



CIEA7 #38:  
DILEMMAS OF AFRICAN MODERNITY AND THEIR THEORETICAL  
CHALLENGES.

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**Forging African unity in a globalizing world:  
a postcolonial challenge**

*Balkanized, fragmented and disintegrated are a few of the qualifiers of some anti-colonial, Africanist and postcolonial criticism of colonization and push for a unified Africa. Yet, was Africa ever a unitary whole or claim a unified past? My paper explores the dilemmas of ongoing African unity talks against the background of the plurality of political agendas. It examines this in the contest of the African Union and in relation to external political interests. Arguing that the ongoing unity efforts have been stalled by parochial interests, it asserts that progress can be made only when the unity talks are understood within the context of the complexities of the continent and its history. It shows that issues of statehood, ethnicity and colonialism, which confront Africa today, can only be understood within the context of the nationalist struggles, socio-economic realities and lessons from the radical ideological framings of the post-independence nationalist projects of the 1960s.*

Unification, Nationalism, Colonization.

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## INTRODUCTION

Balkanized, fragmented, fractured and distorted are a few of the qualifiers of some anti-colonial, Africanist and postcolonial criticism of Africa's experience of colonialism (Adesina & Oteh, 2004; Zeleza, 2003; Ake, 2000). During the First African Conference of Intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora, the picture of a wounded Africa was played over and over again to explain the slow pace of development. Perhaps, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda's treatise underscored best the role of balkanization in underdevelopment of Africa. In that speech, he drew parallels to the USA and China and how they had made good economies of scale to demonstrate how the distortion of traditional social structures and fragmentation of Africa had stalled Africa's progress. Yet, has Africa ever been a unified whole? Can Africans claim a past that was unified in view of its diversities? To what extent can the ongoing reclamation efforts dwell on such claim and of what worth? While supporting the agenda of unity, I argue that Africa's pre-colonial past was diverse and not a unified whole. The emergence and opulence of the diverse kingdoms and ethnicities that existed side by side in those days do not demonstrate uniformity but co-operation and co-existence. I argue that it was diversity rather than uniformity that gave birth to the powerful kingdoms, rich institutions and innovative knowledge of Africa. I argue therefore that Africa achieved progress with what is now so feared by modern (read contemporary) Africa because diversity has become a basis for regression. While that past was not without its own share of woes as empire-building has its own violations and injustices, the achievements of those times should spur on Africa to unity through regional cooperation and integration. Regional cooperation and integration has been understood in the context of pan-Africanism as an opportunity for increasing Africa's bargaining power and for reaping the benefits of economies of scale but also within the context of the diversities of Africa. In today's unity talks African diversities rather than promote has become a tool for undermining regional cooperation and integration.

The 1888 Berlin Conference set the stage for the division and sharing of African lands and people by foreign powers and made possible the pillage and plunder of its resources in the name of civilization and modernization. The vast and diverse yet unexplored rich resources of the African continent were easy attractions for the colonial predators. The civilizing mission of Europe, in the form of the westernization of African peoples who still held on to their rich traditions and own unique pathways of modernization became the target of the cultural genocide that accompanied colonization. Not only were African worldviews and ways of life considered uncivil requiring Western-style modernization, the continent's resources were also targeted for the Western model of modernization. The results of such violations are not just the ever lingering socio-economic challenges that the continent has faced but also the fragmented and distorted identities and citizenships and attendant

complicated, often conflicting, loyalties, interests and agendas, which I argue pose a postcolonial challenge. Through settlement, occupation and association, the modernizing mission of the West ended in plundering African human and material resources and implanted controversial structures and systems leaving in their wake the hurts and wounds that continue to drive conflicts and violation outbursts on the continent. In these contemporary times, through international trade, development aid and development cooperation similar hurts and wounds are being perpetuated and even sustained.

In today's globalizing world, where economic integration has meant not just the elimination of market barriers but also the increasing disappearance of geographical boundaries in trade relations, the situation of Africa has been compounded. Through technological transfer, development cooperation and development assistance, many African nations find themselves at the receiving end of programmes that weaken internal controls and restrict endogenous initiatives. Multilateral and bilateral relationships have resulted in the implementation of development programmes that widen the reach of external partners but weaken intra and inter African cooperation. Under structural adjustment programmes, widely implemented by African states in the 1980s and 1990s, the poverty reduction strategies that have replaced them and now new aid modalities, the neo-liberal agendas have and continue to yield mixed outcomes. Growth in gross domestic products, infrastructure development and improved social services have been eroded by the shrinking of local enterprise, increasing environmental degradation, loss of national autonomy and widening inequalities. Progress in the socio-economic growth of African nations had been paid at great costs. Africa's so-called successes under adjustments have visited on the beneficiaries grave injustices with far reaching consequences regarding the sovereignty, autonomy and identity of the individual nations and the continent. These have been cited as compelling reasons for African unity (Otchere-Darko, 2007; Ake, 1996/2003; Mazrui, 1992). Indeed, this underpinned the pan-Africanist struggles a century ago. Such realization gave cause for the first Pan-African Conference which was held in London in 1900 at the instance of Henry Sylvester-Williams (UNECA, n.a; Stock, 2004)). Over a century later, Africa has still not settled on how to proceed and remains divided into the instantists versus gradualists, progressives versus conservatives and radicalists and conservatives; as if this was something new.

