Going to the People

Amílcar Cabral's Materialist Theory and Practice of Culture and Ethnicity

> *« Always bear in mind that people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children »* (Cabral).
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> *« It is not the existence of a race and ethnic group or anything of the kind that define the behaviours of a human aggregate. No, it is the social environment and the problems arising from the reactions to this environment and the reactions of the human beings in question. All this defines the behaviour of the human aggregate »* (Cabral).

It is now fifty years since Amílcar Cabral wrote his first academic pieces on soil erosion in Cabo Verde. These pieces would mark the beginning of his intellectual concern and his life-long quest with the well being of the people under colonialism, during the liberation struggle, and in the future that he envisaged for the people of Cabo Verde and Guinea Bissau. Today, however, such sentiments and a disposition, like the above quotes from Cabral, may appear to be both platitudinous and commonplace[1]. In addition, they speak in and of a language that very few people, activists or academics, use today, while implying an aim – the achievement of national liberation and socialist development – that looks almost arcane and appears positively utopian[2]. Yet, when set in the context of an engagement with and observation

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1. These remarks come out of a discussion with a number of my undergraduate students in a seminar course in African Studies. Many had heard and have even read Fanon. Few had heard of Cabral ; not one had read him. To some, his ideas were a revelation, especially the way in which he located culture ; to others his ideas were commonplace, not especially original and, as one student put it, « dated ».
2. In fact, throughout this paper I will generally continue to use the language that Cabral himself used, however imprisoned in a past and however awkward it might presently seem. In any event, to do otherwise would be anachronistic and even dishonest to the spirit as much as to the letter of Cabral's liberationist vision. In another paper (Idahosa, forthcoming), I claim that in fact Cabral's language is an entirely appropriate diction to use for both national independence and development. Talking about the exploitation, oppression, the forces of production, etc. for example, is no less legitimate because this is the language that is used, as is his discussion of classes, like the petty-bourgeoisie, because they have fallen out of fashion, or in some cases even said not to exist. In fact, class has almost entirely been written out of the academic vocabulary in Africa. Who uses class to explain the passage of

of peoples over a long period of time, Amílcar Cabral stands almost alone among African nationalists. Even if his focus is under the inspiringly challenging conditions of achieving national independence, rather than in the depressingly forbidding environments of post-colonial crises, he continues to offer some crucial guidance about the importance of identity and how it is formed and situated[3]. One such crisis, as the late Claude Ake put it, is the « conflict among nationalities, ethnic groups, and communal and interest groups » which broke out after the independence and where the resulting « struggle for power was so absorbing that everything else, including development, was marginalized » (Ake 1996 : 5, 7). The crisis of development and economic stability can, in part, be linked to the crisis of managing ethnic relations and conflict.

It is also the context of crisis that Francis Deng has in mind when, in a recent short piece on ethnicity in Africa, he writes that

> « Except for Post-apartheid South Africa, Africans won their independence without negotiating an internal social contract that would win and sustain national consensus. The constitutions for independence were laden with idealistic principles developed outside the continent. The regimes built on them lacked legitimacy and in most cases were soon overthrown with no remorse or regrets from the public. But these upheavals involved only a rotation of like-minded elites, or worse, military dictators, intent on occupying the seat of power vacated by the colonial masters. Such leaders soon became their colonial masters' images » (1997 : 30).

It is not clear that the regimes built on the European-type constitutions « lacked legitimacy » at the time of independence or in the immediate thereafter. However, Deng's position, like many others' recent judgements about the post-colonial African states, demonstrates the distance gone from the certainties of nationalist optimism, forty, thirty, and in some cases, just twenty years ago. For many, the resonance of a principled and meaningful African nationalism seems far away. The inequities between privileged elites and the masses and the manifest failures of national economic policies have caused Africans to turn away from the central state and to the, often, divisiveness of African ethnic politics which re-emphasize their tribal, regional, or other communal identities, so much so that to some the state is now deemed « irrelevant » to most people's lives (Ihonvbere, 1994 ; Dornboos 1990)[4].

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history ; who, amongst African philosophers, uses the concept and is there a Marxist and neo-Marxist political economy or sociology of Africa anymore? It is remarkable that class manifestly continues to exist in Africa, as it does elsewhere, in terms of socio-economic place and existential disposition for those who live it, but is absent from intellectual conviction.

3. People are apt to forget that beyond his own direct experience and disposition, Cabral was greatly influenced by the experience of his Mozambican colleague and friend, Eduardo Mondlane, who was assassinated in Dar es Salaam in February, 1969. His famous speech, « The Return to the Source, » was dedicated to Mondlane and was about « how to integrate himself with the reality of his country, to identify himself with his people, and to enculturate himself through the struggle with them » (A-M CABRAL 1995 : 2). The importance of valorising people's experience, even, and especially through popular culture, was an essential part of Cabral's project of mobilising them for both the liberation and reconstruction of Guinea-Bissau, and which became a pedagogical and ideological tool for others, whether intellectuals, artists and members of the party (KENNEDY 1986).

4. Of course, much of the diminution of nationalism's moral and practical significance has to do with the internally induced malaise by politicians, militaries and elites, and the spread, in part consequence of this malaise, of the rise of sub-state identities. It is also due to the wholesale questioning of the nation-state project and conventional conceptions of sovereignty with the globalisation of people and markets, and of globalizing institutions that set policy options for so many African states.

Cabral, one of Africa's most prescient and principled meaning-giving nationalists, thought extensively about and lived through such problems nearly thirty years ago ; he also sought to bring a scrupulous and purposeful nationalism to the people of Guinea Bissau and Cabo Verde. This vision, and no less his legacy, appears today dilapidated by the many ravages to both the land he so longed struggled to liberate and to the intellectual tradition he claimed to inform its practice of emancipation with. It is because of his integrity, his foresight and much else in his practice as his reflections on them in his writings, however, that he remains one of the most insightful commentators on working out « the internal social contract », or at least establishing a foundation for its elaboration[5]. In particular, one way in which he informed an understanding of the groundwork for this compact was through a discerning understanding of culture and ethnicity, the absence of which continues to divide so many African nation states today, and which is indeed one of the reasons for the lack of legitimacy currently found in so many of them.

