a new body called the African Union (AU) which seeks to work towards achieving continental unity. Now that Africa did not have the odious apartheid regime or colonialism to worry about in the continent, it was deemed timely to move faster towards unity. This is why the AU has a Pan-African Parliament based in Cape Town, South Africa, a Peace and Security Council and a Human Rights Commission among other organs. These organs are tasked with the formulation of laws, maintenance of peace and stability and ensuring the protection of basic human rights on the continent. Various West African countries such as Gambia (2006), Nigeria (2003) have hosted the AU twice a year summits of heads of state. Alpha Omar Konare of Mali and Amara Essy of Ivory Coast had served as Chairpersons of the AU secretariat. Presidents Alpha Conde of Guinea (2017-2018); John Kufour of Ghana (2006-2007), and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria (2003-2004) had served a chairman of the AU Assembly of Heads of State.

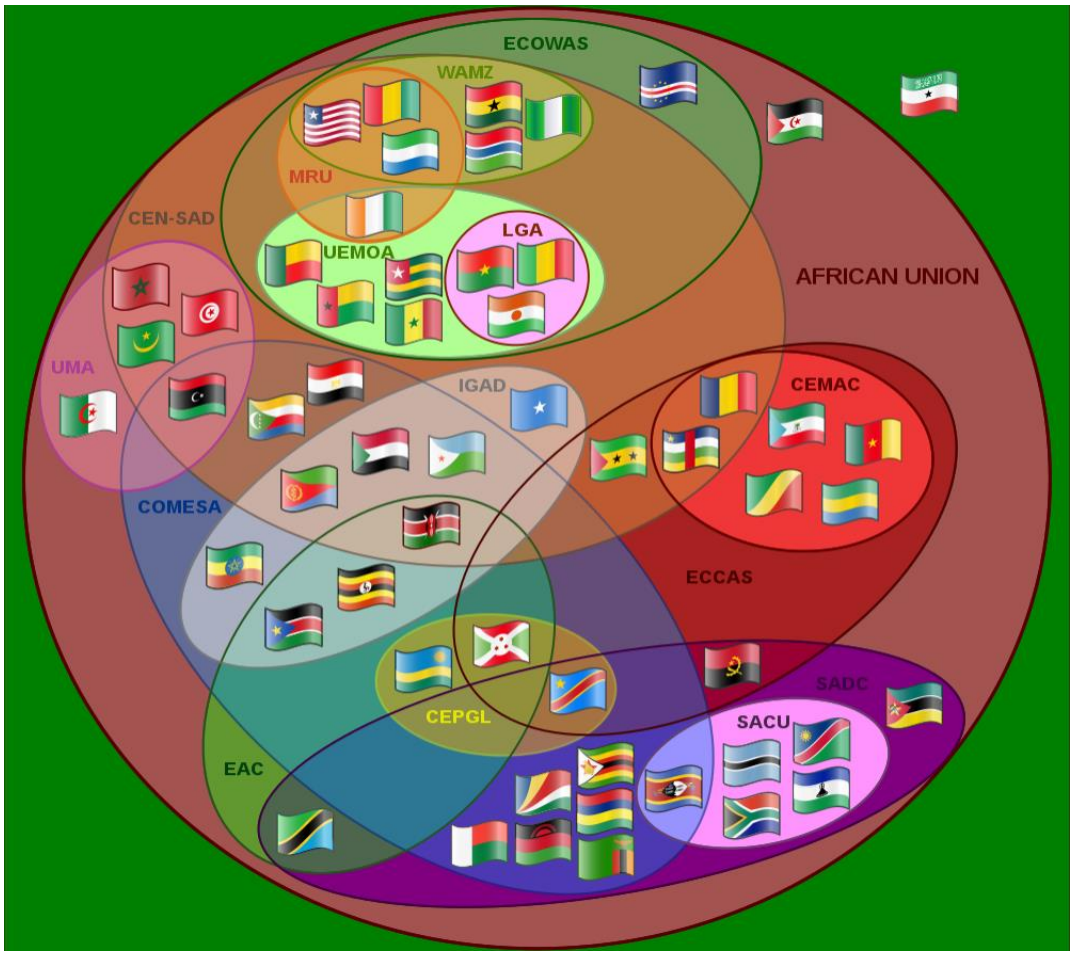
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

In May 1975, West African leaders under the chairmanship of President Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria met in Lagos to create a sub-regional economic and political organization which became known as ECOWAS. As the names suggests, this body was meant to serve as a catalyst to fast economic and monetary cooperation among the 15 states in West Africa such as free movement of goods and people. There were at the time divisions based on colonial history, since the French colonies had bequeathed a standard currency (the CFA) to their colonies, except for Guinea-Conakry.

ECOWAS therefore, started with its stated mission to promote economic integration across the region. Another objective of ECOWAS is to foster 'collective self-sufficiency for its member states by creating a single large trading bloc by building a full economic and trading union'.

Visas were abolished for citizens visiting ECOWAS member states and trade barriers were removed between member states. However, the outbreak of the civil war in Liberia in 1989, compelled ECOWAS to expand its horizons beyond mere economic integration to peace keeping and the promotion of democracy and rule of law in member states.

Consequently, in 1990 at its summit in Banjul, The Gambia, ECOWAS leaders agreed to form a peace keeping force called Ecowas Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to help restore peace to Liberia. The success of ECOMOG in bringing about a ceasefire and restoration of democracy in Liberia encouraged ECOWAS leaders to retain ECOMOG as a permanent component of the organization and has since then intervened militarily to restore democracy in Sierra Leone (1998), Ivory Coast (2003), Guinea-Bissau(2012) and The Gambia(2017). ECOWAS has also created a Parliament, a Community Court of Justice and has declared zero tolerance for military coups and similar illegal seizures of power in order to boost the region's (once the hotbed of army coups) democratic credentials.



Euler diagram showing the relationships between various multinational African entities (the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the East African Community

(EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Wikipedia. GNU Lesser General Public License.

Commonwealth and West Africa

The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone belong to the Commonwealth, the loose association of former British colonies which today boasts 52 member states. All members have an equal say – regardless of size or economic stature. This ensures even the smallest member countries have a voice in shaping the Commonwealth. All members subscribe to the Commonwealth's values and principles outlined in The Commonwealth Charter.

The core principles of the Charter are the respect for human rights, democratic values and the rule of law. Member states must be seen to be abiding by the spirit and letter of the Charter to retain their membership. Indeed, what unites Commonwealth member states besides the use of English language are these core values.

Leaders of member countries shape Commonwealth policies and priorities. Every two years, they meet to discuss issues affecting the Commonwealth and the wider world at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Although Queen Elizabeth of England is head of the Commonwealth, this is rather a symbolic position than anything else. The Commonwealth Secretariat in London, led by a Secretary General, runs the daily affairs of the organization. A Nigerian diplomat Chief Emeka Anyouku was Secretary General from 1990-2000.

President Yahya Jammeh unilaterally withdrew The Gambia from the Commonwealth in October 2013. However, newly elected president Adama Barrow has pledged to return the country to the organisation in mid 2018. Ghanaian and Nigerian athletes have performed with distinction in the Commonwealth Games held every four years, while writers such as Ben Okri and the novelist Helon Habila (both from Nigeria) and the Sierra Leone poet Syl Cheney Coker have won the prestigious Commonwealth Writers Prize.

Non-Aligned Movement and West Africa

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. As of 2012, the movement has 120 members, making it the second biggest international grouping apart from the UN. All African countries, except South Sudan, belong to the organization. Founded in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1961, Presidents Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Toure of Guinea were among the founders of the organization which seeks to ensure 'the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries'.

The Movement was largely a product of the Cold War which pitted Soviet Communist bloc against the West. Members of the Movement claimed to be neutral in this US-Soviet Union struggle for domination and hegemony.

The Movement supported members in their 'struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony as well as against great power and bloc politics.'

The demise of the Cold War and the end of apartheid made the Movement to re-orient its position and now concentrates on issues such as reform of the UN Security Council, sustainable development, debt relief for poor countries and cultural rights.

Organization of Islamic Conference/Cooperation (OIC)

The Organization of Islamic Conference was formed in 1969 following the burning of the Al-Asqa mosque, (the second most venerated mosque in Islam), in Jerusalem, Israel occupied Palestine by a deranged militant. The fire caused so much anger in the Muslim world that the grand Imam of Jerusalem called for an emergency meeting of Muslim heads of state to discuss the incident. This gathering of heads of state from mainly Arab speaking countries was birth of the OIC. Today it has 57 members including The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. One key requirement for membership is that 30 per cent of the country's population must profess to Islam as a religion. Its headquarters are in Jeddah, Saudia Arabia. The organisation sees itself as "the collective voice of the Muslim World" and works to "safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony'. The OIC aims to preserve Islamic social and economic values; promote solidarity amongst member states; and uphold international peace and security. It also works in advancing education, particularly in the fields of science and technology through its arm called Islamic Science, Education, Cultural Organization (ISESCO).