While such exogenous factors present their own challenges, Africa and Africans have in many ways not only extended but also created their own. The divided loyalties, misguided allegiances, resource conflicts and political upheavals, some of which have led to genocidal outbursts have been attributed to, among others, the misguided parochial interests and identity struggles by segments or entire populations, internally or cross-border. Internally, Ghana, Nigeria, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Congo and;

externally, Nigeria and Cameroun, Somalia and Ethiopia have been some of the hotspots. Yet, the continued interest and agenda clashes, all over the African continent were much anticipated in the post-independence unity efforts starting from Ghana's independence to the first Addis Ababa summit of 1963 and beyond. The independence declaration speech of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, was steeped in emancipationist politics, nation-building and pan-Africanism. The independent decade and the struggles before it were all steeped in pan-Africanism. At that time, the agenda was set. The anti-colonial struggles were also struggles for African unity. Africanists of the continent and beyond mobilized in various ways and levels to chart an agenda that would rebuild a united Africa, where its destiny would be in the hands of Africans. A new Africa was anticipated that was not only politically free from the shackles of Europe or any others, but also united and able to champion its own course of development.

In this paper, I examine efforts at African unity against the background of the multiplicity of political interests and agenda. I examine this in the context of the African Union talks. I argue that the ongoing unity talks have been simplified and enmeshed in a tradition that is self-perpetuating and protectionist of divisiveness. It suffers a paralysis that stalls progress in the ways that weaken the cause. I argue that for progress to be achieved we must of necessity break away from that tradition but at the same time return to the early pan-Africanist tradition; which I argue, understood the complexities of the continent and its history. I show that issues of statism, ethnicity, linguistics and colonialism, which confront modern African states today, are not new and can only be understood within the context of history and the lived realities of the peoples caught in its traps. Hence, such political talk needs to be informed and shaped by the radical ideological framings of the nationalist ideology of pan-Africanism. Such efforts, in West and East Africa, I argue, blended African traditionalism with modernity to rebuild the fragmented and fractured communities that colonization engendered.

The paper interrogates the question of tradition and modernity as two concepts that are intricately linked in change processes with incrementally reinforcing effects but which are often set in diametrical oppositionality to paralyze action. It also examines the pan-Africanist project and its place in the African unity efforts. It demonstrates that from the onset, an agenda of African unity underpinned nationalist liberatory and development discourse. Arguing that such progressive efforts have been stalled by parochial interests of political leaders, a case is made for a break that would foster the embrace of traditions that foster action toward progressive change and collective responsibility. Examples are drawn from Negritude, Conscientization, Ujaama and Harambee as critical nationalistic political agenda that remain relevant in contemporary times. In addition, it examines the current unity talks:

what they hold for Africa's future and how they might shift from paralysis to action leading from established traditions. Issues about colonial allegiances and their shaping of the new Africa are discussed in the context of finding new pathways. It concludes that modern Africa's future lies in its ability to learn from its traditions, which are rooted in unity in diversity and in ways devoid of mere rhetoric.

## TRADITION AND MODERNITY REVISITED

Discourses on Africa's growth and development are often steeped in its cultural history and, rightfully so, in ways meant to set it apart from other regions of the world but especially so from Europe and the West. For Africanist scholars, such as Franz Fanon, Kwesi Kra Prah, Masizi Kunene, P. Tiyumbe Zeleza, Ali Mazuri, Claude Ake, Catherine Odora Hoppers and Oyeronke Oyewumi, among many, that departure does not just establish difference or even dissonance but should also liberate African scholarship and people from imperialistic distortions and domination. Coming from a past where African peoples and cultures have been misunderstood and misrepresented and their histories told from a distance, for right or wrong reasons, Africanists must rightfully take their place in the world stage and embark of a re/telling of their stories from within in order to set the records straight. Not only have Africanists scholars been interested in repositioning Africa in the world stage as a credible participant in global civilization, there has been direct efforts to legitimize and revalorize African traditions as unique, diverse and driver for steering the course of Africa's modernization, as distinct from but connected to the West and/or East. Consequently, discourses on and about African development which blames its failures on imperialism, have often been framed in a return to cultural traditions or indigenous knowledge systems. Sometimes these neo-traditionalist efforts have been with their own problems especially when they lead to paralysis or take on the form of what Setunya Mosime (2010) has called renegade neo-traditionalism.<sup>1</sup>

While the return to African roots continues to dominate anti-imperialist scholarships, and rightfully so, its utilization for parochial political interests is troubling. The trouble presents in two ways. Against the background of the dynamics of contemporary times, they do not only fail to address Africa's own growth and resilience but also lack an appreciation of Africa's history and a historicization of those practices. Second, when the flight to tradition becomes a matter of political expediency and selective allegiance, they do not only render suspect the motives of the flyer, low and high, but also become the basis for discursive