In particular, what is of singular significance for Cabral, is the need to understand the context of production within which people work. Although production is clearly not the only aspect of trying to grasp the status of identity in its multiple forms, Cabral would see an intimacy between what people produce, their material interests and their identity, all of which he believed were historically, not genetically, given. The interaction of class, production and culture was an enduring theme of Cabral's political thought and practice. Because of his central interest in the material welfare of impoverished producers, and because of the fact that many of these producers served as the foundation of the national liberation struggle, just as some would be opposed to it, Cabral's practical and normative attention to identity are necessarily implicated in class analysis and production relations. In what follows, I will outline some of the contexts, both practical and theoretical, which informed Cabral's evolving, but obviously unfinished understanding of the role of identity, and of class and ethnicity in particular. Nearly twenty-five years after his death, Cabral is worth revisiting for both the compass, as much as the limitations, of his analyses.

Ethnicity : « the Resilient Paradigm ? »

Most African nationalists sought to avoid serious theoretical and practical engagement with the problems entailed by the relationship between culture and political practice. Consonant with the prevailing modernist assumptions of the time, it was taken for granted that cultural attitudes directly determined political practices, and many nationalists were fearful of its implications. This apprehension was especially true for the understanding of the most directly politically cultural manifestation of diversity amongst peoples, ethnicities, often at that time of independence and in the immediate thereafter called tribalism : shared cultures, where often, but not only, language and a mythology of common descent operate to sustain a collective

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5. Few would disagree with the sentiments of the Guinean filmmaker, Flora Gomes that « when you speak about honest men, men who have cultural and political stature in Africa, you cannot but mention Cabral » (Gomes 1995 : 197). Yet, after breaking away from Cabo Verde in 1980, Guinea-Bissau is now in a state of near civil war and in circumstances of economic collapse.

identity and conception of self within a community. Many African nationalists invoked the nation ahead of the perceived dangers of tribalism and clan, or national integration over local or regional identity, of secular nationalism over religious affiliation[6] ; while Marxist-inspired movements were inclined to emphasise social class rather than ethnicity. Because most African states inherited from colonialism a multiplicity of ethnic groups and the character of African politics was such that national allegiances and state boundaries were rarely coincident, the state primarily solicited a territorial and civic meaning towards « the nation » (Young 1982 ; Tamarkin 1996). Invoking the *ethnos* was often received suspiciously as embracing issues of « tribal » domination and forms of an ethnic maldistribution of resources. The inclination towards stressing national integration over historical, and sometimes colonially created or reinforced cultural identities, was also a practice reflected in the prevailing Marxist and developmentalist literature, both at the time of national independence and subsequently. Much of the developmentalist literature, for example, held « forth about Africa's transition from primitivism to the situation of the modern state [while] the indigenous representatives of the independent regimes… wished to transform their plans for domestic domination "into national integration", whatever the legitimacy they derived from "liberation struggles" » (Bayart 1993 : 42). What frames Shaw's (1986) notion of ethnicity as the « resilient paradigm » in African studies is that despite periodic shifts in explanatory focus, the existence and saliency of ethnic consciousness in Africa is hardly controversial anymore, just what constitutes it and the explanations of how or why the consciousness takes the forms that it does, and, from the standpoint of policy, how to respond to it.

Ethnicity is a highly contested term. Most discussions of ethnicity involve a location within a continuum between two mutually overlapping, although analytically distinct models. The first, the *primordial,* is where ethnic identity is said to often involve and sustain great emotional group devotion and provide and offer an ongoing emotional balance and a mental environment within and through which the social world is constructed and understood. It provides a narrative of the self by situating it through a network of fundamental and enduring cultural meaning and significance, and by being grounded in an existential cultural logic[7]. The second, the *instrumental and socially constructed,* views ethnicity as frequently expressing itself through instrumental forms, as in much recurrent political and social intercourse, as a vehicle for a group's own material benefit at others' expense. Ethnicity is viewed as consciousness animated through social, economic and political practices that are bound in some way to power and interests, and where the very nature of it being made active can point to its contingent, contextual, uncertain and historically constructed nature. Ethnicity, like any social, economic and political identity or network, is not a natural given but must be built through investment in procedures directed to the regulation of group identities and relations, usable as a likely source of benefits, to the groups themselves, and/or those who either support or profit from the groups, and

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6. Although not all. There's the famous Nigerian exchanges between Azikiwe and Ahmadu Bello, in the mid-1960s, when the former requested of the latter that he « forget their differences ». To which Ahmadu Bello replied, « No, let us understand our differences. I am a Muslim and a northerner. You are a Christian and an easterner. By understanding our differences, we can build unity in our country » (PADEN 1986 : 6).
7. One of the best analyses of its kind is BURNHAM'S (1996) study of Northern Cameroon.

against others who might benefit or seek to exclude (Eriksen 1993 : 55-59 ; MacGaffey 1995 ; Young 1995 ; Osaghae, 1996 ; Amselle 1998)[8]. Both basic models also contain, implicitly or explicitly, normative judgements as to how things ought to be : respectively, that differences between people should be acknowledged as facts of life, and that rather than accept ethnicity as given, it ought to be explained as a constructed identity[9].

At any point along the lines between the poles of the conceptual heuristic and normative spectrum, there is also a concern with various kinds of boundary configuration between groups. In particular, there is the interest in the *cultural* composition of the groups, the nature of exclusiveness and inclusivity of group relationships and inequality between them, as well as the extent to which these boundaries are maintained exogenously, perhaps through the state, possibly through the control over resources by others, or through practices utilised from within, having to do with, for instance, class differentiation and/or gender control. Whatever variable is used devolves into a view of ethnicity in terms of « how societies, social systems, or structures function », or *structure*, and those « who approach it in terms why people do the things that they do », or *agency* (Holy and Stuchlik quoted in Eriksen 1993 : 57). That is, the relationship between the institutions, values, practises and resources within a community to sustain it ; and why collectively communities behave and act in the ways that they, for example, rebel or resist the pressure to do so. Presently, most who use the concept of ethnicity to categorise social and political fields and practices would probably concur with the Comaroffs in saying that, at the most general level, « ethnicity is the product of specific historical processes, and tends to take on the "natural" appearance of an autonomous force, of a "principle" capable of determining a whole social life » (Comoraff & Comaroff 1992 : 60). In short, although in flux and mutable, ethnicity as consciousness and as practice contains a powerful stock of emblematic or symbolic resources and affective ties – language, religion, a kinship system – which are often, though not only, made most manifest in political economic activities.