Unlike the UN or the Commonwealth, OIC does not promote issues of democracy and human rights in its member's states. This is why it usually comes under attack from human rights organizations who accuse it of shielding its members such as Iran and Saudi Arabia who have very poor human rights records, from critical appraisal. But the OIC still mobilizes international opinion against the Israeli atrocities against the Palestinians. West African countries like Senegal have played key roles in the OIC. In 2008, Dakar, hosted the OIC summit; during the Iran-Iraq war from 1980-1988, Gambian president Sir Dawda Jawara was chairman of the OIC peace mission tasked with bringing peace between the two neighbouring OIC members. The OIC was renamed Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 2011. In 2019, The Gambia will be hosting the OIC summit.

NGOs: The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Many international NGOs are now present in West Africa, working alongside the established and very effective local NGOs. Their role is contested, as in some cases they have intervened

directly to fund political campaigns (as was the case recently with Oxfam in Senegal). In other cases, they can have a role in health emergencies, as has been the case with the Ebola epidemic of 2014.

Private foundations are also involved. One example is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Also called the Gates Foundation, it is a private humanitarian foundation founded by computer mogul and billionaire Bill Gates and his wife Melinda in 2000. The couple have used a significant part of their wealth to respond to urgent international health and social crises such as malaria control, Aids prevention and polio vaccination. The foundation also has a strong objective of fighting poverty and improving girls' access to education.

Through its flagship support programme called the Global Fund Against Tuberculosis Aids and Malaria(GFATM) West African countries have been able to reduced by half malaria and Aids infection in their countries. Nigeria recently received US dollars 76 million from the foundation to pay for anti-polio vaccination campaigns in the North of the country where the diseases remains prevalent.

Conclusion

While membership of these organizations continue to benefit countries in West Africa, lack of funding hampers the smooth operations of bodies like the UN and the AU. Another hindrance facing the smooth running of these organizations is their domination by big powers as evident in the Veto power of the five Permanent members of the UN Security Council. Moreover, increasingly these organization are being criticized for being bureaucratic and wasteful and for their inability to remain relevant to pressing issues of today such as religious radicalism, youth unemployment and the spread of diseases such as Ebola.

Hassoum Ceesay

11 - Women and Authority in West African History

Authority is the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience. This chapter explores the political authority of West Africa women and the spiritual female principle in the precolonial and colonial eras. A *longue durée* perspective on gender relations in precolonial West Africa illuminates a history of gender parity and, at times, women's authority over men. This history has been obscured by Western patriarchal ideologies—which imagined West African women as "beasts of burden," women who were sold to the highest bidder for the productive and reproductive labor; in short, they imagined a West African woman that never was—and more recent historical processes, particularly the integration of West African societies into broader international mercantile networks and the ensuing establishment of formal colonial rule.

The starting premise of this chapter, therefore, is that during these precolonial times, West African women as a whole were never, as some scholars have argued, subjected to patriarchal forces that subjugated and subordinated them to men. Furthermore, West African women were not passive, but active participants in the making of their own histories. They played significant roles in their societies' religious, political, social, and economic processes; exhibiting control over key aspects therein. Indeed, West African women and the spiritual female principle, during the long precolonial period, had the power and right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience; in short, they had authority. Female political leaders were as common as male rulers; and women, and the female political principle, were central to the seamless functioning of their societies. This right, however, would be contested and tested during the colonial period, resulting in the systematic wrenching away of that power—the removal of women and the female spiritual principle from the avenues of power and authority that they had previously occupied. West African women and the female spiritual principle, did not however, take this sitting down. They employed, and evolved their precolonial strategies of enforcing obedience, i.e. precolonial strategies of resistance, into new strategies for fighting for their rights.

The West African World View

In order to appreciate the ways in which West African women wield authority, one must first understand how West Africans conceptualize their worlds, and what it means to exhibit power and authority therein. West African peoples identify two worlds—the human or physical/visible world, and the non-human or spiritual/invisible world. These worlds are not separate; but like two half circles, or two halves of a kolanut, when connected, make up one continuous, complete, and whole West African world. Therefore, one cannot understand the West African world, nor appreciate West African history by focusing exclusively on the human physical realm. To do this would be only to tell one half of West African history. Likewise, one cannot understand, nor appreciate, West African women's or gender history by focusing exclusively on the physical realm.

Indeed, West African cosmological structures—which operate within a cyclical movement of time or a continuum—demand that we engage with them in order to address the totality of West African experience. Thus, any informed study about female political authority in West Africa, must necessarily engage the female political spiritual principle—those unseen forces that are constructed by West Africans as female, such as goddesses, medicines, masked spirits, oracles; as well as women, (read: human beings), who have been endowed with spiritual idiosyncrasies to interpret this unseen spiritual world; and whose authority is personified in the work of priestesses, diviners, spirit mediums, healers, and prophetesses. It must consider the multiplicity of female manifestations in both worlds.

As mentioned earlier, West African people identify two worlds, the human or physical/visible world, which is made up of the heavens, earth, and waters; and the non-human or spiritual/invisible world. The non-human world is the world which we cannot see. These two worlds are not separate, but connected, and make up one continuous, complete and whole West Africa world. The West African world is cyclical, or never- ending. This explains the West African belief in the never-ending cycle of life and in reincarnation. They believe that one is born, grows old, dies, and then is reborn.

The visible world is a world of human beings, of natural forces and phenomena. The invisible world is a world of divine beings, of good and bad spirits, and departed ancestors. The visible and invisible worlds commune and interact with each other.

West Africans believe that there are spirits all around them. These spirits are too many for one to even know. Therefore, West Africans have mediums (diviners, priests, priestesses) to help explain the universe. These are special human beings who are endowed with spiritual idiosyncrasies.

The spiritual and human worlds are hierarchical. At the zenith of the spiritual world is God. God is neither male nor female. God is a combination and balance of male and female forces. Many West African peoples have different names for God. The Asante and Fanti of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, call God, *Nyame*. The Bambara of Mali, call God, *Jalang*; the Dogon of Burkina Faso and Mali, call the Great God, *Amma*. The Edo of Nigeria, call God, *Osa*. The Ewe of Benin, Ghana, and Togo, call God, *Mawu*. Among the Fon of Benin, God is called, *Mawu-Lisa.* The Ibibio of Nigeria, call God, *Abassi* and *Chuku.* The Igbo of Nigeria, call God, *Chukwu, Chineke,* and *Olisa bi n'igwé.* The Kpelle of Liberia, call God, *Yala*. The Mossi of Burkina Faso, call God, *Winnam*. The Nupe of Nigeria, call God, *Soko* and *Waqa*. The Vai of Liberia, call God, *Kamba*; and the Yoruba of Nigeria call God, *Olodumare, Olorun,* or *Olofin-Orun.*

Alusi Ifejioku - The balance of femininity and masculinity of deities and shrines. Photograph by Daderot. Wikipedia. CC0.

God is too great to behold and therefore is assisted by a pantheon of more accessible lesser gods and goddesses. These gods and goddesses are autonomous, yet interdependent. They are personifications of natural phenomena. Thus, West Africans have goddesses of the lands, gods of lightning and thunder; and, goddesses of the streams and rivers. The Yoruba goddess of the waters and love is *oshun*. The Igbo goddess of the lands is *ani,* and the Fon goddesses of fertility and harvests is *legba.*

Moreover, the West African world view is reflective of a balance of male and female principles, meaning that when there is a male god, that male god is served by a female priestess. Likewise, when there is a female goddess, a male priest serves the goddess.

Underneath the gods and goddess are the oracles. Oracles in West Africa can be both male and female. They are forces that explain the past and predict the future. *Ibiniukpabi* also known as the Arochukwu Long Juju by the British was an oracle in whose power was felt throughout the Nigerian Niger Delta region. And so powerful was she that the British ordered a series of patrols to attempt to destroy her.

Ancestors are the dead, who have come back to life. They represent the never-ending cycle of life. When West Africans pour libation, they do so to invite their ancestors to be present during important times. In many West African nations, ancestors assume the physical form of masquerades or masked spirits.

The human West African world is essentially made up of two types of societies—centralized and small-scale societies. Kings and queens (queen mothers) rule over centralized societies; and male and female elders rule over small scale societies. In West Africa men and women take titles to demonstrate their achievement. Warriors in West Africa can be both male and female, including the Amazons warriors from ancient Dahomey kingdom. The work ethic is extremely important in West Africa. All able-bodied men and women work; and as such, there are no stay-at-home West African mothers. Those able-bodied men and women who choose not work in West Africa are considered useless people because they are not contributing to society. So disregarded are they that they feature at the very bottom of societal hierarchy; even more disregarded than West African slaves.

Politics in West Africa: The Precolonial Era

In West Africa, religion and politics have always been interconnected. This is reflected in the fact that most West African rulers—kings, queens, and chiefs—have ruled by divine right. Many are able to trace their ancestry back, through oral histories, to a semi-divine figure. The Nigerian Yoruba for instance believe that Oduduwa began life as a deity and then became the first King, or *Ooni* of Ife.

This section investigates the central and evolving place of West African women, as well as the female spiritual principle in precolonial politics by exploring the complexities of female political action in precolonial West Africa. It does this by dividing male and female politicking in precolonial West Africa into two broad analytical categories, namely, the human political constituency, and spiritual political constituency. The human political constituency is further divided into two complementary categories: female government and male government. Likewise, as discussed above, the spiritual political constituency is also divided into two: female government and male government.