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<sup>1</sup>In examining, voyeuristic returns to traditionalism in Botswana in time of HIV/AIDS, S. Mosime argues that violence have been visited on women in the form of rape and beatings. As well, rationality has been traded for brutal resistance, which she calls renegade neo-traditionalism.

paralysis. The insecurities and violence in many African countries today have been traced to elite manipulations of ethnic pluralism for parochial political gains (Apusigah, 2009; Prah, 2002, Schalk, 2002). Yet, this is only an extension of similar manipulations of the colonial powers, against which the post-colonial state purports to stand in contrast. Through indirect, and even direct, rule and associationist policies in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana, the British colonial administration perpetrated and used traditional authorities to entrench their hold on the people. Through assimilationist policies, citizenship became a bait and tool of the French colonialists for the forced allegiance and political cooptation of educated elites of Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Guinea in their own colonialism. The elite chiefs and scholars put their interest ahead of that of their peoples.

Today, in an era of postcolonial<sup>2</sup> state, these same elites use various means to perpetuate their selfish interests at the expense of their states and continent. Through nepotism, favouritism, despotism and patriarchy, African politicians entrench themselves in office. In both cases, under colonial and post-colonial regimes, divide and rule tactics have been a successful destabilization tool for setting one group apart from another and in the end one against the other thus manufacturing and entrenching one crisis after another. Undoubtedly, the modern African state must be built on its past traditions but not when such traditions become destructive. At independence when the early nationalists sought for African versions of governance, they found socialism a plausible alternative due to its affinity to African communal values. The versions that emerged in East Africa such as Ujamaa and Harambee built on traditional values with the view to improving the lots of all and not some or even set one group apart or against another. Yet, the return to traditionalism, i.e. neo-traditionalism, makes sense in a fractured continent consumed by increasing individualism and materialism in the name of modernization.

Tradition and modernity are two concepts that are often presented as diametrically opposed. Yet these concepts are intricately related as complements rather than in opposition. Hence, both concepts should be appealing in the search for practical action and responses such as those presented in Africa's development. A senior colleague and director of the Institute of Ayurveda and Indigenous Medicine in Bangalore, India, who has been vehemently opposed to attempts to split tradition and modernity argues that the "modern is emerging tradition." He explains that what is modern is change that sets a new tradition. Indeed, the collective productions of a people result in incremental change that shifts them from one position to another. Tradition and modern are thus different stages of a continuum, one propelling, resulting in and implicating the other. This is a constantly interactive iterative

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<sup>2</sup> Used in a narrow sense to refer to after colonialism and without the criticalness in its broad sense.

and transitional process that is hardly stable although it entails some of the linearity of westernized modernization.

In the context of African unity, many of the nationalists and pan-Africanist understood that our past traditions should serve as strong basis for integration and regionalism. Tradition became the basis for progress toward modernity. Here, I want to present tradition as a rallying point for modernization. This notion has been articulated by Katarxis (n.d.) as follows:

Tradition and modernity are not contradictory or exclusive. They are merely two different classes of things which can however interact beneficially. Tradition is still very often considered as a “thing of the past” without any contemporary legitimacy, and modernity is often mistakenly considered as modernism. ... the “contemporary”, the “modern” and the “traditional” are defined in a context of practice of “virtue” and in the perspective of the “good life”, based on the potentials of our time, and the selected wisdom of past times. (<http://luciensteil.tripod.com/katarxis/id 1.html> DA: 05/09/10).

The former is the appeal of this analysis since the later is characteristic of the western sense of modernization. This fluid notion of the traditional and the modern offers possibilities that are mutually beneficial. It makes possible the forging of connections between the past and the present and fosters the appreciation of history for renewal and growth. This is what has been intended in efforts such as Ujaama and Harambee as well as in critical Africanist discourses. It is a post-colonial position that should challenge misplaced neo-traditionalism in the search for an alternative to the violence of westernization in the name of development.

For the purposes of their paper, this notion offers two probable readings: one from an Africanist and the other Western. For the western sources of this meaning, where the journey to modernity has entailed a specific project of denying the past, a cautionary note of relevance is sounded. But for the Africanist, the note is one of taking a progressive reading of the traditional. As already noted, Africanist, whether scholars or politicians, consider a return to the past as a political project of self-reclamation and departure for western imperialism. The argument is however one of whether that past remains static and whether the persistent romanticization of that past is realistic in the face of evidence of a progressive African past that compares and even sometimes surpasses the West. That would be an engagement of the romantic. Africanists such as Molefi Kete Asante, Van Sertima, Gloria Emegwali and G. Sefa Dei project what I call radical rendition of progressive people with nations in fluidity rather than the fixity implied by Africanist romantics. Yet, their radical renditions of Africa's progressive past is often misconstrued and misused in a retrogressive manner.