Whatever the debates about its conceptual status, no one seriously believes that ethnicity can simply be seen as an expression of the introductory phase of development to be outmoded by modernization and cannot be seen, simpliciter, as false consciousness or « the manipulation of colonists, imperialists or even the incumbents of the contemporary State [and even] Marxist political scientists now recognise this. As the analysis of concrete historical situations inevitably comes up against this point, one simply bows to the evidence » (Bayart, *ibid.* ; Dornboos 1990). Cabral's experience and analyses are so pertinent here, in that he was someone who studied and analysed specific socio-economic situations. He also combined a view of ethnicity in terms of how societies, social structures and institutions

8. Of course, many theorists of ethnicity, even those inclined towards the primordialist approach, argue that it cannot be « natural » in the biological sense, except insofar as all human beings are in some way born into an identity, and therefore are born into an ascription of it that has not been of their choosing. This is part of Burnham's argument about fundamental cultural logics, which, perforce, have some degree of « natural » identity, even if it can be changed. Some writers prefer the term *genetic* to illustrate the way that the power of a congealed ethnicity has of being able to sustain itself through various cultural continuities.

9. As AMSELLE (1998 : 37) has put it, « the postulate that [ethnic]tradition is perpetuated by a sort of characteristic inertia must be discarded ; rather one must look for reasons for its relative persistence ». That is, ethnicity is assumed as given rather than investigated why it takes the form that it does, or doesn't.

function, and why people act in the way in which they do[10] ; was both (under specified circumstances) a developmentalist [11] and someone who used materialist and very often Marxist concepts, albeit amended ones, to explore concretely the relationship between identities and people's socio-economic environments ; and he also sought to meld these identities to some shared conception of an emerging nation space in the process of a national liberation struggle that was rooted in a conception of common citizenship, but which did not deny the entitlements of identity.

From Practice To Theory

It had been Fanon who had suggested that more specific knowledge is required about the people to avert the pitfalls of the subject, the subaltern, of de-colonisation becoming the object of the post-colonial state, which in so many African countries it has become, rather than citizens of nationalist promise. In Cabral, we have a thinker and activist whose focus was always specific and who provided us with an elaborate analysis and understanding of the social and economic circumstances of the peoples whom he saw as the eventual constituencies for a viable national political space.

Like Fanon before him, Cabral's political theory began with a critique of colonialism and the limits of the nationalism he saw elsewhere in Africa in the middle-1960s to the early seventies, before his death in 1973. This critique was a political critique ; it envisaged an alternative set of political values, practices and institutions that were to be actualised in the emerging nation-state. His critique was also *a cultural* critique. Cabral often spoke of the way in which colonialism at its very core organized the constant repression of the cultural life of the people as being, which for him meant that the re-assertion of a commitment to cultural traditions has to be at the centre of both anticolonialism and authentic pluralistic post-colonial state and society[12]. To do so required an understanding of people's experience as a means of formulating a practicable theory of resistance.

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10. Cabral's analysis of class, culture and ethnicity is constantly caught between the agency-structure dilemma of classical sociological debates – the inseparability of society from human activity, the existence of social change, and the growth of individual and/or collective change – and more recent reconceptualisations of the structure/agency in sociological theory. That at times he engages in proto-structuration theory is part accident and partly inevitable and comes out of his unwillingness to sharpen the theory-practice divide, which is regularly shaped by the assertion of people being (and the need for them to be) reflexive, but at the same time recognise that they act within and are constrained within values and institutions not of their own making.

11. That is, he believed in the utilising of the technologies, or the forces of production, to demonstratively increase people's welfare in measurable ways. Progress in agriculture, he once said, is the « establishment of an agrarian structure compatible with the progressive development of the peoples on the basis of their local traditions » (Cabral, quoted in ANDRADE 1980 : 72). Cabral had a belief in western science, as long as it applied itself to the choices that people make, as it were, through their ethnoscience and human ecology, which would be linked to their patterns of farming and participation in and through development. No small thing, indeed ; but he, like no nationalist, said it.

12. It is now in vogue to criticise many African nationalist leaders for being wedded to the one-party state, because it has often been disastrous to political pluralism and tolerance of others' political views, the breeding ground for deeply entrenched authoritarianism and, often, ethnically-base patronage. Cabral believed in the one-party state, and certainly he was not pluralistic in this regard. He shared the common view held in most parts of Africa : that at least for the foreseeable future, Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau would be one party states. One of the principal arguments for this was that parties would be divided upon regional and ethnic lines. While this has often turned out to be true, the obverse has not : that one party

An opposition to any separation between theory and practice, or between thought and experience, so rarely heard today in Africa, informed this vision-critique. Theory disassociated from concrete circumstances and disengaged from practice was politically unproductive. His views on and approach to ethnicity must be seen in this light, as must anything that Cabral wrote. Cabral rarely conceived of theory for its own sake, divorced from the ongoing concerns of de-colonization and building of a new state and society. For this reason, the central nationalist metaphors of Cabral have thought, a return to the source and unity and struggle, can also be supplemented *by unity and differentiation*. For in his thought, Cabral conceptualised what he saw in practice : difference and division, contrast, nuance and contradiction everywhere, whether classes or ethnicities, whether between genders, or whether elders and juniors, or between religions (Chilcote 1991 : 19).

The central themes in his thought and practice are a return to the source of indigenous cultures within which one finds the resistance for the unity and struggle against colonialism. They are not, however, the undifferentiated, abstract culturalism of cultural nationalists nor the instrumentalist appeal to unity of traditional nationalists. Like the supple practical dialectician he was, he saw opposites as contraries not to be entirely replaced, but rather integrated into a nation-state that diminished conflict, but recognised difference. Cabral's thought expressed what he imputed to be the multiply variable lived experience of peoples as they struggled against colonial oppression, and as they struggle to unify themselves as a nation-people, to overcome, without completely discarding, specific local, cultural and class differences that might divide those who inhabit a nation to-be. Thus, despite his nation-state project, Cabral was first and foremost a cultural pluralist by practical necessity and consequence and by normative disposition. If he wished to return to the source of the people for the purpose of not only the achievement of independence, but national liberation, he couldn't be anything less. Ultimately, Cabral like all African nationalists, saw the dangers of ethnicity, of ethnic divisiveness ; and like all African nationalists he sought what one might call a secular conclusion to the dilemmas and choices that ethnicity represented, without giving up a conception of multicultural citizenship.