Leadership and power were not alien to West Africa women in pre-colonial society. Their position was complementary, rather than subordinate, to that of men. Political power and authority was divided between West African men and women in what has been described as a dual-sex political system in which each sex managed and controlled their own affairs.

West African societies recognize two political constituencies, the spiritual and the human. The spiritual political constituency in West Africa consists of divinities, male and female functionaries who derived political power from an association with spiritual world. The human political constituency in West Africa is made up of executives who achieve political potential as human actors in physical realm.

Female Power in the Spiritual Political Constituency: Case Study of the Igbo of Nigeria

The female spiritual political constituency in West Africa of medicines, goddesses, priestesses, masked spirits or masquerades, and diviners figured as political heads in Igbo communities. Female masked spirits featured prominently as judicial courts and judges of

moral conduct. They were the dead who had come back to life in the life of the community. For instance, among the eastern Nigerian Igbo, the female night masquerade, *Abere*, came out only at night and was said to carry all good luck and curses in her market pan. At the dead of night, she moved about acting as a night guard. Her presence was detected by a myriad of gruesome sounds—disagreeable music, screams, screeches and curses—that accompanied her wherever she went. Abere often sang an awe-inspiring song that charged Obukpa citizenry to behave themselves for—"Abere kills the husband, takes the wife captive and also takes captive the man who marries the woman whom she has taken captive." She also visited homesteads and openly disclosed and lampooned the nefarious activities of particular community members. No secret was safe from Abere. In the precolonial era Abere operated as an integral part of the legal system and actively functioned as an agent of social control. She had the power and authority to order humans without challenge and her decrees and punishments were uncontestable. She was a strict disciplinarian who handed down tough sentences and visited anyone whose activities were considered a threat to community wholeness with sickness—chronic sores and mental illness—and if necessary, death. Abere also functioned as a community court, pronouncing judgments in cases brought before her and collecting retributions from offenders. As an embodiment of a dead woman, Abere particularly promoted and protected women's industry (marketing and trade especially), and men were said to fear her pronouncements.

Female Power in the Human Political Constituency: Queen Mothers in the Government and Politics of Asanteland, Ghana

Government and politics in Asanteland was organized along a complimentary basis between the sexes. Some scholars have called this a dual-sex political system. Therefore, the Asante, had male and female government. Queen mothers were women co-rulers of Asanteland. They derived their power from the matrilineal nature of social organization. The Asante have a saying that "it is woman who gave birth to a man, it is a woman who gave birth to a chief." Queen mothers determined succession, inheritance, rights, obligations and citizenship.

Governmental Structure

At the very top of the centralized government were the *Asantehemma* or queen mother, and *Asantehene* or king. Under these leaders were the queen mothers and kings of the paramounts, the female, *Ohemaa* and the male, *Omanhene*. The *Ohemaa* was the co-ruler who had joint responsibility with the male chief in all affairs of the state. Under the divisional areas are the towns, which are governed by their own queen mother called *Oba Panin*, and male chief *Odikro*. Under the towns are the eight clans of Asanteland, which are governed by sub female chiefs called, *Abusuapanyin*.

Responsibilities and Obligations of the Queen Mothers

Asante Queen Mothers exercised authority in many domains. The most important duty however was her responsibilities with regards to the king. First and foremost, the Asante Queen Mother elects the king. She is the royal genealogist who determines the legitimacy of all claimants to the vacant stool. When a king's stool becomes vacant, the *Asantehemma* nominates a candidate for the Golden Stool. She has three chances to nominate a candidate who must be approved by the traditional council.

Asante Queen mother's tool. The Children's Museum of Indianapolis. Wikipedia. CC BY-SA 3.0.

The Queen Mother guides and advises the king, in all matters of state, tradition and religion. She ensures that taboos are not breached, and she is the only one who has the right to criticize and rebuke the King in public. She is a member of the governing council or the assembly of state; and the queen mother's presence is required whenever important matters of state are to be decided.

The Queen Mother also had judicial responsibilities. She has her own separate court in her palace where she was assisted by female counselors and functionaries. She hears all judicial cases involving the sacred oaths of the state and has independent jurisdiction over all domestic matters affecting women and members of the royal family. In certain cases, male litigants could apply to have their civil cases transferred from king's court to the queen mother's court. If she accepts them, then her judgment is final.

As Queen Mother, she is in charge of female governance, and brought women together to, for instance, clean the village. She performed important rituals for the community and was

present during important ceremonies like funerals. It was the Queen Mother who performed all initiation rites; and all young women had to be brought to the queen mother once they started menstruating. Unlike most women, the Queen Mother married has right to have affairs with men in the kingdom.

The Iyalode in Yoruba (Nigeria) Politics

The *Iyalode*, like the male chiefs of Yorubaland, was a chief in her own right. She had her own special insignia of office which consisted of a necklace of special beads, wide brimmed straw hats, and a shawl. The *Iyalode* had her own personal servants, special drummers, and bell ringers to call the women of the kingdom to attention.

The *Iyalode* title was all embracing. She was given jurisdiction over all women. She was given the title *Eiyelobinrin,* "mother of all women." The *Iyadole* was the chosen representative of all women. Her position was achieved, not inherited.

The *Iyalode* office was an elective office that had to have stamp of popular approval. The most important qualification was the *Iyalode'*s proven ability as leader to articulate the feelings of the women of the kingdom. She controlled vast economic resources and was popular. Once appointed, the *Iyalode* became not only voice of women in government, but also, the queen who coordinated their activities.

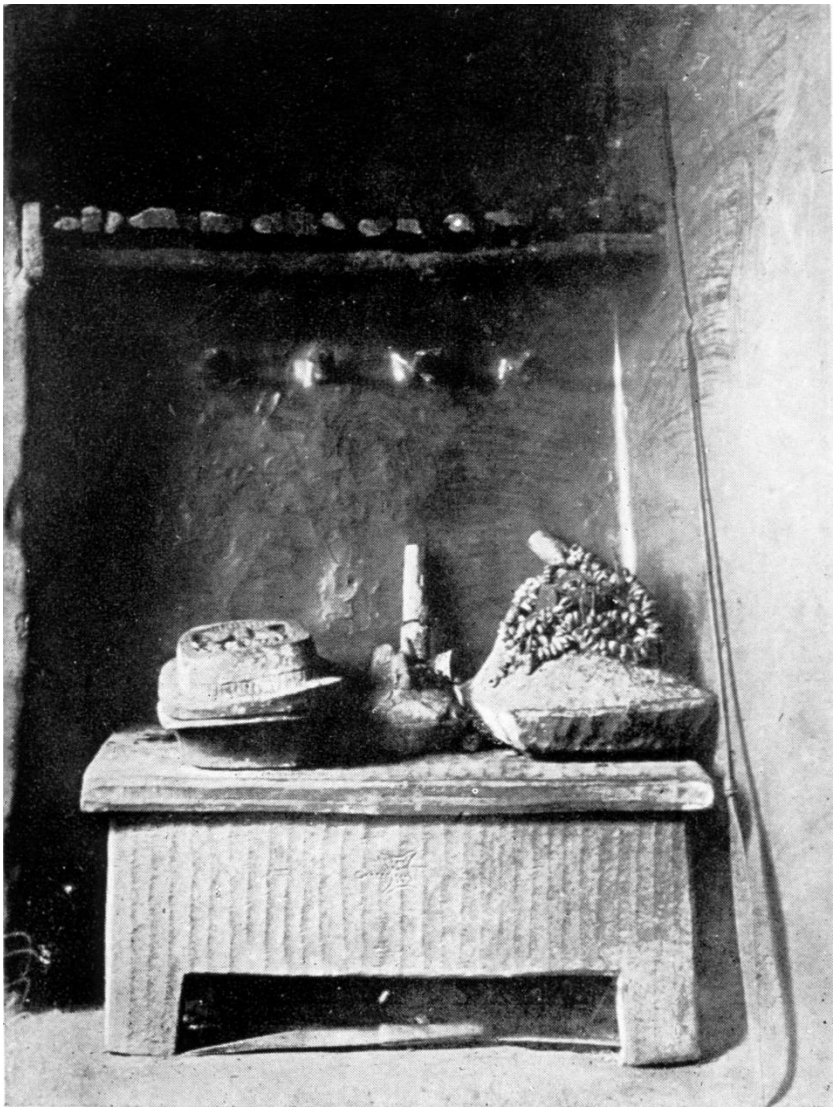
The *Iyalode* settled quarrels in court, and met with women to determine what women's stand should be on such questions as the declaration of war, opening of new markets, and the administration of women at local levels.

As spokeswoman of the women, the *Iyalode* was given access to all positions of power and authority within the State. She exercised legislative, judicial, and executive powers with male chiefs in their council.

She had her own council of subordinate female chiefs who exercised jurisdiction over all matters that pertained to women. Her council of women chiefs were involved in the settlement of disputes between women, cleanliness of the markets, and other women's concerns. The *Iyalode* also controlled the markets in the kingdom. She was the honorary president-general for all women's societies in town. A great deal of what the *Iyalode* could achieve depended on the qualities of the *Iyalode*, her personality, dynamism, and political astuteness.