For instance, in Claude Ake's *Democracy and Development in Africa*, he shows that Africa's attempts at development have been a non-start not just for its imperialist politics but also the failure by African states to set their priorities right. Ake raises the two issues of patronage and parochialism as the bane. In the process, he is not only critical of the persistent conflicts and their inherent contradictions which paralyse actions but also the inability of African states to seek strategic interests that can progressively drive their political and socio-economic interests. By extension African leaders have either been over zealous modernists devoid of their traditions or irrational traditionalists steeped in parochialism. He offers an alternative that calls for a blend of the traditional and the modern as follows:

At the beginning of the independence period, African leaders, with few exceptions, were so absorbed in the struggle for power and survival and so politically isolated by their betrayal of the nationalist revolution that they could not launch a national development project but instead opted for dependent development, letting their metropolitan patrons determine the agenda and find the resources to implement it. Thus, policymaking was largely divorced from political responsibility and development strategy was dissociated both from social needs and from the cultural and historical realities of the developing society. This dissociation led to development policies that have been more disruptive than developmental. Development could not proceed in a situation in which the national leadership had no vision or agenda of its own and relied on outsiders. (Ake, 2003/1996: 40)

What is clear from Ake's analysis above, is the need to understand the exigencies of contemporary Africa, not merely in the context of their past but also of the present, both of which are relevant for shaping Africa's futures. Ake's was not a proposal for African leaders to turn their republics into monarchies where blood relations assume office through the manipulation of electoral systems. Of course, it's a good example of the Africanization of Western democracies into monarcacies! Like even the West, kings and chiefs are for life and are inherited by their blood relations who wait in line for succession. In Togo and DR Congo these have happened already. In Senegal and Egypt monocratic successions are waiting to happen. Africa has also had its fill of despots of the past such as Eyadema, Mobuto, Obote, Amin and Boigny and the new age ones such as Mugabe, Museveni and Gadafi. Others have not been that blatant but have used or are using nepotism to amass and control the state and its resources. The question that remains however is whether that is the path African leaders want to follow in this era of increasing modernization and collective consciousness?



Africa's traditional heritage forms the basis of its identity; that which distinguishes it from non- Africans. It remains the foundations of a unique identity that has been shaped by not just settlement but by the realities of the clashes of various cultures resulting in cross-fertilization and renewals that can only be conceived as not fused by complementing cultures. It is what has been captured by Africanist scholars as its diversity and multiple heritages and, which forms the basis for forging integration. Thus to speak of Africa and its traditions as if there was one Africa is to deny difference and the very basis for appealing to tradition based on diverse cultures and peoples.

Often those who take a static notion of the traditional imply two things, among others. First, that Africa means black Africa and by extension that skin pigmentation is the most important bond for forging that identity. It also suggests that those Africans who are not black, if they ever acknowledge them, are not real Africans. Hence, the Arab north or even the South Asians or even white or mixed race Africans are not African enough. Yet, this is the reality of Africa today. A multi-racial continent, deliberately engineered or not, this is the character of contemporary Africa and any talk about unity must first reckon this in addition to that of the numerous countries with their diverse ethnicities, governments and peoples as the true African heritage. The nationalist fighters did not exclude the Arab north. Leaders such as Nasser and Sadat were at the forefront. Even when they took a position on apartheid South Africa it was for majority rule and liberation of an African state comprising Asians who had been forcefully removed from their roots to Africa, whose ancestors had laboured to move Africa that far and who have suffered not the same but similar humiliations as Africans as slaves, indentured labour and non-White people.

The second is the tendency of what, for want of words, I will call African traditionalists. These are Africans who have not been touched and for that matter scathe by any external forces and factors. There is an apparent Puritanism that is based on origins, roots and closeness with nature. A picture is often painted using characteristics such as ancestral worship, rural dwelling and simple living. Such traditional Africans cannot be Christians or Muslims, schooled, urbanized or even operate in the formal system, which is used to epitomize modernity in contrast to the traditional. The reality, however, is that there are no such Africans, they were there before but have not been for a long time now. The Africans of today are both and all. Hence, in the configuring of a new Africa, it is rationale to work with both. It is this notion of ethnic purity that becomes the subject of manipulation. Not only are leaders manipulating the multiple internal ethnicities but they are doing so even at the sub-regional and regional levels.

In the African liberation struggles, skin coloration and ethnicities did not matter, why should they matter now? Why should it matter when Arab, Black, Asian African suffer similar plight of deepening poverty, gross inequalities and stark rights abuses in a globalizing world? In this case, when skin and culture matter, it only denies collective agency and power to act for change. Yet at sometimes, it should matter. It should matter in times when racialist and ethnocentric policies unduly discriminate and perpetuate injustices on some but not others. They should matter because it is only when those differences are acknowledged and worked with that we can unify the continent. They should matter because it is only when we can all see ourselves as Africans of diverse races and ethnicities who make and contribute to the development of the continent in diverse ways that selective targeting programmes and policies can be adopted to protect vulnerability and empower all. It is only through such that divisive sentiments can be set aside. Hence, in the new struggles and pan-Africanist movement, we need to be guided by that notion and that history.

Additionally, it will appear that there is an aversion to modernity and insane fear of breaking from African traditions and the destruction of our cultural heritage. Founded on the notion of modernity as Westernization, this posturing justifiably provokes repulsive sentiments. This justification stems from multiple factors including the cultural alienation that accompanied the colonization process, sustains itself in developmentalism and globalization and which utilizes the tools of education, Christianization, trade and aid to expand and entrench its hold. Vilified as primitive, barbaric and uncivil, indigenous African cultural systems and practices were and continue to be considered blocks to development.

