

**History, Culture and National Development: The Role of Kenyan Diaspora in
Constructing a New Politics of Culture and Identity**

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Introduction

My address in this paper focuses on the relevance of Kenya's history and nationalist struggle to identity formation and proceeds to argue that identity is a social construction. The intersection of consciousness and historical experience is the basis of such identity construction. It is a product of complex processes of historical interaction between people, institutions and their social practices in expressing selfhood. The construction and expression of identity can either fortify or undermine national solidarity if the leadership function is not played out with vision and tact. National identity based solidarities are built up in social struggles for emancipation, solidarities that have often been abused and wasted away. Alternative identities have been cobbled out which tend to weaken national solidarity by playing out an ominous politics of exclusion thereby undermining the prospect of social cohesion and generating multiple terrains of conflict.

*The precariousness of contemporary politics of identity in Kenya seems to affirm the philosophical insights of Frantz Fanon when he states in **Black Skin White Masks** that the colonized subject cannot make a meaning for himself. Leadership and intellectual projects of social transformation are supposed to be critical projects in national development which if carried out on the basis of a near sightedness of exclusionary identity politics inevitably lead to forms of resentment and resistance that generate and sharpen terrains of social conflict. There is no way economic growth can take place in an environment that is wracked with deleterious social conflict of the type occasioned by tribalism and other related absurdities of social behavior and action. That is why it is necessary to diagnose and explore cultural logics of power and give an account of the extent to which culture is constitutive of other identities as well as demonstrate how these identities and their cultural repertoires constitute useful social capital that can be harnessed in national development.*

The fact is, forces of globalization are producing new kinds of social identities and movements for political and economic change. In view of this, the whole process of leadership must be seen in terms of the position it should occupy in mediating the encounter between the global forces and the concrete social and political settings in which our historic local cultures are evolving.

The leadership function should be energized by consultative proclivities and synergistic decision-making if the intellectual and material outputs of various components of our national citizenry are to be meaningfully brought into play in national reconstruction and development. It is in this sense that the need to identify the role of the intelligentsia and particularly the Diasporic intelligentsia in a new cultural politics of national construction becomes apparent. Re-coursing to the prospects of our reservoir of professional and intellectual capital in Diaspora in the West and elsewhere needs to be undertaken with philosophical hindsight as well political and economic tact in order to harness its locational advantage and professional as well as material endowment in helping not only the reshaping of identity politics in Kenya but also ignite the country's troubled locomotive of development. The Diasporic cadre of the intelligentsia can help push horizons of discourse along these charters that will help the Kenyan political elite to get out of the impoverishing politics of connivance and geniality in tribal politics and parochial agendas.

In this sense, the key contribution of my presentation is to provoke a new quest for theoretical and empirical exploration of the changing nature of our cultures in their experiences of encounter between the global and the local in circumstances that militate for the need for a changed citizen perception and identity transformation. The contemporary Kenyan society like other societies is steeped in grave challenges of globalization in relation to a wide range of social relationships and issues. It is, therefore, germane to explain and problematize the concept of identity as an idea that can encapsulate a lot of definitions and their attendant ambiguities of social adventure where there is no sense of national vision. The concept of identity needs to be reworked to create a national sense of purpose, political community and also form a new basis of fostering social cohesiveness.

If reprehensible attitudes and practices associated with the domestic political class can be avoided by the Kenyan Diasporic caucus, authentic processes of development and social change as well as public policy recommendations which can shape new identities in Kenya's public life may be generated. We need to focus on the concepts of development in terms of our Africanity rather than our differences. Our citizenship is complex in the sense that if Africanity is a form of articulating our human beingness as Africans, that it bespeaks our African identity our identity is not a matter of blackness brownness or whiteness. It is not a matter of our ethnic or religious belonging despite the fact that ethnicity and religion have been labeled as critical markers of identity in improperly mediated perceptions of the essence being.

The essence of being should be conceived in terms of preservation of human dignity and the upholding of a social order in which fairness and social justice to all citizens is respected. Our blackness or ethnic grouping is not an end in itself; it is a mere representation of majoritarian or minoritarian fractions of our geographical location in which our sense of identity is developed.

Improper use of majoritarian and other social categories has led to misdeeds that have contributed to Africa's fractured geographies as marked not only in its ethnically and racially diverse citizenship but also a wounded cadre of transmigrated citizens we call refugees. Mismanagement of the African polity has led to swelling ranks of refugees and these émigrés have contributed to the making of global Africa embodied in the Black Diaspora. Needless to overstress the complexity of ethnic and national identities in Kenya and, in fact, reveal how such identifications have evolved over time amidst struggles for social justice which decolonization represented, there is more relevance in accounting for how the ends of struggle for decolonization were sabotaged or reconfigured by political agents who undermined the whole purpose of resisting the economic and political changes wrought by colonialism. As such, Diasporic Kenyans comprising political and economic refugees have failed to offer an alternative basis for social action even when the country degenerated to a circus of bewildering politics of exclusion which culminated in the eruption of bloody episodes of ethnic cleansing.