Igbo Women in Community Politics

There were two arms of government in the human political constituency in Igboland, the male and the female. Female government in Igboland was further divided into two arms, the *otu umuada* and the *otu iyomdi.*



Igbo ancestral shrine Onica Olona, Northcote Whitridge Thomas (1914), Anthropological report on the Ibo-speaking peoples of Nigeria, Part IV. Harrison and Sons. Wikipedia. Public domain.

The *otu umuada*

The *umuada* included all married, unmarried, divorced, and widowed daughters of the lineage or community. Their meetings were held on rotational basis between the communities in which they married. The result was the creation of communication networks of women throughout Igboland. These networks made solidarity between women from vast areas possible during the Women's War of 1929 or *Ogu Umunwanyi*.

The duties of the *otu umuada* were many:

1. They served as political pressure groups in their natal villages.
2. They created unifying influences between their natal lineages and marital lineages.
3. They settled disputes, intra lineage disputes and disputes between natal villages and villages in which they were married.

4. They performed rites, rituals, and sacrifices for the community, including the final absolution rites for new brides. On the day in question, the bride-to-be would confess all her wrong doings to the *otu umuada* who would then purify her.
5. The *otu umuada* also performed purification rituals for lineage houses and other areas that were considered polluted, so that the gods or goddesses would not leash out their wrath on the people, but instead, provide them with good health, bounty and offspring.
6. The *otu umuada* heard confessions from adulterous wives and performed purification rituals for them.

The *otu inyomdi*

The *otu inyomdi* were wives of the village. Their leader, *anasi*, was the most senior wife in the community. She was the wife who was married longest in the community. The *anasi* was the medium through which the women could voice their concerns and protect their interests as wives, mothers, farmers, and traders.

The duties of the *otu inyomdi* was many:

1. They helped lineage wives in times of stress and illness.
2. They heard and pronounced punishments in cases involving husbands who mistreated their wives.
3. They made sure that the village stream and market place was clean.
4. They made decisions involving the planting and harvesting of crops.
5. They took care of animals that had destroyed their crops.

Women's Assembly

From time to time in the life of the community, the *otu umuada and otu inyomdi* came together as the women's assembly to discuss issues that affected them as women in the community.

Ogbo associations or Age Grade associations

Age grades were groups of women of same age, who came together in order to provide incentives toward ambition and hard work. They performed religious, social and political functions within the community; provided training for young people in group life; and provided avenues for socialization and companionship which were very useful and integrative factors in society. In Igboland, unmarried lineage daughters formed themselves into various *ogbo* associations. One of them was the *okpo ntu* and their duties included cleaning and maintaining the village latrines and garbage dumps; performing communal labor services such as house building and associated tasks; and, organizing themselves into

dance groups, which provided forums where girls could build strong and lasting relationships with other girls in the group.

Title Taking

In Igboland status was achieved, not ascribed and a woman's status was determined by her own achievements, not those of her husband. Igbo women could improve their social standing by taking titles. These titles included the *ikenga, inachi* and *inwene*. Titled women were accorded a lot of respect and those who showed leadership capabilities could often hold political office.

The omu and her cabinet

The *omu* and her cabinet of titled women councilors, *ilogu,* were charged with take care of the female section of the community. The market place was the Igbo woman's domain. It was held every four days. The *omu* and her cabinet oversaw the market and defined its rules and regulations. The *omu* and her cabinet fixed the prices of market goods and defined market prohibitions. They acted as a court in the judging of cases and persecuting of wrong doers. The *omu* appointed a police woman called the *awo*. The *awo* implemented the fixed price regulations in the markets. She made sure market taboos were observed, and arrested wrongdoers and brought them before the *omu* court. Market taboos included, no fighting in the market, palm produce should not to be sold in bunches, but separated first; and last but not least, peppers should be boiled first before being sold.

Strategies of female resistance in precolonial West Africa

In the precolonial era, West African women gathered together to vocalize their feelings about situations that affected them. These meeting grounds also served as support networks that women could depend upon to exact punishment of offending men.

What exactly would women do? First, they would request that whatever objectionable behavior stop. If it did not, the women's groups would serve as 'pressure groups' which would exact punishments on the guilty party or parties. West African women's group tactics included: the use of strikes, boycotts, force, nudity as protest, and "making war" or "sitting on a man." "Making war" or "sitting on a man," was the toughest measure that West African women employed for punishing wrongdoers and enforcing compliance to their rules and regulations.

Strikes and boycotts often meant that West African women would ignore their household or marital responsibilities. For instance, West African women could "boycott" or abstain from sexual intercourse with their husbands. J. S. Harris reports on a case when a community of Igbo women repeatedly asked their clansmen to clear the paths leading to the market.

When they did not, all the women in the village refused to cook for their husbands until they did. The boycott worked because all the women of the village cooperated. Husbands could not ask their mothers or sisters for food.

A West African woman could enlist the support of other women in "making war" on an individual in a number of ways. The aggrieved woman could lodge a complaint at the market place or at one of the women's gatherings. They could let out a traditional cry of grievance which would echo the village over. All the village women would gather at a common ground, the market place or the village square. Palm twigs would be passed around from woman to woman a symbol of the war to come. The women would dress in war gear, their heads bound with ferns and their faces smeared with ashes. They would then move with war-like precision, and gather at the offender's compound. Once there, they would dance and sing derisive songs that outlined their grievances. Some of the songs called the manhood of the offender into question. They would bang on the offender's door with their cooking pestles. Then they would skirt the offender's compound and cover it with mud. On some occasions the women would destroy the house. They would pull the wrongdoer out and rough him up. They would surround him and then take turns in symbolically "sitting on" him.

A man thus reprimanded, stood humiliated in the presence of all his peers. He could be so punished if he repeatedly mistreated his wife, violated market rules, or allowed his animals to destroy women's crops.

Effect of Colonialism on West African Women's Political Structures

Colonialism in West Africa allowed a foreign power to rule West African people without their permission. The European colonialists were able to take over West African land through military conquest. Colonialism did not value the world of the colonized. It divided the colonized society and rendered all its members weak.

Colonialism marked beginning of end of any equality between sexes in village and politics. Women suffered the greatest loss of power. They were relegated to the background and could no longer take part in decision making. In non-centralized societies, opportunistic young men who befriended colonial masters were chosen to fill leadership positions as warrant chiefs, and the cases that previously went before women's organizations, were now taken to the colonial courts. Except for Ahebi Ugbabe of colonial Nigeria, there were no women warrant chiefs, or members of courts. Women were not made court messengers, interpreters, clerks, or police women.

The warrant chiefs were very corrupt. They constantly helped themselves to women's agricultural produce and animals; and forced Igbo women into marriage without allowing them the customary right to refuse them.

Women's political organization lost prestige and members as their political and religious functions were replaced by colonial rule and Christianity. Clinics and foreign drugs replaced the need for rituals and sacrifices that women's organizations undertook for welfare of village.

The colonial governments banned self-help and the use of force by individuals or groups to bring wrong doers to justice. They also banned "sitting on a man." The colonial environment did not allow for group solidarity amongst women, nor did it provide provision for dispersed leadership or shared power.

The colonial masters laid claim to African land, privatizing and commercializing it, thus obstructing the traditional system of communal land ownership. They introduced crown grants which allowed men who wanted to purchase or own land to do so. The system not only made women's ownership of land impossible, but restricted access to it for farming purposes.

Colonialism eroded many of the economic avenues women had in traditional society. With the introduction of cash cropping for world markets, men were increasingly employed to work on farms, overlooking women, traditional cultivators, in the process. Colonialism brought about the importation of European goods, thus ruining traditional price fixing systems, another woman-controlled sector.

With colonialism came Christianity and the introduction of western ideas and culture. The new faith attracted only a few converts to begin with. When West African women realized that western education was the key to political leadership, many more joined, so that their children would be allowed to attend missionary school.

Church and school were synonymous, with classes held in church building. Girls had less access than boys to missionary education. These schools generally provided opportunities for education in vocations that were considered male, like carpentry and printing, thus excluding women in the process. The few girls that did attend missionary school were confined entirely to the private life of family. They were taught cooking, cleaning, child care, and sewing—the necessary domestic skills for Christian marriage and motherhood in their minds. This, unlike preparation which enabled them in pre-colonial culture to be involved in both private and public domains.

Prejudices against West African women by the missionaries was in keeping with the Victorian ideology that a woman's place was in home. They believed that women were frail minded and incapable of mastering the so-called masculine subjects. Moreover, Christian marriage introduced the title of "Mrs." Which replaced the tradition of West African women going by their mother's first name, further diffusing the validation of women.

The Effect Colonialism on Igbo Women—The Women's War or Ogu Umunwanyi of 1929

Women "made war" in 1929 to call attention to a number of situations that adversely affected their interests as women.