## PAN-AFRICANISM AND AFRICAN REGIONALISM

A century and one score ago, Africans and peoples of African descent recognized a need to build a united front in their struggle to restore African dignity and to liberate African nations from the shackles of colonialism. This move was possible even at that early stage and at a time not too far after European partitioning and colonization of the continent. The visionary leadership at the time understood the place of collective mobilization in a way that recognized not just the new divisions and the emerging allegiances. It understood how such allegiances were planted to manipulate and set one group against the other. It also understood the political implications of not forging a common collective struggle in spite of the artificial borders and more importantly to not allow those borders to become barriers but weapons of enforcement and bargain.

At the dawn of independence, there was certainty of what direction and form African liberation should take and clarity of doing so as a united Africa. Declarations such as “the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked to the total liberation of Africa,”

made by the first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, at the dawn of Ghana's independence, demonstrates the desire at that point for a new Africa freed from its fragmented past. For political, economic and social reasons the nationalist leaders at the time such as Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda imagined an Africa without its fractured and distorted past. Pan-Africanism was set as the agenda for not just liberating all of Africa and its splinter states but also positioning it as a powerful force in geo-politics. These pan-Africanist leaders, many of who became first presidents of their countries such as in Ghana, Kenya, Guinea and Nigeria, were wary of the weaknesses of balkanization and the need to debalkanize continent. Yet, they conceived this in the form of integration and cooperation such as to weaken the physical boundaries. They did this by advocating for the United States of Africa, which presupposed the existence rather than the dismantling of states in ways that forged closer links. Although unclear what form and shape a debalkanized Africa would take, there was reason for unifying the fragmented and fractured continent whose political patronage rather than social history was shaping its existence.

The proposal for the United States of Africa had as its elements economic, social, political and military elements. Economically, integration of markets and currencies was proposed. Socially, the collapse of artificial barriers for the free movements of people and goods was strong on the agenda. Politically, the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was a start and militarily the proposal for the establishment of the African High Command. The extent to which these have been achieved is up for all of our judgement. What is clear is that 50 years on these issues are still up not for judgement but discussions. Ironically, the reality of our time suggests that we cannot hold off anymore. Nkrumah explained this in no uncertain terms as follows: "We all want a United Africa, United not only in our concept of what unity connotes, but united in our common desire to move forward together in dealing with all the problem that can best be solved only on a continental basis." (UNECA: <http://uneca.org/adfiii/riefforts/hist2.htm>. DA 05/09/2010)

The reconstitution of the AU, the formation and strengthening of sub-regional unions such as ECOWAS, SADC and COMESA are pointers to the need to move more swiftly. Each of these constituencies has had to, in one time or another respond to some crises or the other. Economic, political and social crises in countries like Zimbabwe, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan have necessitated swift regional responses. In 2003, the Asmara Declaration proposed the adoption of regional languages that could assist in further integration. The East Africans and North Africans have done so well with Swahili and Arabic respectively but the same cannot be said of the rest of Africa. Hausa seems to hold promise for West Africa but actions to propel it remains unclear. Hausa is spoken (also written) in Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo and Cote D'Ivoire. With a stronger ECOWAS and the

movement of peoples within the sub-region, my suspicion is that the use of Hausa is becoming more widespread in the sub-region. These are strong indicators for unification which render hollow the continued hold on parochial nationalisms and especially so in a globalizing world. Ironically, such nationalisms are rooted in Westernism not only in the use of borrowed language such as English, French and Portuguese but also politics, trade and security.

Africa has had to stand up and respond in unison through regional or sub-regional bodies such as ECOWAS, ECOMOG and SADEC to various crises affecting member states. While Africa's own internal conditions represent their own challenges, happenings in the global contexts make unification not only compelling but also strategic. The sporadic responses which have now been institutionalized to form more responsive bodies have become expedient in the face of increasing globalization. Call it African localization of globalization, even as the continent becomes more and more integrated in the global world stage. A UNECA report confirms this:

The past two decades have witnessed a resurgence of regional integration groupings at a global level. The challenges of African development are compounded by the globalization and liberalization of the world economy, greater economic integration of financial and money markets, and a shift towards the creation of large trading and economic blocs. These developments offer not only challenges but also timely opportunities to Africa, and there is a need to broaden the concept of regionalism and to rethink Africa's regional integration strategy. (<http://uneca.org/adfiii/rieffrts/hist3.htm> DA: 05/09/10)