The starting point for any understanding of the premises of Cabral's political thought and practice is, then, empirical, and even biographical. This need not detain us here, except to point out, as several commentators have, that much of Cabral's theory came from his methodological self-consciousness born out of his discrete, concrete and specific studies of the people of his country. Such circumstances prevented Cabral from having any preconceptions about the blueprint of analysis and determined outcome,

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states have led to the elimination of ethnic-political alignments. In fact, there is no evidence that despite almost four decades of single-party rule which was supposed to eliminate regional and ethnic political parties in many countries, that ethnicity has diminished in any way as an important variable in many African nations' political economies. One wonders what might have happened if the principal opposition group during the independence struggle against the Portuguese, FLING (Frente de libertação para a independência nacional da Guiné) had been allowed to participate more fully in political life directly after independence. Unfortunately, the evidence of multiparty Africa is no more sanguine, as ethnic divisions have been evident in elections in many African states since the legalisation of multiparty politics in the early 1990s. Indeed, as Crawford YOUNG (1995, 24)has recently said, reviewing recent political developments following the introduction of multiparty elections, « rather than "solving" ethnic questions, three decades of autocracy have deepened the dilemmas ».

an outcome not to be theoretically prejudiced, in addition to his practice being in effect equivalent to his theory. The details of his experience, and the intellectual – as opposed to the emotional – commence with his agronomic surveys for the Portuguese government in the 1940s and 1950s, where he gained a detailed knowledge of Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde's ecological and agronomic conditions, and thus of its peoples. This knowledge allowed him to draw up detailed, if provisional, categories of the population of Guinea-Bissau and the Cabo Verde Islands : the property, the productive practices and the forms of social and political authority in the countryside.

However, Cabral's compilation of fact and statistics obviously was not purely academic scholarship, but reflected his concern for his first hand view of what he believed was the existing experiences of the colonised. Carreira, for instance, has told us that the oral literature of notoriously powerful storms and unpredictable rainfall patterns across the densely populated islands of Cabo Verde ; a literature full of motifs that saw drought, forced migration by the colonial state and emigration as synonymous evils, a literature of which Cabral was acutely aware (see Carreira 1982 : 173 ; Moser 1978 : 176 ; Andrade 1969 ; 1979). From his father Cabral derived a deep interest both in the folk traditions of the islands as well as in their agricultural and ecological problems, problems that developed his later interest in agronomy (Moser 1978 : 177-78 ; Andrade 1980 : 14-20 ; Chabal 1983 : 32-34)[13]. Cabral's politics were the result of the compulsion of experience : « that I saw folk die of hunger in Cabo Verde, and I saw folk die of flogging in Guinea (with kicks, beatings, and forced labour)… this is the entire reason for my revolt » (Cabral 1969b : 111). There was every reason for Cabral to be sensitive about identity and identities and how the African ones might coalesce politically to overcome such brutality and become nation-agents and autonomously self-determining Africans again.

Cabral realised that the « re-Africanization of the minds » of a people must take place both within the context of a dialogue between the Europeanised intellectual, the *assimilado,* and the majority of the rural uneducated peoples (Cabral 1970 : 51-52) ; and that for the *assimilado,* national independence was one « of the ways of becoming Africans once again… to return to our African roots », but only by establishing relationships with « non-civilised » *[sic]* Africans[14]. Cabral's questioned whether his educated, *assimilado* status meant that he had to avoid turning his back on his people, which meant, of course, getting to know the African producers for whom colonialism was an infinitely more oppressive a burden.

13. As his wife, Anna-Maria CABRAL (1995 : 2), recently put it, « judging from his youthful poems – especially *Ilha* and *Segue o teu rumo irmão* – and other student writings, it seems that culture was the first perspective that Cabral used to think about his epoch, the contradictions of colonial domination, and the conditions of peoples' lives ».

14. Cabral's language here reflects the colonial language of Portuguese imperialism : « civilised » being those who had European, i.e. Portuguese education beyond primary school, and those, but not only, *indigenas,* primarily rural producers, who did not. This characterised and was overseen by what Mamdani (1996, 1996a) has called the bifurcated apparatus of the colonial state, a legal dualism typical of indirect rule which set (« modern ») law aside customary law. « Modern law » regulated relations between « non-natives » and « non-native » relations with any « natives ». Customary law, on the other hand, regulated relations between « natives ». I cannot fully explore here what is in effect his Bourdieu-like understanding of reproduction. It is this understanding that informs his concern for the consequences of the relationship between these two groups and the ways in which, because of colonialism, both materially and symbolically, the dominant classes reproduce themselves through what was the cultural capital that they derived from their, relatively speaking, elite education.

What Cabral saw as one of the principal lacunae in post-colonial Africa was the absence of a common compact, or identity, to wed the people and the political elite who had nominally spoken for the mass of the people during the independence struggles. Any repossession of self entails confronting the fact of repression of the identity of a people for any withdrawal into a hypothetical pre-colonial culture evades the realities that colonised peoples face individually and collectively. These harsh material realities are distant from the psychological, apolitical concern for identity so often characteristic of cultural nationalism, and so increasingly being reinvented in today's Africa and amongst its « postcolonial » expatriates.

The return to the source for Cabral is, then, a collective act, though it is not one of unanimity. The repossession of self requires a broadly based movement, one built upon and infused with a plurality that cannot be based upon narrow class nor upon parochially tribal, as opposed to cultural traditions[15]. For Cabral, a broadly based political movement is fundamentally one that involves a class struggle in that the war of liberation was necessarily a class struggle given that the vast majority of Africans were rural producers, and those who exploited them were merchant capitalists, conjoined to the colonial state. Colonial social relations were antagonisms rooted in the way people are situated in the social organization of production. But the organization production, and of classes, are composed of different ethnicities and cultures, cultures, which, however related, have different traditions and different existential realities (Rudebeck 1992 : 48-51), however differentiated or however in fact they are homogenised. Hence Cabral thought that while the theory and practice of nationalism had to be supplemented by an analysis of politics and class, conversely, class politics must be supplemented by an analysis of cultural differences, and the various communities within which these identities were located and, indeed, often separated from and in conflict with each other.