1. They believed that the British colonial government would institute direct taxation on them. In 1927, the British had instituted direct taxation on men. It was rumored that women would be taxed next.
2. They "made war" in reaction to dramatic falling of palm oil prices due to the world depression. Food pricing was an Igbo woman-controlled venture; and before the institution of direct taxation on men in 1927, the official price of palm oil was between 12 and 13 shillings. The official price of mixed oil was between 9 and 10 shillings for a four-gallon tin. The official price of palm kernels was between 7 and 8 shillings for 50 pounds. In 1928, the price of palm oil fell to 7 shillings 5 pence. By 1929, the price fell some more to 5 shillings 11 pence

What did the women do? They decided to negotiate, which is a method that the women employed in pre-colonial times to right any wrong done them. Therefore, on December 30, 1929, Igbo women held a mass meeting. They met with the District Officer and representatives of United Africa Company, John Holt, Russell's etc. They demand a higher price for palm oil and kernels: "we have fixed a certain price for palm oil and kernels and if we get that we will bring them in. We want 10 shillings a tin for oil and 9 shillings a bushel for kernels."

3. They "made war" because of the high price of imported goods. In 1928, the duty on tobacco rose from 1 shilling 6 pence to 2 shillings in 1929.
4. They "made war" because of the change in the method of purchase from measure to weight instituted by the colonial government. Igbo women were convinced that they were being cheated.
5. Igbo women "made war" because the government had introduced an inspection of the women's produce.
6. Igbo women were enraged at the persecutions, extortions and corruption of the warrant chiefs and Native Court members.

And last, but not least,

7. Igbo women felt totally disregarded and disrespected by the colonial officials.

It was these factors that fueled Igbo women's anger, presenting a need to put the British colonialists in order.

What happened? In Oloko area of Bende Division, the acting District Officer Mr. Cook asks warrant chief, Okogu to start counting adult males, females, children and animals. Warrant chief Okogu assigns this task to Emeruwa, who is his messenger. On November 23, 1929, Emeruwa goes to Nwanyereuwa's house to ask her for this count. An angry Nwanyereuwa screams to him: "was your mother counted?" They seize each other by the throats, and a scuffle ensues. Nwanyereuwa raises an alarm. Coincidentally the women meeting at the market, to discuss this tax rumor. Nwanyereuwa bursts in and tells them what happened. This is an overt sign that they are indeed going to be taxed. Women thus send word to other women by sending palm twigs to women in neighboring villages asking them to come to Oloko. The significance of this action represented the war to come. These women in turn send palm fronds to other women.

On November 24, the Oloko market is filled with women from far and near:

One Sunday an alarm was raised, our attention was called to the fact the case had occurred, that is to say, what we had been anticipating had occurred. We all started that night for Oloko to see what had happened there.

Once gathered, the women trooped to Niger Delta Pastorate Mission to demonstrate against Emeruwa:

they danced and danced outside the Mission compound all night, eating and drinking palm wine and singing that Nwanyereuwa had been told to count her goats, sheep and people.

From the Mission, they marched to Okogu's compound, to ask him to explain why he had ordered them to pay tax. They ended up storming his compound, looting his property, and attacking his wives and servants. The method that the women employed was the method that they employed in the precolonial area to "make war," or "sit on a man."

On November 26, the women went to Bende Divisional Headquarters to report the assault on Nwanyereuwa. The next day, Igbo women of Bende, Aba and Owerri Division assembled at Oloko, and refused to disperse until the acting District Officer Cook informed them that they would not be taxed. The women also insist that Okogu is arrested and removed as warrant chief.

According to District Officer Captain Hill who had just returned from leave:

The women numbering over 10,000 were shouting and yelling round the office in a frenzy. They demanded his cap of office, which I threw to them and it met the same fate as a fox's carcass thrown to a pack of hounds. The station between the office and the Epsom and just round the office resembled Epsom Downs on Derby Day. The crowd extended right away through Bende Village and the pandemonium was beyond al belief. It took me two hours to get an opportunity of sending the wire asking for more police.

The women left with written declaration that they will not be taxed. Okogu was arrested and sentenced to 2 years in prison.

The colonial government thought that women would be appeased by this arrest. The reverse, however, occurred. News of Okogu's imprisonment encouraged women who believed that they had scored a victory, and as a result, they stormed village after village.

On December 12, they invaded Nguru, Okpuala, and Ngor and destroyed colonial court buildings and burnt all records. To prevent further destruction, the British colonial government deployed a mobile striking force. On December 13, colonial government sent dispatches out to Aba, Port Harcourt, Mbosi and Owerri. In Calabar Province, Ikot Ekpene, Abak and Opobo were attacked. Fire was opened and there were a number of casualties.

All in all, over fifty women are killed and fifty were wounded. The effects were not positive for women. Politically, the British outlawed the warrant chief system and replace it with the

“massed bench” system, which put a number of judges in power instead of one. The British also outlawed self-help and “making war” or “sitting on a man”

Additionally, the colonial government sent a slew of anthropologists and ethnographers into the field to study Igbo political systems in order to make sure that nothing like the Women’s war ever happened again. The British sent colonial government anthropologists like C. K. Meek, Sylvia Leith-Ross, Margaret Green, and Ida Woods to study the Igbo. Thus, by the end of 1934, over 200 intelligence reports had been published.

Nwando Achebe

12 - The Environment in West African History

West Africa has been in contact with the outside world longer than any other part of Africa south of the Sahara and west of the boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon, a boundary that is one of Africa's major physical and human divides. Africa and West-Africa in particular involuntarily supplied a significant amount of resources in slaves, minerals, as well as farm and forest produce. Again, in Africa, environmental issues have been a perennial concern for historical and physical geographers, anthropologists, archaeologists and medical scientists. Historians have discussed ways the physical environment and conditions have shaped the history and development of the people of Africa

In this chapter, we shall look at the Historical antecedent of the physical environment, trace the origin of some major crops grown in the region, then lastly, soil and land management.

THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENT OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IN WEST AFRICA

The land of West Africa consists of contrasting kinds of physical environment. The forest environment differs from the savanna environment, a mountainous area from a flat lowland area, riverine area from one away from a river, an area with predominantly sandy soils from one with predominantly loamy soils. Each kind of physical environment presents a peculiar set of problems or challenges which must be solved if people are to survive on the land. A farmer, for example, should take the physical characteristics of the land into serious consideration and devise suitable methods to ensure that he gets good results. He would probably perish or live a very simple and miserable life if he were unable to find ways of solving the problems of the physical environment.

GEOLOGY

West Africa, like most parts of Africa, is largely composed of Pre-Cambrian rocks, which have been folded and are often aligned from north- east to south-west, as is reflected in much of the relief. They are exposed over about one-third of west Africa or over two-thirds of the area south of 12^{o} N and are part of the vast continental platform of Africa which in West Africa has an average elevation of about 400m (1,300ft). The oldest rocks may be about 4000 million years old. Some are metamorphosed sedimentary rocks, others are ancient volcanic and intrusive.

Pre-Cambrian rocks have been variously subdivided, but their ages are uncertain as radioactive dating methods are not reliable with metamorphic rock. This oldest or lower Pre-Cambrian, comprises the Archaean or Dahomeyan and probably the Birmian system.

The Archaean consists of highly metamorphosed rocks. Prevalent acidic types are mica schists, gneisses and quartzites, most are the product of the granitisation and metamorphism of original sediments. Basic rocks are garnrtiferous geneisse and amphiboite. Gneisses of similar composition are found in the Kasila series of Sierra Leone and others are known in Mauritania and Nigeria.

The Birimian system occurs in southern Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The lower Birimian has folded and steeply dipping alternating grey-wacks and argillaceous beds, as well as some tuffs and lavas. The upper Birimian (Greenstones) consist mainly of volcanic rocks. The Kambui and Marampa schists of Sierra Leone may also be Birimian.

RELIEF

West Africa lies generally about 200m and 500m (600 to 600ft) and consists mainly of the worn monotonous and fairly level surfaces of the platform of Pre-Cambrian rocks. Higher relief may occur where trends in the ancient rocks can still be traced from the north-south hills of the Sierra Leone interior. Residual granite domes are common and the 'Younger Granites' are responsible for some bold relief, an example is the Jos Plateau in Nigeria. Certain series of the Pre-Cambrian give higher relief. An example is the several Birimian, Tarkwaian and Akwapim-Togo –Atacora ridges.

DRAINAGE

The drainage characteristics of West Africa may be summarized as follows:

1. Rapid run off on crystalline rocks, especially on the south or south-western Pre-Cambrian shield, where the rainfall is particularly heavy.
2. Behind the south western and Guinea coasts, rivers are cutting down to new base levels, probably because of Miocene and later uplifts and inward tilting. Thus the Volta River is gaining at the expense of others. The Guinea Coast Rivers are frequently interrupted by rapids and deposit relatively little alluvium, except close to the shoreline.
3. Greater maturity and indeterminate courses of the rivers of the sandy central lowland zone compared with the immaturity and vigor of the Guinea Coast Rivers. The Senegal, middle Niger and the upper reach of the Volta rivers have devious courses from the central zone.
4. Great seasonal variations in river flow a seasonal rain causes extensive flooding eg. along the Central Niger.

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural pursuits are the basis of almost all West African life. As in any part of the world, important determinants of crop distribution are climate and soils.

In the forest, crops have to be raised from small plots by periodic cutting and burning. Soil becomes exhausted and, as there is very little animal manure and artificial fertilisers are expensive and difficult to use satisfactorily in the tropics, there is no simple alternative to a long fallow period. Thus the forest farmer generally expends much energy per acre. Yet he is more than compensated by growth of permanent tree crops such as the cocoa, the oil palm, kola and coffee.