While corroborating UNECA, it is also the case that Africa has its own agenda of integration, from the pan-African project, which it needs to return in order to respond strategically to its regional needs and global challenges. Apart from the USA model, there is now also the EU that Africa can learn from as it returns to work on its pan-Africanist project. The EU in particular is fast redefining global development cooperation in the way that utilizes its regional structures as a powerful force during negotiations, at the same that the independent states maintain their sovereignty and bilateral relations. This does not only increase their influence in global politics and economics as a body but also opportunities for supporting and accelerating the development of weaker nations through regional trade, educational exchange and labour movement as well as regulations and governance mechanisms that benefit individual states and the regional body. This is a good example for challenging those who hold on to and use their various colonial allegiances to stall progress. More and more they have had to deal with the EU rather than their colonial benefactors resulting in cut backs on cooperation funds. The power of the euro today is another

example. This glowing example was not lost to the pan-Africanists. Rather, it informed their project and indeed we also have our example of the mass liberation of African states in the 1960s. Ghana became an important place for not only nurturing the ideology but also a training ground for Africanist leadership and a centre for mass mobilization. Zimbabwe and Tanzania did same for southern Africa in the struggle against apartheid. Resources and intelligence were mobilized all over to support Africa as a whole, rather than regional, national or ethnic causes. It is sad that in today's Africa, nationalism and ethnicity have become the basis for crippling the pan-Africanist project. Even within nations, ethnocentrism has become the mobilizing ground for genocide and constant conflict with dire consequences as in the case of Sudan, Rwanda, Nigeria and Ghana.

Yet, W.E. Du Bois, the great pan-Africanist, foresaw this in the following:

If Africa unites, it will be because each part, each nation, each tribe gives up a part of the heritage for the good of the whole. That is what union means; that is what Pan Africa means: When the child is born into the tribe the price of his growing up is giving part of his freedom to the tribe. This he soon learns or dies. When the tribe becomes a union of the tribes, the individual tribe surrenders some part of its freedom to the paramount chief.

(<http://uneca.org/adfiii/rieffrts/hist3.htm> DA: 05/09/10)

This analogy should be familiar to any African who grew up in their roots. Even in the Diaspora, this notion of community has been employed to keep families and black peoples together. In migration, internal and external, we hold on to these time test values. This is what Du Bois proposed a long time ago. Although he did not examine the situation of the chief who worked for the colonialist like it happened in Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria or the chief who raided, annexed, enslaved or even sold off neighbouring peoples, he highlighted the principle of communalism and what it means for individualism.

One impediment to the Africa unity agenda has been the reluctance and even insecurities and suspicions of sovereign nations. Leaders, dating back to the early nationalist era, appear to have been more keen on guarding their turfs rather than heed to forging a united Africa. Recent efforts to fast forward progress have been marked by such insinuations. At the 2007 AU summit in Accra, Africa was returned to the same old divisiveness of the 1960s which gave birth to the Casablanca and Monrovia blocs. Today, we speak of the Instantists and gradualists or radicalist and conservatives. While the former categories are calling for a united Africa now, the latter want to steer a slow course. The later including Kagame of Rwanda and Mkapa of Tanzania cite the same old tales of uncertainty, insecurity and diversity to stall progress while others including Gadafi of Libya and Wade of

Senegal argue for unity now starting at sub-regional groupings and with those nations ready while working to include all. Perhaps we need both radicalism and gradualism and not one or the other. Regional integration efforts that is steered by a radical declaration starting with some members and gradually including others worked for Europe, why not Africa? Such integration has always underpinned the pan-Africanist project, which has so much been misconstrued and even misappropriated to serve imperialist ends. Some African leaders were convinced to believe that they were going to lose their positions to Nkrumah, the strongest and most radical advocate who was fast establishing his leadership as a liking candidate. Today new hesitate leaders are expressing similar fears out of what can be called the possible shortening of the newly found positions and the luxuries that attend them. Today, the fear is Gaddafi's leadership. Yet, Gaddafi is perhaps the only North African leader committed to continental Africa. If for anything at all, Gaddafi's leadership should serve as an important link for integrating the Arab north and the rest of Africa.

The truth is that pan-Africanism and African integration have been seriously misconstrued. The tenets of pan-Africanism of old and now suggest a blend of the radical and gradual. African needs a radical commitment and agenda of change that must work for that resulting using both radical and gradual tactics. The establishments of economic, security and political institutions have always been viewed as the starting point for forging an African unity in the pan-African project. Nowhere in that project has it been stated or even been suggested that a united Africa is a one nation Africa otherwise the proposal for the United States of Africa will not have made any sense. I say this wary of the form of the United States of America has taken. Yet, I dare say so because Africa is not the Americas and has its own understanding of unity, one based on diversity. African socialism, which characterised post independence development and suffered similar misconstructions is an example. African communal living which was so aptly defined by Nyerere's Tanzania under Ujaama and Kenyatta's Kenya through Harambee were projects that understood that living, working and sharing together was not same as European Socialism or the Communalism of Marx and Mao. In spite of its own implementation challenges, the implementation of Ujaama in Tanzania has made that country not the most affluent but most equitable country on the continent. The defiant Nyerere, unlike Kenyatta who succumbed to Western imperialist pressures and unlike Nkrumah, whose conscientization mission was cut short through military action, succeeded in building a society that Tanzanians worthy of their citizenships can and are proud of today. Tanzania adopted Ki-Swahili, an indigenous language with blends of Arabic and European influences. Also, Tanzania's Arab population who like the Germans had delivered their own doses of violence on the indigenous Africans, were not thrown out or even sidelined. Nyerere worked tirelessly to unite the island of Zanzibar with Tanganyika in order to build the union of Tanzania. The benefits have not been freedoms

and liberties for all but high levels of parity especially in the area of gender but also in ethnicity and class. These are examples for African unity in this globalizing world.