The eruptions of political relations culminating in these criminal acts stained the image of the Leviathan Moi regime and yet it seems to be recurring in the present era. It is my view that the Diasporic community inhabits a different problem space that can enable it to enter into meaningful dialogue and take the rightful position in fostering positive interactions. There ought to be initiated such interactions outside and within the country in a new politics of ideological becoming which raptures vestiges of discriminatory colonial barriers and post-colonial tribal charters of political demagogues. This position requires embodying the idea of change, flexibility, fluidity and re-negotiation of identity in relation to demands of social change and national construction. It implies confronting and challenging dominant cultural elements which stifle cross-cultural conversations that are required for building and solidifying a new sense of political identity. A new politics of ideological becoming must be deployed to bind the wounds of a highly fractious Kenyan society with a goal to spur a new prospective process of identity formation. This process is necessary in confronting the senselessness of ethnic separateness and bigotry which bedevils the psychology of leaders and citizens in different social locations of an otherwise beautiful country.

The above mind-sets may have developed because of lack of good leadership mediation and the development of a congenial culture of tolerance of the so-called the other. The absurdity of this criminal psychology is exhibited by persons from different social backgrounds who appear in essence to stand in different relationship to structures and systems of power, privilege and authority in a country whose contours of the problem space we need to understand adequately.

History, culture and national development

If the actions of the Diasporic community are to be motivated by an ethical demand, the different social and personal identities which appear more insecure and contested can be re-negotiated and re-invented in a national cultural calculus under a new refreshing social stimulus they have engineered. Ethically speaking, identities need to be negotiated circumventing the dangers of bigotry and intolerance and their attendant violence since cultural processes are regarded as increasingly central to the effective operation of business, government and voluntary associations. There is need for Kenya's Diasporic community to demonstrate a sense of national responsibility by showing an extensive interest in articulating the relevance of place and position as well as the resources required for the construction of a new sense of identity in the country. This is particularly critical as Kenyans begin examining the power dynamics that can be made possible in cultural geographies that have long been fractured by socio-economic exigencies and discriminatory policies, policies which criminalized difference while undermining politics of alternative thought. This community must take stock of the social, human and financial capital at its disposal and begin to focus on their use and deployment for development purposes.

While figuring out points of entry and engagement of the Kenyan society in order to spur development dynamics, it is important to point out that the paradigm of social emancipation developed by western modernity seems to be undergoing a deep crisis. Social emancipation seems to have lost its appeal and that is why themes of exploitation, economic domination and marginalization have lost their luster. Social emancipation can be re-invented based on creative visions emanating from Africa and this process requires to be understood as a form of counter-hegemonic globalization. It should rely on local and global linkages and alliances among social groups around the world in social constellations which go on resisting social exclusion, exploitation and oppression as caused by hegemonic neo-liberal globalization. Even if the social sciences produced in the northern academy over the years appear to be exhausted in their drive and capacity for renovation, innovation and renewal our scholarship must be sufficiently prophylactic in addressing African problems.

This must be the case even if scholars elsewhere have ceased to be the conscience of progressive social transformation and have become devices of legitimizing absurdities inherent in new forms of monolithic empire-driven capitalism. They are bedeviled by apologia for imperialist ills if not consecration of the status quo and the social injustices it reproduces (Rojas, 2003). We cannot afford to be entangled in such elusiveness of behavior that shows an apparent loss of a sense of intellectualism and its social responsibilities.

Betrayal of the Nation

In the light of the above, it appears that the contemporary neo-liberal discourse has one fundamental blind spot. It treats the present as if the present has had no history (Shivji, 2003). History invokes the notion of change over time, human agency, the role of material circumstances in human affairs, and the question of the notional meaning of historical events. The nature of being in poverty stricken and marginalized Africa raises serious ontological concerns if ontology points us to the need to study the nature of being and existence. Every reality generates its own ontology and, therefore, ontologically speaking identities in Africa are hybrid because of biological and cultural mixing over the years should we view our being from the vantage point of history.

*This raises the possibility of “learning from history” so as to suggest the possibility of better understanding ourselves in the present given that in order to understand the present, we must demystify the past. By so doing we will create a better understanding of the forces and circumstances that brought us to our current situation (Little, 2006). There is need to interrogate history in defining politics of identity and culture while recognizing forces which have destabilized and inscribed in the national psyche a destructive dominant ideology that has led to what Frantz Fanon calls pitfalls of national consciousness. Fanon (1961) argues in **The Wretched of the Earth**, the African leadership failed at achieving liberation across class boundaries because its aspirations were primarily those of the colonized bourgeoisie, which was a privileged middle class which perhaps sought to defeat the prevailing colonial rule only to usurp its place of dominance and surveillance over the masses.*

As Fanon would suggest, colonialism may only be understood as a complicated network of complicities and internal power imbalances between factions within the broader categories of colonizer and colonized. He decried the way in which nationalist leaders often replicated the systems of coercion and domination that shaped colonial rule.