By contrast, savanna farms are generally large and less varied in their crops, as the shorter growing periods restrict the farmer to one main crop unreliability of rainfall and lack of bumper harvest are challenges that may encourage more careful cropping. Population presence may also induce better farming, for example, the Kabrai of Togo, the Hausa around Kano and others.

Inter cropping or double cropping is very common in West Africa. Although this method may seem inefficient and looks a muddle, it saves labour and land and limits soil erosion by keeping the ground covered. Moreover, some plants may benefit from inter-cropping. On the other hand mixed cropping may necessitate the use of crop varieties tolerant of this system.

THE DISCOVERY OF COCOA

The cocoa tree (Theobroma cacao) originated in South America and its bean consumed as a drink by Mayans and Aztecs. Historians believe the Olmecs (first major civilization in Guatemala and Mexico) first discovered that the cocoa fruit was edible by observing rats eating it with gluttonous vigor. They soon realized the tree produced a fruit with a thousand flavors and nearly as many uses.

Theobroma cacao. Wikipedia. CC BY 3.0.

The Olmces (1500-400BC) were almost certainty the first humans to consume chocolate, originally in the form of a drink. They crushed the cocoa beans, mixed them with water and added spices, chillies and herbs (Coe's Theory). They began cultivating cocoa in equatorial Mexico. Over time, the Mayans (6000 BC) and Aztecs (400 AD) developed successfully methods for cultivating cocoa as well.

For these civilizations, cocoa was a symbol of abundance. It was used in religious ritual dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, the Aztec god responsible for bringing the cocoa tree to man to Chak ek Chuah, the Mayan patron saint of the cocoa and as an offering at the funerals of noblemen. Cocoa beans were also used as a form of currency in pre-Columbian Mexico.

Cocoa production advanced as people migrated throughout Meso-America but consumption of the drink remained a privilege for the upper classes and for soldiers during battle. By this time, the re-invigorating and fortifying virtues of cocoa were becoming widely recognized and embraced.

COMMERCIALIZATION OF COCOA (16TH CENTURY)

In 1502, Columbus got his first glimpse of cocoa beans on a native canoe during a stop-over in Nicaragua, but he did not appreciate its awesome potential value. The true importance of this 'brown gold' was not recognized until Hernando Cortez drank it with the Aztec emperor Montezuma, and brought it back to the Spanish court in 1528 along with the equipment necessary for brewing the drink. Even then, it is unlikely anyone envisaged it ultimate importance as a world commodity.

Following a victorious war against the Aztec empire and the downfall of the Aztec civilization, Cortez intensified cultivation efforts in New Spain, with the intention of developing a lucrative trade with Europe.

The Spanish court soon fell under the spell of this exotic elixir and adapted it to their taste, adding cane sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and pepper. Initially Spain reserved cocoa for its exclusive use, carefully guarding its existence from the rest of the world. They were so successful keeping cocoa secret that when a group of English pirates captured a Spanish gallons, not recognizing the value of the weighty cargo of beans, they burned them!

In 1585, the first cargo of cocoa beans arrived on the Iberian Peninsula from New Spain (the Spanish name for Mexico. This launched the trade in cocoa, and resulted in the establishment of the first chocolate shops, thus ushering in a new era of rapidly growing demand for this mysterious nectar from the new world.

THE EARLY INTRODUCTION OF COCOA TO WEST AFRICA

The date of the first introduction of the Cacao tree to the British West African possessions is somewhat uncertain. The credit of having first brought the cacao tree from the New World to the African tropics undoubtedly goes to the Portuguese. They are reputed to have planted cacao on the island of Sao Tome (off the coast of Gabon) as far back as 1822. It was not until about 1870, however, that cultivation was undertaken seriously there. By 1895, the export of cocoa beans from this island had reached a million kilograms, which was a considerable quantity for those days.

ORIGIN OF COCOA IN GHANA

With regard to the Gold Coast, which has been for many years the leading cocoa producer of West Africa, it is stated that in 1868 the Basel Mission at Akropong (in Akwapim, Eastern Province) had a few cacao trees growing in their grounds and that these were flourishing. It is also stated that in 1879 a native of Mampong (also in Akwapim) brought back pods from Fernando Po (an island off the Cameroons) where he had been working, and raised a few trees which he planted on his farm near that village. These trees are believed to have been the parent trees of the Gold Coast industry. Cultivation on the Gold Coast was greatly encouraged by Sir William Griffith, who was Governor from 1880 to 1895, and who established the botanic garden and experiment.

ORIGIN OF COCOA IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, the position is very similar to that of the Gold Coast. For cocoa is alleged to have been first introduced there by a native chief called "Squiss Banego" in 1874—also from Fernando Po. He established a cocoa farm in the Bonny district and cultivation spread. By

1887-9 a few plantations had been established by European companies, those of the Royal Niger Company at Abutshi and Onitsha being taken over by the Government of South Nigeria in 1900.

It is thus apparent that the cacao of both the Gold Coast and Nigeria was derived from a common source—Fernando Po. From which part of the American tropics the Portuguese obtained their seed or plants in the early part of last century there appears to be no record, but it is probable that they would have come from Pará in the Amazon region, or from other parts of Brazil.

ORIGIN OF COCOA IN SIERRA LEONE

In Sierra Leone the cacao in cultivation is conceded to be of a different type from that in general cultivation in the Gold Coast and Nigeria. This raises the question of the origin of Sierra Leone cacao. In this connection it may be of interest to note that among old records at Kew is one of young cacao plants being sent to Glasgow Botanic Garden for shipment to West Africa on the 30th August, 1864. Unfortunately, there are no details as to the ultimate destination of the plants and how they fared. However, it is probable that at this early period they would have been consigned to Freetown and not to any other part of West Africa. As the voyage is a comparatively short one it is quite probable the plants survived and ultimately became established in Sierra Leone. At about this time, economically productive plants of various kinds, including cacao, were constantly sent from Kew to such far off places as the botanic gardens at Brisbane and at Durban and usually survived the long voyage. There was free intercourse and exchange of plants between Kew and the West Indies at this period and the probability is that the cacao plants dispatched from Kew in 1864 were raised from West Indian seed and were not of Brazilian origin as is believed to be the case with the early introductions to the Gold Coast and Nigeria.

There is thus the interesting probability that the present day cocoa of West Africa (apart from recent introductions at experiment stations) is of dual origin, that of the Gold Coast and Nigeria having originated from Brazil and that of Sierra Leone from the West Indies.

DISCOVERY OF KOLA NUT IN WEST AFRICA

Kola nut is the seed kernel of a large African tree grown commercially around the world, particularly in Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Brazil and other parts of South America. It is extremely popular amongst the inhabitants as a caffeine-containing stimulant. The nuts are eaten whole or powdered and mixed with liquid for a drink.

The kola nut is primarily derived from three species from the cocoa tree family, Cola acuminta, Cola nitida and Cola vera, which originate in tropical West Africa but can also be found in pockets of Brazil and the West Indies, where they were taken by captives on the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The trees typically reach a height of 25 meters or 60 feet, and its waxy oval leaves frame cheerful star-shaped flowers that are white or yellow with purple

accents. Its fruit is pod-shaped, each of which is nestled about a dozen roundish shaped seeds or kola nuts. The kola nuts may be red, white or pinkish of hue. The nut's aroma is sweet and rose-like; and the first taste is bitter, but sweetens upon chewing. The nut can be boiled to extract the cola.

Cola acuminata. Franz Eugen Köhler, Köhler's Medizinal-Pflanzen. Wikipedia. Public domain.

The Many Roles of the Kola Nut

Its versatility as a symbol, medicine, food and flavoring has been long been utilized around the world since ancient times and continues to be so applied. Science has isolated certain compounds within it, which can be credited with its medicinal benefits.

Symbolic Uses

As a symbol it is used in West Africa by the Igbos of Nigeria, Senegambia, Ghana among other countries to grace social rituals of hospitality as welcome offerings to guests; as sacred offering in religious rites and prayers; in ancestor veneration; and in important life events such as weddings, naming ceremonies, funerals and memorials. As a mark of respect the kola nut is broken with knife. Prayer follows the presentation of kola nut immediately, which in traditional pattern is with libations. In the prayer our forefathers are beckoned to come and participate in the eating of the kola nut and to guide and protect in the mission that brings the people together. After the prayer, the kola nut is broken, shared, everybody eats and the ceremony begins.

Medicinal Uses

The kola nut is high in caffeine as well as a number of other phyto-chemical compounds including betaine (a natural red pigment), kola red, phenolics, tannins, theobromine and theophylline. Its bitter astringent flavor is used as digestive aid prior to meals to stimulate gastric juice and bile production; while its caffeine and theobromine content make it a potent neuro-stimulant that is used to combat fatigue. The nut and its extracts have been also successfully used in treating respiratory conditions such as asthma and whooping cough as its caffeine, theobromine and theophylline content act as vasodilators that dilate the blood vessels, allowing for greater circulation of oxygen. Other medicinal uses include the treatment of toothache, diarrhea, exhaustion, headaches, hunger (the caffeine content means it is an effective appetite suppressant), malaria, nausea, poison antidote, sedative, and as a stimulant and tonic.