In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah embarked on radical socio-economic programmes in educational expansion, health delivery, infrastructural development and industrial development that were aimed at accelerating progress while challenging imperialist policies and programmes. The defiant Nkrumah, like Nyerere, insisted on import substitution industrialization and the building of infrastructure that would increase internal and regional autonomy. His political agenda of conscientization tackled neo-colonialism head on through education and training at the same time that his pan-Africanist activism was strongly articulated at the continental fora and the world stage. This sowed the seeds of fear that gripped fellow African leaders and local Ghanaian opposers as well as paved the way for the imperialist manipulations that resulted in his fall and eventual demise. A similar political project was carried out in Franco-Africa by leaders who understood the dehumanizing outcomes of the denationalization efforts of the French colonialists. Scholars like Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal and leaders like Sekou Toure fought tirelessly to restore African dignity and citizenship while recovering African values and identities through the Negritude. The African humanism agenda of the Negritude served to restore African dignity and forge a unified struggle for liberation.

Today, African leaders have adopted what they call a gradualist approach, which is based on the strengthening of sub-regional cooperation for the eventual integration at the continental level. This cannot be considered a radical deviation from the radical position. The only disjuncture is in implementation. The OAU has metamorphosed into the AU yet has not been weaned of its traditional sloppiness. The AU maintains its tradition of slowly responding to African needs and accelerating the pace of integration. While our leaders express strong need to unify this has also been marred by slowness in action. It still lacks the impetus to call irate leaders to order or even sanction when necessary. Today the sub-regional unions are much stronger but the same cannot be said of the regional union and the integration efforts. African states and leaders continue to make pledges which they persistently neglect to honour. They are quick to heed to western pressures at the expense of the continental union agenda. A case in point is the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) which it was trying to shove down the throats of African nations. While debates were widespread and calls were being made by subregional and regional groups by civil society and political unions, nations like Ghana, Nigeria and Cote D'Ivoire were quick to succumb and nothing has been done to them. That a huge country like Nigeria with the benefits on a large internal market, wide range of resources, oil power and political stability should kowtow to external pressure can only be considered an irony. Nigeria should be standing shoulder to shoulder

with any world nation such as USA for the Americas and UK and Germany for Europe by leading the African region in its development rather than pan-handling for resources and aid! African unity will remain mere rhetoric without such leadership yet each time a leader seems to appear fears rather than good sense takes over. The cases of Nkrumah and Gadafi are evidence. The noble prize laureate, Prof Wangari Maathai of Kenya recently affirmed Africa's leadership crisis during an Eminent Persons Round Table on the opening day of the Pan African Media Conference in Nairobi in March 2010 by pointing out that Africa lacks visionary leadership (<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/201003190458.html>. DA: 05/09/2010). This should be understood to mean a selfless and forward looking leadership committed to making bold decisions to change that moves Africa ahead. Such a leader should be able to blend African traditions with the offerings of the contemporary world and dare to speak out and to be different.

K.Y. Amoako (2010) in his appeal for expediting action on African unity explained:

We know that with renewed political impetus, it is important that we also take a candid and critical look at our record, in order to make our shared aspirations of the African Union a concrete reality. Why has African unity fallen so far short of its early promise? Let me offer a few of the key reasons. For one thing, political commitments of member states to regional plans have far too often not been translated into national policies and action. For another, national policies have conspired against a higher degree of private sector-driven regional integration, resulting in low levels of intra-regional as well as inter-regional trade. On the institutional side, the integration agreements have contributed little to the higher levels of industrial growth envisaged for the continent's development. Overlapping memberships of the regional economic communities have worked against the overall exacerbated objective. And let us not forget that in every subregion, endemic political instability exacerbated by persistent conflict has undermined the effectiveness of regional integration.

(<http://www.uneca.org/adfiii/riefforts/ref/speech/ky1.htm>. DA: 05/09/2010)

Amoako speaks eloquently to the challenge of African unity by illuminating the core of the problem. Continually, African leaders make commitments but do not act on them. The unity now (radical) or later (gradual) seems to have become yet another tradition. Yet, this is far from the sense of tradition offered by Shankar (2010). After 50 years of political independence, the unity efforts have not been able to go past the gradualist tradition, as excuses upon excuses are offered to delay action. Excuses such as the building of internal structures, strengthening of sub-regional unions and need for a well-thought out a strategy have remained in the discussion for far too long. During a press encounter in March 2010, hosted by ALLAfrica Global Media, the majority of participating leaders, political and civil,



although agreed on the need for integration were absorbed in demonstrating and protecting their national interests. Kagame, Odinga and Mkapa, in their responses to questions on African unity concentrated on explaining how their nations were fairing rather than how they were working toward African unity (<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/201003190458.html>. DA: 05/09/2010).

Some kind of lip-service was paid to the unification efforts by suggesting stronger commitments to individual nationalisms. To be fair, there are practical challenges that need work but should they bloc progress? In the case of Europe, they did not have to be at the same level to establish the EU! Why should Africans seek a level ground even before the unification takes place, when the point of unification is to promote such levelling? Is it not the same fears raised above that are gripping this crop of leaders and even the older ones in these globalizing times when integration is inevitable? This is a postcolonial challenge in a stage of the rapid integration instanced by globalization.