*In **The Wretched of the Earth**, Fanon blames the failings of nationalism on the intellectual laziness of the middle class. Fanon suggests ways in which intellectual leaders often betray the national working-class. The retrograde steps with all the weaknesses and serious dangers that they entail are the historical result of the incapacity of the national middle class to rationalize popular action, that is to say their incapacity to see into the reasons for that action (Fanon cited in Maspéro, 1965). Those in Kenya and those in Diaspora may need to reflect on this Fanonian indictment.*

*For Fanon, before independence, the leader generally embodied the aspirations of the people for independence, political liberty, and national dignity. However, as soon as independence was declared, far from embodying, in concrete form, the needs of the people in what touches bread, land, and the restoration of the country to the sacred hands of the people, the leader revealed his real inner purpose: to become the general president of that company of profiteers impatient for their returns which constituted the national bourgeoisie. Faced with a growing retinue of profiteers, syndicateers and racketeers in the Kenyan political economy, here lies a cancer of betrayal within African nationalist movements which Amilcah Cabral saw as a decay of unity that undermines the potential for defeating imperialism and the now collapsed system apartheid in Africa. Aidoo was to clearly demonstrate in **No Sweetness Here** the disillusionment that arose as a result of the failure of the national liberation struggle to improve the lives of any one but the most elite classes of society (Aidoo, 1997).*

For Aidoo, in view of the emerging patterns of global apartheid in which, paradoxically, African political economies lie entangled in persisting neo-colonial trappings, independence failed to live up to its promises. Its aftermath marked the beginning of increasing disillusionment as it became clear that for the majority of the people nothing had changed and that domination and exploitation simply continued under a different name (Aidoo, 1997). It is inexpressibly ironical that there developed a form of cultural dependence on the West despite the richness of African culture. The bottom part of our pot of Africinity seemed to have cracked. Yet in our African experience the expertise in the repair of broken pots is, to say the least, colossal. However, someone has to take the responsibility of doing it. Observably, culture is a social matrix which provides the context which guides social behavior. It is a complex realm of beliefs, attitudes and ritual practices.

Understanding of cultural dynamics is essential to the proper perception of what is needed to be done in confronting and meeting our society's quests and desires to promote health, prevent disease, improve literacy levels and spur people into productive actions and amicable social relations. There is need for dialogue, debate and cultural conversations in order to produce social knowledge which equips us with understandings of our cultures and enable us to devise strategies that provide us with not only the social, cultural, and economic environments that influence human health, economic productivity and behavior but also with the means of incepting the necessary processes through which these environments can positively exert their influence positively.

In the language of contemporary globalization, the newly globalized world is culture-coded. Culture has replaced society as a key organizing concept for classifying and ordering social reality. From this point of view, and perhaps in a very simplistic sense, global cultural identities are considered more reliable indicators of the state of the world than internal social processes (Mamdani, 2003). Culture talk which globalizing Western dominated media is popularizing as a norm assumes that every culture has an essence that defines it. From this point of view, politics is said to be a consequence of culture. This looks problematic but trudging on along these charters of ambiguous adventure strategic talk of culture also assumes the world of Africa is basically pre-modern and while moderns are said to make culture as masters of culture, pre-moderns to which Africans are relegated are said to carry their traditions, somewhat in the manner of passengers who carry baggage on a journey: they are not masters, but mere agents, agents of culture (Mamdani, 2003). It is up to us to change these, somewhat mischievous, assumptions.

While bearing in mind the notion of the situatedness of the historian there is need to contest beliefs and practices of that ideology upon which the wholeness of perverted identity is constructed. There is need to claim epistemological radicalism that will bring us out of the woods of ambiguous adventure. Our sense of focus and profundity of thought must emerge as a product of our present intellectual situatedness in the concreteness of poverty whereby our quest for national building authentically draws from lessons from an already demystified history. Why? Because epistemologically speaking identities are impure and unstable and the demystification of our past must offer us with a basis of crafting a new national consciousness that bellies the requisite political identities that will create and be custodians of a new public morality in Kenya. This is because identities are open-ended (Appadurai, 1996).