It should be clear as we proceed that Cabral had no fixed notion of culture, and his notions are situational and variable within the context that he saw communities and societies. He also oscillates between and uses at the same time culture as social customs, practices and values and culture as the meanings people evoke or produce from their experiences, or how people make sense of their worlds, regardless of their environments and circumstance. Normatively, he had a commitment to engage the perspectives and the practices because they are what peoples live by, and, for Cabral therefore, are their cultures. They also constitute the strength and identity of the various peoples, including, even, some of the customs and traditions, which, by western judgement, contain elements of ungrounded contradictory beliefs rooted in different rationalities from those of the « modern ». I should state now, however, that Cabral was not a cultural relativist ; he never said all cultural perspectives or practices are equally true, and he did not seek to understand each culture exclusively in its own terms. Rather, he attempted to understand cultures in the same way, and it would be a requirement of his

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15. The distinction between tribal and cultural traditions is not a hard and fast one, as the latter is clearly a part of the former. Cabral often-associated tribalism, as opposed to the existent reality of tribes, with intolerance, partialness and conflict, something now habitually identified with ethnicity. Cabral, mistakenly, I believe, did not believe this to be a major issue in Guinea-Bissau. However, it is not clear today that, despite Guinea-Bissau's current problems, this is the principal cause, as opposed to the outcome, of ethnic conflict, although one of the lines of political demarcation has been regional (FORREST 1987 ; RUDEBECK 1992).

methods of research that he leave each perspective and practice equally open to examination (Milton 1997). Any return would involve engaging the content of those beliefs and those who held them, those who had, according to Cabral, been least touched by colonialism, the people from the rural areas. And in this regard, Cabral was fortunate in a way rare amongst European-educated Africans and nationalists anywhere : as an agronomist, he had the first-hand experience of his country's people, geography, economy, agriculture and society.

The Production of Material Culture

While most African nationalists were either mobilizing and exhorting sections of their populations for eventual independence, or lyrically promoting the sonorities of *négritude* and various forms of cultural nationalism, Cabral had by the late 1940s already written on problems of soil erosion in Cabo Verde. He had also toured the latter and the Guinean countryside to begin investigating at first hand the nature of the indigenous people's social and productive systems, the politics that moulded them together or kept them apart, and the impact of the chain colonial commodity production upon them. He displayed a remarkable prescience, both before and after he was asked by the Portuguese to draw up the detailed Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) census outlining the agricultural conditions of Guinea's peoples.

In his first agricultural pieces, written while still a student, Cabral maintained that soil erosion in the Cabo Verde islands was the principal and indirect cause of the drought and famine that had afflicted the countryside. (1949 : 350-352). Cabral had a peculiar moral anthropology. Here, and in some of his more technical writings on agriculture, Cabral displayed an enormous sensitivity to those who make their living by agriculture, from the land. As usual, his considerations were never merely technical, but concerned with problems that derive from the absence of development, and as a consequence, the hardships of those who work the land. For instance, in his *In Defence of the Land*, he asserted that the best way of defending the land is the best way of defending people. Cabral had concerns for an ecological balance between people and nature and for increased productivity in order to improve the living conditions of the people (1949 : 350 ; McCulloch 1983 : 50-51). Cabral's agricultural surveys thus began his understanding of the relationship between a people's culture, what they produced, the character of the producing techniques available to them, and peoples' development. By the very nature of these relationships, Cabral's focus would be identifying groups of people by markers considered ethnic, one aspect of which would be production.

His census contains a detailed breakdown of the people into ethnic groups and administrative units, of the amount and kind of agricultural holdings, of the areas under cultivation, the crops planted and the kinds of rotation used. Even in the short summary and overview of the census that is available in English and French, there is a wealth of detail showing how Cabral had an intimate knowledge of the productive practices, the material basis for the social organization and activities of the peoples of Guinea. For instance, even though there were over 25 ethnic groups in Guinea, over 87 %

of all holdings were held by four major ethnic groups, the Balantes, essentially rice growers, the Fulas and Mandigas, disproportionately dry rice and groundnut producers, and the Manjacas, who, like the Balantes, were essentially rice and dry rice producers. These four groups constituted 85% of the population, with two, the Fulas and Balantes, holding two-thirds of all land holdings between them (Cabral 1956 : 5-9 ; Chaliand 1969 : 6 ; and Chabal 1983 : 18-19 ; Rudebeck 1992)[16].

Although Cabral did not engage in any detailed social analysis here, other figures also suggest how much more closely some ethnic groups, like the Balantes, were to the chain of commodity production, of cash crops for export, established by colonialism than others. In part because of this proximity, they had developed an identity over time based upon common territory and the salience of identifiable characteristics and differences from others, such as the Fulas and Mandingas[17]. When combined with his later, brief analysis of the social structure of Guinea (Cabral 1964), these figures might be seen to suggest a measure of the degree of *reluctance* or the difficulty that certain ethnic groups, at the behest of those within a given community who had benefited from the expansion of commodity production, would show about getting involved in the struggle against foreign exploitation. What is one of the principal implications of this analysis, especially when apparently buttressed by the survey ? It was that ethnicities framed within (though not formed) by colonialism, are partly, but most evidently, mobilized and reconfigured politically and economically by and through their relationship to the state and/or the market : their degrees of inclusion within, exclusion from, their benefit from and oppression within and under them. Perhaps this observation might seem obvious enough, but it had not been said before, and certainly not by nationalists.

Cabral saw ethnic tradition not as fixed customs, but as growing out of material and symbolic interests : over conflicts, both internal and external to given communities, and over the resources, both material and symbolic, that are generated out of these relationships. Cabral's purview of ethnicity is clearly not primordialist – that is, that identities are not in some way necessary, unequivocal and immutable, but they are part of an evolving set of social relations that are linked to production relations. However, as we shall also see later, identities are not simply situational, instrumental and mutable either. Cabral understood the *symbolic* side of both authority and identity too, even within small peasant communities.

Cabral also showed that there were over eighty-five thousand agricultural family holdings. Even though there was some variation between the largest

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16. Cabral was not what we might today call an environmental determinist, or what could be called « ethnoecologist ». This is where the role of human populations in ecological systems, and their study within the wider field of cognitive anthropology, are examined to understand peoples' cultural perspectives on the environment, and where « cultural features evolve as adaptations to their local environment and that, within any one culture, there is a complex of features that is more directly influenced by environmental factors than others » (MILTON 1997 : 480). Cabral knew too much about the impact of various exogenous forces on the communities for him to reduce their adaptive behaviour to their environment.