## AFRICA'S FUTURES AND THE POSTCOLONIAL CHALLENGE

The postcolonial has been defined diversely to include a blending of the pre-modern, modern and beyond. As a discursive project, it doubts projects that offer uncritical universalizing positions, conclusions and judgements. Rather, it challenges and explores possibilities for constant contestation and confrontation meant to open up discourse, offer fresh insights and expand possibilities and opportunities. It thus challenges majorities as well as minorities, metropolises as well as dependences and/or, superordinates as well as subordinates to exercise agency in interrogating and contesting their positions in their bid to re-shape and improve meaning and responses. Agathangelou and Turcotte (2010: 2) corroborate this when they argue that postcolonial criticisms contribute "epistemic, knowledge frameworks and material insights to hegemonic power relations, and in particular global violence" by specifically raising questions with geopolitics and its implications for various subjects. It is this challenge that should appeal to African leaders.

The African unity efforts can benefit from the postcolonial challenge by not just offering the space for interrogating and contesting imperialists spaces to unveil their implications in Africa's development challenges but by also illuminating existing discourses and opening them up for fresh meanings for charting new courses and building strategic alliances. Also, it will enable Africa to embrace the blending of the traditional and modern as equally valuable and legitimate spaces for participating strategically in the globalizing world. It will afford the embracing of both in ways that are mutually reinforcing so that as Shankar

(2010) asserts the modern can become an emerging tradition. It will help set that debate aside for the good of Africa.

Meanwhile, the seeming oppositionality between the gradualists and instantists, radicals and conservatives remains worrying. However, a third way is emerging that seems to hold promise, if only it does not suffer the same paralysis that often holds and keeps down radical ideas for change in Africa. During the 2007 AU summit in Accra, Prime Minister Meles Zenawe was quoted to have said that: “there is only one position, of the practicalists,” in an emotional response to the schism around Gradualism and Instantism. What is that practicalism that Zenawe opted for? The practical realities of Africa in the form of poverty, disease and inequalities amid affluence and vast resources endowments require practical action. Africans and African leaders must act with one conviction and act with one voice in order to stem the tide of ever present imperialism and underdevelopment. Africans must challenge yet work with tradition and modernity toward purposive ends that respond to African needs collectively and individually, now and the future. This is a postcolonial offering.

At the 2007 Summit, the participating leaders concluded on setting a time table for the “realistic but radical integration process” (Ochere-Darko, 2007). The following year in Addis Ababa, at the heads of State meeting, this position was given further reaffirmation. For how long can Africa maintain the rhetoric? When will Africa ever be ready to take action and swiftly too? Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA, Lalla Ben Barka corroborates Zenawe’s position as follows:

I strongly believe that Pan-Africanism is even more relevant today that it was in the 1960s. Then, it was necessarily visionary but it was this very idealism that served to limit Pan-Africanism to a dream, limiting its scope and to a large extent derailing it. When the hard reality of development set in, the ideals of Pan-Africanism were quietly forgotten and were put on shelf to gather dust. Yet, Africa’s place as an equal partner at the global table can only be assured if it thinks and acts regionally. (<http://www.uneca.org/adfiii/riefforts/hist.htm>. DA: 05/09/2010)

Ben Barka sums up the urgency of regionalism today but also the weak responses to Pan-Africanism as the bane. What is evident, in view of the present dire socio-economic conditions, which have been blamed largely on the injustices that Africa has suffered in terms of unfair trade relations and incriminating donor conditionalities, is the need for radical change.

As we move on, I will like to re-echo the lessons from the past in the form of the traditions set by the pan-Africanist and the early nationalists. I also want to state that Africa

cannot afford to snail walk in the face of the challenges of these time. Want it or not the peoples of Africa, fortunately, and not the leaders, unfortunately, are breaking the barriers. This sounds the warming bells for the wake up. The people move when they find sites of prosperity. Ghana and Nigeria and now South Africa are hotspots for people movement on the continent. I was recently impressed by how Ki-Swahili had made it possible for people within the East African community to move freely to seek better career fortunes within the region, when at a workshop in Tanzania. I have also been horrified by the mass and xenophobic reactions in South Africa, which resulted in the wanton destruction of life and the properties of fellow Africans. Unfortunately, those who suffered in South Africa were blacks and not whites, some of who were citizens of nations the hosted the Anti-Apartheid leaders.

I want to invite us to return to the founding ideological traditions. In Ujaama and Harambee we find communal living models that promote equalitarianism and exemplary leadership. If well implemented good governance can be promoted. Conscientization will empower people to think Africa and claim an African nationalism that is based on Africa for Africans. In Negritude, we find a citizenship model that is based on Africanist identities; open, warm and welcoming. These ideologies are up for exploration for building the economic, political and social integration, regional and unification models that are African-centred but are also appreciative of a new Africa that stands for growth and progress for and with the people; the masses. It should stand the challenges of globalization and fulfil the postcolonial promise of a truly liberated Africa. Above, these must be rooted in pan-Africanism.

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