Historical knowledge and consciousness should offer a basis of intervening to alter the emphasis on the act of constructing falsities and stereotypes which other unmediated agencies make while at the same time endangering national security and citizen's well-being. Nietzsche's admonition in the use and abuse of history stated that you can explain the past only by what is most powerful in the present. In rewriting national history it is the present that always gives the past whatever meaning there accrues. Demystification of the past is not a defeatist invalidation of the process of writing history; it is merely a frank acknowledgement of a reality of interpretation (Nietzsche, 1957). Jean-Paul Sartre and Friedrich Nietzsche both attempted to replace traditional morality with an ethics based on authenticity. The time for authentic leadership and authentic institution building has come.

The Politics of Identity: Nationalism and patriotism

Kenyan must conceive of authenticity in their actions, according to their social location, the medium of social action and the purpose or ends of their action. The practical lesson of authenticity ought to be reflected in role performance. There is need for reshaping identity politics in Kenya because it seems to pretend that it can manufacture authenticity through the reliance on stereotypes and urban myths which exclusionist politics perpetuate. The theoretical and empirical exploration of the changing nature of cultures, identities and narratives in contemporary society in relation to a range of social relationships and issues needs to be made. Identity is a concept that can encapsulate a lot of definitions and many differences. Despite the conflicts which identity politics kindle domestically and abroad in Diasporic communities, part of the identity crisis is due to the fact that identity is a much abused concept, which tends to have either too great or too little meaning. It is a concept that has grown ambiguous, on account of being overloaded or under-loaded with meaning. It is a concept that has undergone too much wear and tear by too many. It seems to lose its value as analytical category.

We need to be rescued from parochial structures of identity. Madan Sarup (1996:11) says; identity is a construction, a consequence of a process of interaction between people, institutions and practices. This position embodies the idea of change, flexibility, fluidity, negotiation of identity, in relation to social change and dominant cultural elements. Because we are in a crisis, that is why we must confront the nature of our identity and sanitize it in a new politics of ideological becoming in this era when there are many politicians but there are few statesmen. Thus, the politics of ideological becoming should inspire the generation of new processes of identity formation by persons in different social locations, who occupy different relationship to structures and systems of power, privilege and authority.

There must be a new extensive interest in the relevance of place and position for the construction of new sense of national identity in Kenya. This is crucial to the articulation of new senses of identity given the worrisome absurdity of prevailing notions of purity that are oblivious of biological and cultural mixing that has taken place over the years.

A nationalism that is informed by these obnoxious realities is a nationalism that leads to toxic leadership and it is not useful. A new sense of nationalism impregnated with patriotism is desirable and can be taken in as a fundamental component of the new identity formation. There is need to rethink the dynamics of identity through the construction of Diasporic based Kenyan and Kenyan descended identity public discourses. We should, therefore, be showing growing concerns about how social cohesion and solidarity can be supported in unstable national and global environments.

The political agenda must re-shaped by a new politics of identity, with new and diverse groups claiming the right to recognition and to being stakeholders in a variety of areas. The diasporic community is one such entity of stakeholders. What needs to be explored more fully are the ways in which inter-community dialogue might enhance collective identity. What role can the Diasporic community play in bringing about this conversational bridgehead? The problem or answer lies in the rethinking the issue of identity, whose fundamental reference is social location. The current terrain of conflict is largely defined by politics of ethnic and cultural difference. This has led to a sort of politics of identity in which marginalized communities or their members are embattled to re-affirm their unique identity and their quest for inclusion.

It appears to be a struggle over definitions of or claims to politically and culturally sensitive categories of being/becoming limited here to ethnic and religious identities that I find objectionable. In this raw sense of the word, identity is the sense of being, or of becoming, a badge that distinguishes one from others in a perception that is entangled in Cartesianism which is itself bereft of a transcendental motif. Descartes' famous line "I think therefore I am" is a crucial index of the novel stress on identity that has not been mediated by any positive leadership function. He laid the ground of the rationality of the reasoning subject as the ground of certainty (<http://fhss.byu.edu/POLSCI/BOHND/301/Descartes.htm>).

This sense of self provided a basis of animalism. The dialectics of human "animality" are exhibited in the failure to embrace a transcendental perception of being and its social essence. That is why we need a new phenomenology of politics by which negotiating uncertainties generated by emotions and desires will enable us to tame unruly emotions of tribalism and the passions for corruption that undermine national integrity. Kenyans at all levels of society need to develop a high degree of moral obligation and social responsibility. There is need for a new sense of national identity to emerge in our people that will allow citizens of diverse origins to feel they belong to a nation of diverse cultural heritages yet they are bound by a homogeneous, unified national project of social transformation. Different initiatives ought to be generated to negotiate better terms of national integration and consolidation of independence. Indeed, there exist many theories that inform us that identity is determined. In some of these theories, institutions such as the family, the school, the place of work, and, increasingly, the media play a crucial part in determining one's role. The Diasporic community can be an effective institution builder. Role theory makes "us aware of the myriad ways in which the behaviors we enact in interaction with others are influenced by the positions we occupy in society and vary as we interact with different persons (cf Mead, 1934).