17. The terminology used for the Fula is confusing, as they are known variously throughout West Africa as Fulbe and Fulani ; while in other parts of Senegal and Gambia they are known by other local ethonyms. Similar confusions abound with the Mandingas and the Balantes. This ethonymic shift illustrates AMSELLE'S point of how often language reflects a politically and socially produced *conversion,* especially through migration, where negotiated identity and status get transformed in naming people, from both within and outside, both positively and negatively (*ibid. :* 43-57). For consistency, I will use Cabral's terminology.

and smallest land holding unit amongst the various peoples, between approximately 6.5 and 1.6 hectares, by any standards they could all be classified as smallholding units (Cabral 1956 : 12). Whatever else characterized and differentiated these communities, Cabral was dealing with small peasant-type farming. Thus while Cabral did not engage in social analysis here, it is apparent that at this stage of his descriptions of Guinea he seemed to think that the relative smallness of farm size differentiation, and the presence of a uniformly low agricultural technique and output was more important in characterising people than their ethnic differentiation, or even some incipient class formation. Here, then, one directly sees how Cabral is casting ethnicity in this context as a dependent variable : the scale of or extent of economic production likely determines the status of the salience of ethnicity. Although he doesn't specify the degree to which or how this might happen, when tied into his later remarks on the nature of authority systems within communities, we can see the beginnings of a class analysis of ethnicity too.

Containing explicit criticisms of colonial agricultural policies as well as having prescriptions to overcome the problems caused by Portuguese neglect, Cabral's census also noted that many producers were being forced to shift away from traditional cropping techniques and subsistence crops. They were forced to move out of food crops, like rice, and to move into monocropping, particularly the growing of groundnuts, especially among certain groups like the Fulas (1956 : 8). As a result, Guinea's economy depended on the value of the product within fluctuations of the international market[18], which also tied certain groups, either through pervasive destitution that contributed to the migration to towns and a commodity chain, to be pre-eminent in the production of certain commodities and their eventual (urban) class locations[19]. Indeed, although Cabral never mentions this, one very significant inference of his analysis is that fluctuations in international markets will have both national *and* ethnic effects, and that certain interests must necessarily develop out of these relations in the commodity chain. Commodity chains *and* development are deeply implicated in the formation and development of ethnicity.

The wide variety of crops grown by different ethnic groupings in Guinea was for Cabral also testimony to the peasants' good sense in bringing about variations in planting. The variation of crops suggested the possibilities for a country whose production would for some foreseeable future be in agriculture, though not, he optimistically thought, one characterized by low yields and low returns (1959 : 15)[20]. In an article on soil conservation (1954a),

18. From a purely historical point of view, this process had begun prior to formal Portuguese colonialism, where many Fulas had wanted to establish political control in the groundnut producing regions so as to obtain the economic benefits offered by the peanut trade. As production fell from 1879 on and French and Portuguese merchants began tightening control over trade, Fula groups began fighting among themselves for control of dwindling resources (BOWMAN 1987).

19. In the case of the Fula, in the shift out of the production from rice to maize and groundnuts there were lowered nutritional levels in consumption. In some areas, the peasants sold rice or groundnuts to concessionary companies at prices that often did not cover the costs of family labour (CABRAL 1954a : 13-14). This encouraged smuggling across borders where producers and tradesmen could get much higher prices : an economic leakage that an underdeveloped country could ill afford (CABRAL 1956 : 15 ; 1968 : 100 ; 1969b : 240), and which continues to characterise so much of the border economies of Africa's nation-states today.

20. I cannot do justice here to Cabral's remarkable prescience in his knowledge of what today would be called ecological management. The key issue here, as elsewhere, that Cabral is

Cabral showed the absolute and relative contributions of the different peoples of Guinea to agriculture, without assigning any superiority or inferiority to the various groups of producers. He showed, again, that there is a general equality prevailing in the conditions of production among the different peoples, but that the relative skills and knowledge of these groups led to economic differentiation among and within them. Cabral was here less interested in the ethnic dimension to politics (an interest which would come later during the liberation struggle), and more in the relative equality in the general low level of the conditions of production and agricultural technique. However, we should note this important, even, again, obvious observation : that however comparatively equal the resources over production within and between communities, that variation leads to social differentiation within and perhaps without economic resources. Thus although Cabral's descriptive-interpretative agronomic surveys came out of a need to depict the agrarian bases of the colonial commodity economy, it was also rooted in his own moral developmentalism, where technique is an instrument of popular welfare, and within which one can see both a culture of production and the foundations of a sociology of identity formation and development.

Trying to Integrate Class And Culture

Cabral was modest about his own social and cultural analysis of Guinea and often showed occasional deference to, or claimed ignorance of, Marxism. Cabral never rejected received theory, the experience or insights of others tout court (Cabral 1966 : 90-92). Deference to others' theories had its costs, however, since in every « case practice comes first and theory after… If you really want to advance the struggle, you must really make a critical assessment of the experience of others before applying their theories… » (Cabral 1972a : 20-21 ; 1968 : 138) but only from a detailed knowledge of the conjunction of their social and cultural milieux and their productive systems and practices. Such were the minimally sufficient conditions for ensuring people's support. Cabral believed that practical theory could only derive from contact with the work and struggles of the grass roots. Of the willingness to maintain this contact, Cabral wrote :

> « having to live day by day with the various peasant groups in the heart of the rural populations [the party cadres--P.I.] come to know the people better. They discover at the grass roots the richness of the cultural values (philosophic, political, artistic, social and moral), acquire a clearer understanding of the economic realities of the country, [and] of the problems, suffering and hopes of the popular masses » (Cabral 1970 : 54).

Cabral's social-cultural analysis and theory arose from political involvement with people, and because his main interest lay in addressing the developmental needs of his people fighting for independence. In itself there is nothing remarkable or profound here. When theory serves to explain the constraints people face in political action, and there are grounds for social classes and/or ethnic groups to participate in a liberation struggle, then theory almost tautologically begins by reflecting on the interaction of these

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pointing to, is the untrammelled effects of colonial agricultural practices as against those of traditional practices, and what they did to the science of local knowledge (CABRAL, quoted in ANDRADE 1980 : 70-71 ; MCCULLOCH 1983 : 49-56).

groups and actors. Moreover, Cabral's analysis was placed within such areas as culture and ethnicity, variables hitherto rarely treated in Marxist, as well as contemporary revolutionary, analyses of national liberation. Where these subjects were treated, such analysis often cleaved to assumptions about history and class, the implications of which many African nationalists found questionable and at times objectionable. It is Cabral's views on these issues that, in part, have generated the seemingly pointless debates over his putative Marxism[21].