As Food and Flavoring For Drinks

You will find often West African manual workers, laborers and farm workers chewing kola as they go about their daily work as a pep-me-up in between meals, although the practice is said to be dwindling amongst the younger generation. Nonetheless, the kola nut is still used as a type of aperitif prior to meals to enhance the taste of the food to follow, as its astringency cleanses the palate and stimulates saliva production. Nutritionally, it is a source of some B-vitamins (thiamine, riboflavin, niacin), as well as proteins, starch and sugar. Muslims in Africa often substitute it for alcohol as their religion forbids them to drink and, although it contains 1-3.5% caffeine, it is not addictive. It is the distinctive source of flavor for colas, and certain soft drinks and tonics.

Coca Cola Drink

In May of 1886, Dr. John Styth Pemberton, a pharmacist from Georgia, USA took extracts of the kolanut and coca, mixed them with sugar, carbonated water and caramel coloring to create the first Coca-Cola recipe. Since then it has been used as flavoring in many other soft drinks - although Coca-Cola purportedly does not used kola nut anymore, but uses instead synthetic derivatives that mimic its flavors.

Negative Effects Of Kola Nut

Regular daily chewing of the kola nut can stain the teeth giving a telling rusty color. According to medical science, kola nut does have a high level of nicotine, which can affect body chemistry negatively. It can lead to insomnia, high blood pressure, high heartbeat, high-level toxicity, over stimulations and locomotive effects. However, despite some of these negative medical reports, the kolanut is a cherished commodity that has blossomed into a huge economic prospect with kolanut exportation to China, North America and India, where it is largely required for the production of cola drinks and pharmaceutical products.

SOIL AND LAND MANAGEMENT

The African cultivator in particular and the tropical cultivator in general have frequently been portrayed as wasteful, even destructive, exploiters of biological resources, especially in

relation to tropical forests. This view, if not completely unjustified, is certainly a gross oversimplification of the actual situation. Indigenous systems based on the cultivation of small areas for short periods, and the subsequent development of a natural fallow, are conservative of biological resources, for the following major reasons:

1. Only small patches are cultivated. This is probably a consequence of the labour involved in clearing forest, but has the effect of introducing only minimal disturbance of the plant-soil system, of reducing the effect of increased run-off by constricting the distance over which movement of material is possible, and of limiting disturbance microclimatic effects.
2. Cultivation lasts only for a short period, which may be two or three years, or a little longer, after which the plot is allowed to revert to natural fallow. The reason for this reversion has commonly been supposed to be ''loss of fertility' but there is considerable doubt that this is so, at least, in itself. Nutrient supply by the soil does not, in many areas at least, decrease as rapidly in successive years as had once been assumed. The measurable amounts of nutrients in the soil, though low by standard in higher latitudes. (if the more fertile areas are used for the comparison), may not truly indicate the availability if those nutrients to plants. The activity of the soil water regime characteristic of forest areas for much of the year, and for the wet season in much of the rest of tropical West Africa, probably ensures maximum solution and dissociation of nutrient ions during the growing season of the crop plant. It is likely that weed problem play a significant role in the decision to abandon a cultivation plot.
3. Many large trees are not cleared, the stools of smaller trees are left in the ground, and the roots are rarely disturbed significantly, particularly in their lower extensions. This means that considerable quantities of organic matter continue to be supplied to the soil while cultivation proceeds, and that as soon as the regeneration of stools and roots ceases to be prevented by the abscission of the aerial shoots in the process of weeding, vigorous growth of these plants takes place. Furthermore, under the woody fallow, restoration of the nutrient and organic matter equilibria in the soil is rapidly achieved. Related to this is the fact the seven or eight years is usually a sufficient length of time for the woody fallow to accumulate nutrients in amounts adequate for renewed cultivation.
4. In the process of cultivation, the indigenous cultivator leaves a considerable number of adventitious plants growing with his crops. These are rarely weeds, which are by definition useless to the cultivator, but self-sown plants which have a technological, medicinal or food use to the indigenous community. They have the effect of providing a cover of ground which conserves moisture, intercepts heavy rainfall, and supplies some organic matter to the soil.
5. Finally, a significant proportion of forest clearing for food crop cultivation is undertaken with the intention of establishing more permanent managed ecosystems, which include cocoa, oil palm, rubber and other tree crops. These, despite their much greater simplicity compared to developed forest, are analogous to it in respect of a number of basic ecological relationships, and represent an essentially conservative form of land use in the tropical forests.

SOIL EROSION AND WATER CONTROL

Soil erosion is not a general problem in West Africa under indigenous husbandry systems. It is, however, locally a chronic problem, and in many areas a potential hazard under changing cultivation practices. Soil erosion is intimately associated with problems of water control and desertification, and it is thus convenient to consider both together.

Arid Land - Cape Verde, Boa Vista (2013). Photograph by Espen Faugstad. Flickr. CC BY 2.0. https://flic.kr/p/dMfcwG

Over much of tropical Africa the annual water supply from precipitation is less than the amount of water most crop plants would transpire if adequately supplied with moisture. Furthermore, over much of this area the rainfall is unreliable in amount and occurrence, both seasonally and annually. Also it is commonly very intense. Thus conservation measures must involve efficient use of the available moisture, and the prevention of the adverse effect of intense rainfall, such as flash floods. A special section has been created in this chapter to discuss the drought at the Sahel region.

Maintaining a plant cover and mulching, separately or together, constitute one approach to the problem, but the preservation of useless plants simply as a conservation measure involves the waste of moisture which might otherwise go the crop plant, and is feasible only in areas where the water supply is more or less adequate to the being grown. Mulching with dead plant matter is also not usually practicable, since there are other more pressing uses for such materials as straw, plant stems and leaves, which might be used for conservation of this type. Artificial mulches, such as bitumen-in-water, though practicable, are not usually economically or technically possible in the present socio-economic situation in areas where such measures are most needed.

Contour and tie-ridging effectively achieve conservation of water supplies, and a diminution of runoff velocities. The combination of the two has proved their worth. These measures offer simple and satisfactory ways of controlling water use and preventing soil erosion, but soil differences still need to be taken into account. The importance of such measures cannot be overemphasized, and always involve major schemes of rehabilitation, embracing

engineering works, afforestation, considerable modifications of traditional agricultural practices, even of settlement patterns and land apportionment. These imply considerable expense of money and of expertise which could otherwise be used for agricultural improvement, rather than for arresting the effects of past malpractices. Rainfall variability, and prolonged drought have been major environmental issues disturbing the African continent. On the more western part, while the Sahel region has had a long reputation of extreme drought conditions, most West-African countries have historically suffered from environmental challenges. For the past thirty years, inconsistencies in rainfall and high levels of variability have negatively affected agriculture. Rainfall provides the moist nature of soil and aids in its aeration encouraging massive agriculture production. Concerning rice production, it has had the tendency of causing fluctuations in production in countries like Sierra Leone and Gambia. The major climatic condition that has negatively impacted the agricultural activities of the West African regions is drought. This environmental phenomenon has persisted since the 1960s with the early 1980s and 70s witnessing the worst conditions of it. This drought had systematically altered the kind of food crops cultivated in the regions whiles drastically reducing the production of other crops. Examples include sorghum, millet and rice.In Gambia, farmers had claimed that, the droughts had altered the rains negatively. Rainfall in this country and other Sahelian states has being the main source of irrigational water for their crops. Considerably, Agricultural produce had increased in the 1950s and 60s due to the favourable rains in this period, however the late 1960s and early 70s saw the decline of the rains. In the southern part of the country, farmers claimed rains in the month June of the 70s were low comparing it to that of the 1950s. The rains in the latter had only last for a month. The major crop which has been affected by these droughts is rice. Rice has been the major staple of countries like Sierra Leone, Gambia and most Sahelian States. In Gambia about 20-30% of lands are converted to upland rice cultivation. Primarily, its production has been dominated by women serving as major source of income. Since the inception of this environmental phenomenon, rice production has declined approximately half of what use to be produced. This has led to most indigenes relying on exported ones. The major setback here is the reduced rains which has also in turn reduced run-off to the main lands of rice plantations. Generally, rivers have also dried due to this same issue.

Other major staples which have been affected by the drought are millet, sorghum and groundnuts. The cultivation patterns of these crops have increasingly been determined by natural rains. With the advent of the drought, Men have opted for Lands which are rich and moisture which can sustain the cultivation of the crops. This action has led to increasing degrading activities in regions like Burkina Faso, Mali and Gambia. The desire to farm in areas closer to water bodies has also led to water pollution. Statistically, poor and erratic rainfall in many years
since 1968 has brought about reduced yields of these crops in the countries and has reduced the potential germination of seeds. Particularly the seeds of millet and sorghum have suffered a great deal from this instance.

Ghana just like many other tropical countries is very much vulnerable to climate change and variability. An estimated 35 percent of the total land mass is desert and since the 1980s the has been increasing desertification of the northern part of the country. Desertification in Ghana is currently estimated to be proceeding at a rate of 20,000 hectares per annum

thereby compromising water resource. n northern Ghana, these farmers are usually involved in the cultivation of staple grains including maize, rice, millet, sorghum, soybean, cowpea and groundnut, and also engage in the rearing of small ruminants such as sheep and goat.