The nature of the life of the people is in their culture and what it circumscribes. That is, why there is need for a national culture in which there will be seeded prospects of good life. By its nature, culture touches our lives individually and collectively in various ways and nationalism has a relationship to culture. As such, there is need for rethinking of our sense of nationalism. As Zeleza says, nationalism has been one of the world's most important ideas and instruments of political leverage and legitimacy whose ideology and institutional anchor is the nation-state (Zeleza, 2006). The nation-state remains a crucial site of organization of social life. It is a meaningful and coherent space of struggle for empowerment for billions of people across the world. Nevertheless, socially, nationalism has diverse ethnic and civic dynamics. Its ideological and intellectual referents and representations also vary. Nationalism should be mediated to provide a basis for building a disposition of patriotism in citizens. Patriotism is the nurture of pride in a country's virtues and demonstrating an eagerness to correct its deficiencies. Nationalism without patriotism leads to a blind pride in one's country regardless of what it does. Patriotism is a lively sense of responsibility and indeed Kenyans abroad and those within the country need to embrace a high degree of national responsibility.

Although good policy outputs ought to have cultural relevance in this broad sense, policy is no panacea to all problems relating to culture and its relationships to our social, economic and political systems if it is not bellied by a profound sense of national responsibility. Such policy simply stands as a facilitatory strategy for building the nation-state and its identity as distinct from other nations without providing sufficient grounding for politics of positive identity formation. This is a politics that should be cultured in a distinct national consciousness.

Confronting the reality of underdevelopment

When looking at the question; who is leading development in Africa? One sees the need to interrogate global development and underdevelopment of the type we see in Kenya today whose causation is multi-faceted (See Aubrey, http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~ga320592/aubrey/past_scholarship.htm). These concerns are not being addressed adequately given the narrowness of the African productive base, the distorted class structure, the unbalanced markets and poor labor mobility. The agriculture sector plan of New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) provides an extensive assessment of the state of African agriculture and rural poverty, but it is limited in its treatment of the structural factors/forces, and external (global) causes of rural and agricultural underdevelopment which afflicts countries like Kenya.

Poverty in Africa has reached alarming levels in which half of the population or 340 million people live on less than US\$1 per day. The root causes of rural poverty in Africa have been attributed to various forces both internal and external (Moyo, 2002). Africa lags behind in cereal production to all other regions in the world, in 1999 alone there was production gap of almost 900 million metric tons between Africa and Asia. It is a supreme irony that just at the time when African leaders were putting the right policies in place and were showing results, overseas aid to Africa fell from US\$32 per person in 1990 to US\$18 per person in 1998. What role the Diasporic communities of Africa with their lobbying potential play in reversing that trend? It is possible for politics of identity, human rights and particularly the right to development to be taken into the streets of Western metropolises.

The major threat facing NEPAD in mobilizing resources is its dependency on the Bretton Woods Institutions and donor countries to be forthcoming with investment finance, against a backdrop of dwindling development assistance from donor countries, bilateral and multilateral institutions including the Bretton Wood Institutions. This beggarly approach comes against a worrisome background of ballooning food import bill and external debt (Moyo, 2002).

Underdevelopment has partly been exacerbated by parochial politics of identity which acutely entrench agendas of social exclusion as opposed to national integration based on a sense of fairness and inclusivity. Because of lack of a creative leadership of national identity transformation, politics of identity attending to nationalism was shaped by an intellectual discourse whose consciousness assumed that the impact of colonialism on African societies was mainly economic.

In the decade that followed African political independence, militant nationalist intellectuals of the generation that inherited Africa's colonial legacy focused on the expropriation of the native as the great crime of colonialism (Mamdani, 2005). This generation assumed that political economy was the most appropriate tool to come to analytical grips with the colonial legacy. Needless to mention, Kenya has an imposing colonial legacy in its legal and economic policy framework that needs to be addressed. 2005). The limitations of political economy as a framework for political analysis has somewhat hamstrung development given that development is not so much about allocation of existing resources but rather about mobilizing resources that are hidden, scattered or badly utilized (Freinkman, 2001). The above colonial legacy notwithstanding, it is pertinent to point out that the process of state formation generates political identities that are distinct not only from market-based identities but also from cultural identities faced with a growing tendency to root causes of violence in cultural difference.

However, there was a failure to historicize the political legacy of colonialism, of the colonial state as a legal and institutional complex. It is a complex that reproduced particular political identities in political economy type of discourses. The tendency was to discuss agency in an institutional void, by focusing on how it was harnessed to the colonial project (Mamdani, 2005). The absence of a properly mediated transition from politics of decolonization to politics of national development calibrated with a sense of patriotism led to a material driven politics in the name of having a share of the national cake. There developed a sense of deprivation which created a quest for power that was not properly mediated. The overthrow of colonialists led to a mere replacement of colonial oppressors and exploiters with African oppressors and exploiters. This was a cadre of nationals who had lost sight of the need for a national project of social transformation. Independence then became a mere experience of political succession without genuine ingredients for a stable political transition based on clear ideological outlines. The quests of nationalism were utterly betrayed in a post-colonial political culture which lacked both patriotism and civility.