Thus the circumstances which led Cabral to his conceptions of class and culture were many and complex. The ethnic mix of Guinea and the manner in which peasant and ethnic communities interacted, or didn't ; the way they had been brought into the commodity chain, and how their lives had been affected thereby, all intersected in a way to make the peasants, or many of them, cautious about even revolt, let alone national liberation and making it « their own » (Cabral 1966 : 66 ; Davidson 1981 : 80). The specific grounds to motivate popular struggle could be found in a pre-existing theory ; a theory supposed to be true independently of its correspondence to practice cannot be selected to guide a struggle, since it would impose a extraneous idea upon that struggle ; and if it is untrue, then, unless prevented by luck, it must misguide those who direct the struggle and those who are being guided by it (Cabral 1966 : 93). Here was Cabral's simple methodological message in eschewing abstract theory. If Gramsci's understanding of hegemony came from his careful reading of Italian history and society, rather than from previously worked out theorems, then so did Cabral's notion of cultural resistance. In his methodological principle in analysing classes, Cabral also set out to understand who the various classes in Guinea were, to analyze their role within the social structure of colonial social relations, and in what ways antagonisms were implanted in the way people are situated in the social organization of production, and then try to mark out their possible roles within the anti-colonial struggle and their political and economic inclinations for post-colonialism (Cabral 1969b : 59). The starting point for this analysis would be the differences between the city and the rural dwellers of Guinea[22].

Production is a central variable in explaining how people come to see the world, how they relate to others and those of their kind. For instance, we know that the conditions of the petty bourgeois existence shaped the way in which people interacted with each other, gave them a proximity to the colonial regime and a closer look at its racial repression and links to the « outside » world than was possible for the peasantry. Yet while production can be at the basis of human interaction, it cannot be understood solely in terms of where it is produced. The site of production, its closeness to the centres of colonial post-colonial power, is a decisive factor in the culture or consciousness of a class or group. In this regard, culture, as Angel Mukandabantu (1983 : 211) has suggested, has *both material and practical* foundations in production and in how people cope with the world, resist or

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21. The questions of Cabral's fidelity to Marxism today seem absurd. But a lot of irrelevant ink was poured over discovering his essence. For samples see LYON 1980 : 158-59 ; MCCULLOCH 1983 : 108-109 ; SOLODOVNIKOV 1984 : 110-12 ; LUKE 1981 : 309, 317 ; BOCKEL 1976 : 35-9).

22. I leave aside here any discussion of workers, such as they were, in Cabral's analysis ; and nor will I argue for or elaborate on the obvious here : that Cabral was not wrong about his faith in workers, only about the timing of their leading role in the struggle against colonialism. In addition, I will only tangentially discuss his famous analysis of the petty-bourgeoisie.

adapt to outside encroachment. While there is never a one-to-one correspondence between production and culture for Cabral, he did want to assert that there is an important affinity between the way in which people produce and their outlook on life and the world. As with his earlier discussion of the relationship between agricultural production and people's use of the land, Cabral emphasized that a mode of production, or the manner in which and by which people produce, is a way of life or a culture.

I am unsure how informed Cabral might have been by Marx's first thesis on Feuerbach, which emphasises the underlying unity of all of social life as *practical* activity[23]. Cabral essentially disowns the notion that social existence can be demarcated and entirely ordered into discrete social, cultural and economic domains, even where, analytically, there is a need to differentiate these spheres. Rather than always examine the various ways in which the relationship between superstructure and substructure are related and expressed, Cabral – to bring him sociologically up to date – like Bourdieu after him, argues that the two realms are not so distinct at all ; indeed, he strives to set out how material and symbolic practices are integrated, and in so doing, stresses the basic singularity of social life[24]. He viewed culture as intertwined with development, or increased well being, and culture as practical, material and symbolic, but contestable, like identities themselves. Because the peasantry is both the subject and object of development, Cabral's pathway to development in large part depended on his analysis of the peasantry and peasant identity[25].

The analysis of rural classes in Guinea begins and ends with the recognition that it is impossible to distinguish social groups politically unless one can differentiate them in accordance with various kinship ties that enter into the identity of the different ethnic communities of which the social groups are a part. Cabral's analysis here is trying to come to terms with a distinction between what John Lonsdale (1994) would come to call the characteristics of political tribalism and moral ethnicity, where the social construction of ethnicity has an internal and external constitution. The latter, moral ethnicity, was formed out of the ideological and political arenas within which ethnic identities developed through bargaining over the authority within and the boundaries of political community. These internal struggles

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23. He couldn't have been about the German Ideology.

24. « After » is not quite accurate. The genesis of Bourdieu' s notions of the *habitus*, of cultural capital and the aligned, although distinct notion of social capital, were developed embryonically during his ethnographic work in the Kabyle region of central-eastern Algeria in the early 1960s. Coincidentally at the same time, Cabral was investigating the social structure of Guinea. The *habitus* is a number of given intellectual and emotional characteristics which are grounded in some socialisations, through the family, the community, and in the modern age, the school and media : « a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems » (1977 : 82-83). It is a form of cultural power which clearly serves tradition and convention and is, therefore, conservative. *Habitus* is linked to what Bourdieu calls *doxa, or* the « world of tradition experienced as a « natural world » and taken for granted » (*ibid. :* 164). Refinements in his later work (e.g. BOURDIEU & WACQUANT 1992 : 73), while identifying how social reproduction is a function of both agency and structure and is inherently conservative, do not alter its generic problem : that his analysis, like his analyses of the Algerian peasant, can appear static, somewhat deterministic and without agency to change – unless it comes from outside.

25. Cabral's position here is part of a much larger and longer discussion about history, development, classes and class struggle, which I cannot enter into here (MCCULLOCH 1983 : 89-90 ; JINADU 1978 : 127-29).

over identity were also linked to and restrained by a normative realm of reciprocity and social rights and obligations – a moral economy of the rights of access to resources and property. Together they would define the normative foundations of both the cohesiveness of or conflict within a given community. The external facet of ethnicity, political tribalism, inextricably linked to moral ethnicity, did not involve a pursuit of a normative, moral identification ; it emerged, rather, out of colonialism's varying effects on different African communities, and would be occupied with collectively mobilising and organising the political community. Such tribalism went beyond the boundaries of communities delimited by moral ethnicity, whether challenging or collaborating with the colonial state and, thereafter, challenging the interests of contesting ethnicities who also seek access to state patronage and political control[26].