CONCLUSION

The soils of Africa vary widely in their characteristics and behavior in relation to plant growth, and in their response to various agricultural practices. Nevertheless, discernible spatial pattern may be clearly seen on different scales, and thus afford the basis upon which subsequent rational development of the resources may be built. Increasing production from already productive areas and developing as yet unused areas of land is possible, given adequate local knowledge of soil character, and its satisfactory representation on an understandable map, as well as the technical knowledge which is available as a tool for the development of agriculture from the essentially conservative indigenous systems to more ambitious uses. This involves, as Sir Joseph Hutchinson has pointed out 'the domestication of the soil as [man] has domesticated plants and animals'. This is already in progress, and much current soils in the tropics have been developed in Western Europe. Concerning this development, an understanding of the basic characteristics and distribution of the soil would make a major contribution.

DROUGHT IN THE SAHEL

Africa has been affected by series of challenges which ranges from high rate of poverty to conflicts and war among others. Environmental hazards have been one of the challenges confronting the African continent. Droughts continue to feature greatly in these environmental hazards. It is defined as a long period of little or no rain. Though all regions have enjoyed a considerable amount of drought, the Sahel region continues to top the chart so far as this environmental hazard is concern. The Sahel is a strip of Land that stretches across 12 countries including Chad, Mauritania, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Cameroon, Gambia, Somalia and Ethiopia. It is geographically situated at the South of the Sahara Desert. The region witnessed its extreme drought in periods prior to 1820 and 1840. This had remerged again in the 1980s with effects greater as compared to the period stated above. Climatologists and Scientists have predicted that these drought conditions can last for several decades. Tied to the issue of drought in West Africa is the variation of rainfall patterns or the dry spells. The dry spell is defined as the Sequence occurrence of consecutive days with precipitation lower than 1mm. considerably, the uniformity of rainfall in the Sahel Regions have fluctuated over time. Rains in the month of August which peaks rainfall in the region, has been falling considerably according to the Meteorologist Mike Dennet. What are the possible causes of this?

A Sahelian landscape. Nigeria-Niger border in the Lake Chad area (2010). Photograph by Vincent Hiribarren. CC-BY-SA 4.0.

Causes of the Increasing Rate of Drought and Minimum Rainfall in West Africa

Changes in Sea Surface Temperature

The West African Monsoon westerly (WAM) has been the main source of rainfall in the Sahel. The reduction of the WAM have caused the onset of the droughts experienced in the 1960s. Between 1930 and 2000, the region has encountered the weak WAM which has resulted in the southward shift in the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ). This in turn has decreased moisture input which acts as an agent of vegetation growth. The long lasting effect has been less vegetation and high albedo.

Moreover, the repercussions of the El Nino weather pattern which is of the warm waters in the Pacific Ocean have also played a part in the Sahel's dry spell. This has also caused the northward shift of the mean sea level pressure along the coast of West Africa hence creating dry conditions over the Sahel.

The Declining Vegetation Cover

The declining vegetation cover has been caused by overgrazing and the conversion of woodland into agricultural lands, and has caused increase in the albedo of the landscape. This has reduced the amount of moisture in the atmosphere resulting in a lower probability

of rainfall in the region. The overreliance on wood as the sole means of fuel in the region has also largely contributed to devegetation.

Human Induced Climate Change

Human-induced climate is mainly concerned with human activities such as deforestation and land degradation through various unsustainable methods of cultivation and the sweeping Green Houses Gases such as Carbon Dioxide. Sahel's CO_2 rate has increased at a rate of 2.2% between 1960 and 2006. According to Epule and Peng this is associated with the 28% increase in population. Hence people are encroaching the areas that were initially uninhabited. This has contributed to ripping the region of the little vegetation it is left with.

Effects of Sahel's Drought

The major impact of the drought in the Sahel is the drastic decline of tree species in the region. The major tree species in the region is the Acacia tree. Other species include Commiphora africana, Balanites aegyptiaca, Faidherbia albida, and Boscia senegalensis. These trees are the major reducing agent of CO_2 in the atmosphere. In Senegal, the average number of trees present reduced from 64 ± 2 in 1945 to 43 ± 2 in 2005. Their decline inversely has increased the rate of CO_2 in the atmosphere. Other effects have to do with the surge of famine in the region. Poor nutrient nature of the soil has resulted in poor yield of major staples of the region. The food sufficiency had dropped from 98% to 25 % between 1960 and 1985. In Sudan, famine had affected close to about 20-25 million people with 3% month death rate. Staple food crops such as millet and sorghum yields have also dropped to about 20% from the normal.

The inconsistencies in rainfall statistics and little attention being paid to other atmospheric data and conditions responsible for drought in the Sahel region have made drought predictability difficult. There is a need for more studies on these atmospheric behaviors concerning the drought. Keen attention can be paid to what time span constitute the drought and what should drought's threshold hold; this will aid in proffering a better solution to the seeming unending phenomenon.

Moreover some positive changes are now taking place which show how concerted action by West African governments can make a difference. The government of Senegal instituted a major tree-planting initiative along the River Senegal (at the border with Mauritania). This has led to increased vegetation and crop production or the first time for many decades.

Thus history shows the relation of West African history to environmental patterns, but also the potential to change the trend for the better with concerted social action and historical awareness of these factors.

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13 – Conclusion: Future Directions for Students and Teachers

The WASSCE History examination is designed to give students a sound grounding in the regional history of West Africa. It introduces students to many important themes:

1, the methods through which the past can be studied;
2, the layers of changes which have shaped the region to be as it is today;
3, precolonial history as it relates to Islam, Atlantic and Saharan Trade, Economic History and the History of slavery;
4, colonial history as it relates to the Scramble for Africa by European colonisers, resistance, and independence;
5, postcolonial questions relating to the difficulties of independence and the relationship of West African nations to world organisations.

This syllabus goes together with the national histories which students must take in each country which sits the WASSCE exam. The combination is important. A regional understanding is vital for the following aims:
1, building bridges between different countries;
2, understanding what is held in common;
3, and thereby to build a common shared future path of peace and prosperity.

This path will be much harder without this shared understanding. This is why the regional paper is so important – not only in terms of passing the exam, but also in terms of the knowledge that it can bring.

History can be seen as a "useless subject", one that is not going to help in making your way in a difficult world. Yet History is also the foundation of a number of other subjects: a historical understanding can help in a wide range of topics, including (but not limited to):
Environmental Change; Economic Development; Urban infrastructure; Health Policy; Political relations of West Africa to the world.

Thus a thorough grounding in History can help to shape a deeper understanding of some of the problems which arise in very different fields, and which are vital to the future of West African countries. The WASSCE syllabus offers this grounding: it is not just a programme with the exam as an end point, but also a beginning for building new awareness of the historical origins of the problems of today.

Thus this textbook does not pretend to be comprehensive, and nor should it be. It invites future questions, by teachers and students alike; and from these future questions, new insights can emerge into what matters in the West African past, and how teachers and students in West Africa can shape this understanding.

The authors of this textbook want to be very clear. For too long, the study and analysis of West African history has been shaped by concerns and funding mechanisms located outside of West Africa. They hope that this textbook can offer a platform for the generation of new

questions and criticisms which are much closer to the historical interests and needs of students and teachers who sit the WASSCE exam.

That also means that this textbook is a work in progress. The authors do not consider it completed, and welcome questions and comments as to how it can be improved and what materials and topics might also be covered.

We are aware, for instance, that while the European presence in Africa has been addressed, the many African influences in shaping global cultures have not been discussed. This is vital in shaping an understanding of African contributions to world history, and the reciprocal dynamics which have shaped and continue to shape the world. For just a few examples:
1, Recent research has shown the influence which Africans had from the 16th century onwards in developing agricultural technologies, social structures, and also forms of music and dance in the Americas;
2, Folk songs still sung in southern Portugal today derive from oral narratives of the Guinea-Bissau region;
3, Some of the artistic motifs used in earlier times were linked to sculptors in Sierra Leone.

Similarly, there is a need to understand histories of health in the region, to see how indigenous knowledge systems and Western medicine have overlapped. This is especially relevant in the area of medical infrastructure laboratory research, as well as diverse colonial and post-colonial responses to diseases, epidemics and pandemics in the regions of Africa and beyond. There are other essential themes like medical racism, colonialism and imperialism which must be loudly explored in the Senior High School literature. This will ensure the consciousness about the need to encourage extension and expansion of the knowledge of science, technology and medicine within the space of history. It will also enable students and teachers to critique the evolving of African states within the broader context of Africa's interaction with Europe.

It is also pertinent to emphasize that this textbook highlights the continuities and discontinuities within the history of the African people and projects further to make the subject relevant to contemporary times. Again, the authors believe that, this is a living document and must evolve with additions and continuous fine-tuning when it is necessary. The historiography of African history has crossed the borders of what would be referred to as "traditional histories" to other specialised themes in medicine, science and to a larger degree interdisciplinary research and writing. With this understanding among other things, we believe that the story of the African people must be told to reflect their own ontology, epistemology among others.

On this note, we envisage that this resource will serve as a teaching and learning tool as well as an agency to develop the interest for the writing of African history that has much relevance to the African people in the first instance and also to the wider world in the second instance.

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Entrance of the University of Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria, April 2017. Courtesy of Vincent Hiribarren.