The world today is rapidly changing and under the influence of economic rationalism and globalization. Nevertheless, in an attempt to rush to modernity we tend to replicate all the mistakes of the western world and in the process lose the very elements of our society that could teach us how to avoid those mistakes (Power, 1998/1999). That is why cultural identity ought to be viewed as one of the critical ingredients for nation-building and attainment of national sovereignty. In view of this politics which have generated an ethnic competition for the control of the state, Kenyans have failed to identify, nourish and monitor those cultural values which are critical in laying a solid foundation for national development.

There is need to understand how different strategic logics of political competition create incentives for political actors to emphasize different kinds of ethnic identities. In view of the existence of a Diaspora that has roots in these identities, although it is struggling to construct its alternative identity, Kenya needs a different architecture of nationhood. Diasporic Kenyans can help the country go beyond a mere movement of skilled nationals into new situations a movement of musical chairs. They can offer a means of forming new levels of identity up and beyond the fundamental ethnic or tribal group identity inspired by the new solidarities and links they are forging abroad. There is need for a well considered ideological basis of altering a country's political institutions as to provide platform for effecting change in the kinds of ethnic cleavages that emerge. These cleavages emerge as axes of political competition and conflict in Kenya.

Culture is one of the major motivation factors for the development of not only tourism as the case seems to be in contemporary social practice but also for developing a proper national character and congenial ethos of management of public affairs of the nation. In policy terms there has been a failure to recognize the critical role intellectuals ought to play in social transformation of the country. Neither has the role of politicians, peasants and workers been delineated in a clear ideological blueprint. According to the role theory, a character's role defines the basis of identity formation.

Diasporic communities must take their positions in orchestrating national transformation. It is when the orchestra begins to play together that then something amazing happens. The cymbals, when they sound alone, produce a harsh sound. Ethnic groupings are like such cymbals whose cacophonies are disquieting to the mind. Yet, all of a sudden, this dissonance of their clashing sounds is transformed into euphony, pleasant music to the ear when taken into the whole movement of the musical score. Vision provides such a unifying frame. Society at large needs a vision to unify the different identities which constitute it. Society's vision cannot be unconscious (CADI, 199-2004).

Tribalism is cacophonous and a significant segment of a country's citizens must be aware of and share the euphony vision of national integration. Towards this end, Diasporan intellectuals and investors can begin to enforce their vision on the current criminal psychology of Kenyans that seems to have been rendered criminal by politics of ethnicity, its parochialism and corruption. Our personal identity, or social self, emerges through a complicated socialization process. This process involves giving symbolic meaning to other people's behavior and that is why we talk of national symbols. Giving symbolic meaning is a process known as symbolic interaction without which it becomes difficult to develop cross cultural understanding, a sense of national pride co-existence and tolerance. During socialization, we learn the language of the culture we are born into as well as the roles we are to play in life. Through socialization we come to develop a sense of self especially how we learn how to function in society (cf Mead, 1934). The specific outcomes of socialization are either a healthy attitude or a pathological deviant attitude. Tribalism is driven by a deviant attitude.

Internalization of ideology

Althusser's description of processes of the internalization of ideology are important in understanding the formation of political identities in so far as all ideology has the function of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects. For him, there is no practice except by and in an ideology (Althusser, 1971). Althusser is saying that these groups of ideas control the way we act, because we always act in accordance with our ideas, our thoughts. People create ideology to help us make sense of our world, to give it some order. An ideology is created out of our ideas. According to Althusser, in our present Western Society, the most important and the widest-reaching ideological state apparatus is the educational apparatus. At one extreme of social practice, Terry Eagleton argues that ideology should be understood in terms of a complex set of effects in discourse. In this way he preserves it as a way of analyzing social practice while avoiding the implicit nihilism of the postmodernists (See Eagleton, 1996). Hegemony is created when subjects are made to internalize the dominant ideology.

While socialization refers to the general process of acquiring culture, anthropologists use the term enculturation for the process of being socialized to a particular culture. Political socialization is important in the process of personality formation. A new personality is required in Kenya through a process of civic engagement in a conscious process of political socialization.

While much of human personality is the result of the socialization process, this process can mold it in particular directions by encouraging specific beliefs and attitudes despite the fact that we do not have a homogeneous identity but that instead we have several contradictory selves. Identity is a process and it is heterogeneous (Sarup, 1996).

Role of national Diasporas in Asia in development

India and China provide the two great Diasporas of the world. India has a great presence in the Western mind. The Chinese Diaspora is culturally loyal to Chinese civilization but often has been said to have little regard for the dictatorship that runs the homeland. By contrast, democracy is at the very core of India's national being. Millions of Westerners have read Indian novels in English. This is not true of Chinese novels. Indian movies, which are popular all over Asia, are starting to penetrate Western consciousness (Sheridan, 2006). All this is happening since the 1990s when the overseas community emerged as an acceptable ethnic identity around the world, be it the well-mobilized Chinese overseas community or the Jewish one. Overseas or Diaspora Chinese have become an economic asset for the development of China in the past two decades, investing substantially in their homeland. The bulk of the very considerable foreign investment in China over the past two decades has come from Diasporan Chinese. The factors that have catalyzed this movement of funds have ranged from Diasporic sentiment to the reshaping of policies by the still-Communist homeland government to accommodate Diasporan capitalism (Bolt, 1996).

In China and Israel, Diaspora investors and entrepreneurs played a critical role in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) setting up joint ventures, including export domestic companies thereby showing how ethnic and cultural links could be instrumental in facilitating integration into the global economy as well as transferring of professional and managerial skills (Freinkman, 2001). There is need for efficient utilization of Diaspora's potential given that Kenya has one of the most highly educated and broadly successful Diasporas. Many Diasporan communities have much better control and access to skills and resources as they relate to financial, human and social capital that can be mobilized to accelerate the dynamics of the transition process from underdevelopment to development.

Although India looks up to overseas Indians for foreign investment, that cannot be the only reason for engaging the Diasporic community. The Diaspora gives India a wide reach in the international arena, through engagement with a wide range of countries. India has a natural link with people of Indian origin and their strong desire to remain connected with their Indian heritage (Singh, 2003).

Hindu India is only one ethnically majoritarian intellectual form of national identity thriving amidst the territorial anxieties of globalization, and basing itself on the idea that each national state is a unique domain of a singular, unitary and definitively national culture. National identity and international collaboration still constitute the ground on which we must work to address problems in the present with knowledge that connects the past and future. Despite the challenges of globalization, the national state retains its organizational clout, institutional basis of identity conferment and also its territorial authority (cf <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~dludden/LuddenHIMALmaps1.htm>).

There are talks and discussions on the meanings of home and place, displacement, migrations and Diasporas. Distinctions are made between immigrants, economic migrants, refugees and exiles. There is also a great deal of interest in the self, subjectivity, and in recent developments in the theory of the subject. How does one represent oneself? There is talk about different positionalities. Identity can be displaced; it can be hybrid or multiple. Identity is not an inherent quality of a person but that it arises in interaction with others and the focus is on the processes by which identity is constructed. It can be constituted and re-constituted through community: family, region, the nation-state (Sarup, 1996). Several world economies have benefited by capitalizing on their links with national Diasporas (Freinkman, 2001). China, Israel and India have received a major developmental push from their nationals based a broad from private transfers including remittances to their families sent by Diasporic communities.

China and Israel also succeeded in complementing this financial support by active involvement of the Diaspora in their economic development. As we consider the possibility of creating an alternative framework of national development, we need to realize that ideologies which are formed as means of domination and resistance are never simply free to set their own terms but are always marked by what they are opposing; no ideology takes shape outside a struggle with some opposing ideology (Sarup, 1996). One crosses frontiers and boundaries but identities are not free-floating; they are limited by borders and boundaries. There is, therefore, a distinction between space-based action, an action which a person can move on from, and space-bound action, which is limiting to the agent (Sarup, 1996). The range of human behavior is so wide, and groups maintain boundaries to limit the type of behavior within a defined cultural territory. Boundaries are an important point of reference for those participating in any system. Boundaries may refer to, or consist of, geographical areas, political or religious viewpoints, occupational categories, or linguistic and cultural traditions.

Creating a new national culture based on a new national consciousness

National culture, nationalism and ethnicity have been three of the major concerns of social analysts worldwide (Onta, 1999). The individual in society, his or her subjectivity, sense of selfhood, and experience of a life world, all have a cultural dimension. As Jagtenberg and McKie (1997, 124) put it, statements about identity always communicate about “who we think we are”. And since pronouncements about who we think we are vary so greatly across time and space, it would seem prudent to approach any statement about identity equipped with both flexible intellectual parameters and critical self-reflexivity. We need a theory of the self to know which side we are on, both epistemologically and politically.

Epistemologically, we need to know who we are in order to act. Selfhood therefore provides perspective and a sense of identity which are necessary for conscious agency. Formulating a theory of the subject provides agents and agency that can be the vehicles of resistance and change (Spears (1995, 17-19). It is important to look at ideas we hold about the self in a changing world because our notions of self and the symbols we deploy will be of direct relevance to the worlds we build in the future. The breadth and diversity of all that we identify with self and subjectivity will clearly determine our ability to deal with difference, otherness, and multiplicity (Jatenberg and McKie 1997, 148).

Unfortunately, matters related to the domain of culture have been prone to restriction to discussion to talk about food, drinks, song, dance and ornaments consumed in nation by which we keep tourists and national politicians entertained and amused. The history of the actual agents and institutions circumscribe the reproduction of these aspects in contributing to the growth a distinct national character require re-thinking and deploying in the building of the dominant national culture. These efforts are missing from the foregoing narrow focus and accounts of culture. We need to distinguish between the history of the formation of the Kenyan state and the history of the development of Kenyan national culture or irredentist nationalisms. These two histories are related but they are not the same.

With respect to the history of Kenyan national culture or nationalism, we need to pay attention to the world that various agents have produced, engaged in and embodied in the struggle for the Kenyan nation over a period ranging from pre-colonial, colonial to the postcolonial eras. It means describing richly the work of agents in the form of individuals, groups, institutions and the state and the social-structural conditions within which they produced the activities, affiliations, celebrations, emblems, identities, idioms, institutions, memories, monuments, representations, statues, symbols and texts that embody and engender the entity called the Kenyan nation.

In view of generating pertinent public discourses on these, there is need to establish reciprocal bases of national culture, which will require the cultural authentication of the nation-state. There is need for production of national thought that is better understood as a single phenomenon tilted towards the production of ideology of peoplehood in Kenya, that is, national culture (cf Fox 1990:3).

There is need for use of the single term nationalist ideology that may lead us to see the processes by which these conceptions develop, alter, and inter-grade in real life. Usually there are several coexisting and even contradictory perceptions, which constitute competitive nationalist ideologies. A national culture emerges from the confrontation over what the nation should and will be among competing national ideologies. The character and power of national culture are matters of historical understanding that should guide social practice. They are conscious social constructions, not cultural givens as many would have us believe. Underscoring the fact that any national culture is an outcome of historical practice has an important implication for the perceived relationship between material conditions and national cultural forms. Cultural materials constitute strong emotional commitment by individuals to the nation (Fox 1990:6-7, Fox 1989).

Studying the making of dominant Kenyan national culture should entail the writing of the history of inventions of important elements of that culture; the projects that support their growth, and the various media that should facilitate their distribution and reproduction. In his influential essay, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness", Frantz Fanon describes the process of national liberation, in fact predicting in advance, that while nationalism unites people in the anti-colonial struggle, once this struggle is over, its end result is simply to establish and in a sense liberate the national bourgeoisie who has been kept down by colonial domination (Fanon, 1961). National culture under colonial domination is a contested culture whose destruction is sought in systematic fashion. It very quickly becomes a culture condemned to secrecy.

Conclusion

History teaches us clearly that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism. The triumph of nationalism must lead to a well designed project of national transformation and development. Talking of culture, it is the national consciousness which is the most elaborate form of national culture. National consciousness is patriotism, and this goes beyond nationalism. It is the only thing that will give us a profounder perception of our roles in national development in an inclusive sense. The problem of national consciousness and of national culture takes on a special dimension in Africa.

The birth of national consciousness in Africa has a strictly contemporaneous connection with the deprivations and abuses Africans have suffered over the years (cf Fanon, 1961). In this sense, the responsibility of the African as regards national culture is also a responsibility with regard to the global African culture, in other words, Africanity where the Diaspora represents global Africa.

The provincial thinking of ethnicity and its associated parochialism is, therefore, retrogressive and it exhibits a bizarre and despicable pitfall in national consciousness. Its retrograde instincts with all the weaknesses and serious dangers that they entail are the historical result of the incapacity of the national middle class to rationalize popular action as Fanon would say, that is to say, they demonstrate an incapacity to see into the reasons for that action as we have pointed out earlier. It then appears that our contemporary conditions of existence have generated numerous challenges that foster deep uncertainties that require to be tamed through acts of self-critique as Kenyans. In this critique we ought to realize the importance of alternative knowledge production about our Kenyan society without falling into unfortunate misuses of history and other disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences.

Scholarship is not about swings in intellectual fashion, it is a matter of creating superior thought and knowledge formations that can be useful in transforming society. The historian cannot divorce himself from the outlook and interests of his age. That is why every Diasporic Kenyan member of the historical academy and other allied disciplines must ask himself or herself what the contribution of his or her scholarship to knowledge is towards national re-conscientization and identity transformation. Kenya like many other Third World countries is faced with gigantic developmental challenges that require urgent tackling. To understand a problem in its deepest sense requires extremely critical ways of thinking, viewing, understanding and analysis of the problem and that is why Diasporans ought to come in problem-solving social additives. In their coming, they should realize that the roots of the national problem need to be examined and both sides of the argument visited before a sustainable solution is mooted.

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