Amongst certain ethnic groups, particularly between the so-called horizontal state societies of some of the Muslim groups such as the Fulas for instance, it was obvious that great power was wielded by certain village chiefs. Under colonialism some of these chiefs would become *chefes do posto*, serving as tax collectors for the colonial state. Outside of these Islamicized groups, under colonialism most of these « chiefs » were not the traditional village elders, or *homens grandes,* who continued to retain much respect within their communities. Many chiefs, as administrators had become *sipaios* (native police) and many, as elsewhere in Africa, were in fact imposed on peoples from outside of their own ethnic group. This regime of native administration is what Mamdani (1996a) has recently called the *modus operandi* of colonial rule, a *rural despotism* which was a pivot of ethnic consolidation under colonialism, an attempt by the colonial authorities to cosmeticise « customary justice that was really administrative justice » (1996, 1996a). Mamdani is worth citing in full because his depiction of the dual process, the contradictory moment of the rural dimension of political-ethnic and colonial power which is quintessentially Cabral-like :

> « Ethnicity, in other words, was never just about identity. Its two contradictory moments involved both social control and social emancipation. This is why it makes sense neither just to embrace ethnicity uncritically nor simply to reject it one-sidedly. Everywhere the local apparatus of the colonial state was organized either ethnically or on a religious basis. Yet it is also true that it is difficult to recall a single major peasant uprising during the colonial period that has not been either ethnic or religious in inspiration. This is so for a simple, but basic reason : the anticolonial struggle was above all a struggle against the hierarchy of the local state, the tribally organized Native Authority. This is why everywhere, although the cadres of the nationalist movement were recruited mainly from urban areas, the movement gained depth the more it was anchored in the struggle of the peasantry against the array of Native Authorities that shackled it. After independence, however, there was a dramatic shift in the political focus of the nationalist leadership, from the local to the central state apparatus, from the decolonization of local state apparatuses to a dual preoccupation : deracializing civil society in the towns and restructuring unequal international relations » (Mamdani, 1996 : 146)[27].

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26. Cabral would not, I think, accept the implication that these groups' identity was primarily formed through their links to access to the resources of modernity and economic accumulation, as is implied by Lonsdale's analysis of the Kikuyu in Kenya. The process had long been underway in West Africa.
27. I think that Mamdani's heuristic is evocative, even derivative, of Cabral here. Where he differs is his emphasis on anti-colonial native administration. This was true clearly in many cases, but in many cases it was not (even in Nigeria which he cites so extensively), and was clearly not true in the case of many ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau, who fought directly

Cabral was quick to add, though, that the « semi-feudal » or strongly hierarchical, « vertical », or stateless, group-patrimonial social systems could not be explained simply by Portuguese colonialism. The character of these ethnic groupings and political organizations pre-dated colonialism, although he never actually developed extensively in what ways they did. Moreover, there was at least one non-Muslim or so-called « animist » group, the Mandjacas, which showed social relations characterized by a patrimonialism similar to the Islamicized groups. This patrimonialism consisted, on the one hand, of lineage chiefs, heads of extended families or villages, whose ancestry, according to custom, could be directly linked to the spiritual authorities, and on the other hand, it consisted of their dependents, an exploited peasantry who, with few rights, had to fulfil certain work obligations to the spiritual authorities in order to have some access to the land (Cabral 1966 : 56-57, 1969 : 37-38). Portuguese colonialism had sought out these groups because their social practices dovetailed with colonial administrative goals. In contrast, other « vertical », « animist » communities or ethnic groups, such as the Balantes and certain Mandingas, had very little social stratification nor the nascent state organisations characteristic of the patrimonial or semi-feudal systems. They were instead segmented societies organized in and around « age grades and village and lineage loyalties », and, of course, gender (Cabral 1966 : 57 ; Urdang 1979 : 85-92 ; Galli & Jones 1987 : 33-52; Lopes 1987 : 45-47; Davidson 1981 : 30, *ibid. :* 29 ; Rudebeck 1992). Such divergent traditions along with diverse economic circumstances would, despite the similar level of the material resources, define different ethnicities and cultures, with variable consequences in a variety of areas. For instance, Chabal and others have suggested that Cabral's reasons for believing why groups like the Balantes supported the struggle were at best incomplete. One reason for the Balantes' seeming enthusiasm for the cause was their relatively more egalitarian, decentralised system of social organization. However, perhaps more important was the fact that the Balantes were more *urbanised* than other peoples and had confronted more transparent exploitation through the system of taxation, economic grievance and repression in the towns, as well as the denigrations of colonial racism.

Women's Participation : A Perplexing Issue

The significantly different patterns of social and economic life, would also suggest future practices with respect to both the mobilisation of ethnicities as members of classes, a peasantry, as well as the perplexing practical issue of women's emancipation. There was also the problem of how to address the traditional leaders within the rural areas, and whether their customary place as « intellectuals » in society should accord them a different status within the changing distribution of land, labour and productive tasks in their various communities. As Luke has suggested, « new forms of human interaction and individual identity models… break down the oppressive social customs involving young-old, male-female, intra-family/extra-family, or inter-village

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against colonialism and rarely against their local, indigenous representatives. That the PAIGC did attempt to undermine many of these local representatives, had more to do with pragmatic practices for the future and genuine demands for democracy, where status, achieved or hereditary, was hardly a sufficient condition of participatory democratic politics.

relations in colonial society » (1981 : 325). For example, women were treated as property among some Muslim communities, being married and « requisitioned » as early as twelve, with polygyny being widespread. When these practices are considered next to the unwillingness of Muslim men to send their women to schools for even the rudimentary skills and literacy set up by the party in some of the liberated areas, the circle of oppression was closed. Among the Balantes, the oppression of women was less, despite relatively earlier marriages, polygyny, and patrilineal descent, because women were allowed to keep what they produced (Cabral 1966 : 66-67 ; and cited in Chaliand, 1969 : 63-67). Again, then, we see how depicting ethnicity was linked to questions of power over resources, not least of all women, and the degree of autonomy they would have both within the household and in the so-called public realm.

Cabral's approach to practice here, as on many other matters, was cautious and pragmatic and linked to the specificity of the ethnic groups whom he was addressing at any given point in time. There were no instant formulas for women's emancipation from the various forms of oppression that they endured – for instance, their continuing burden of « household » duties, including childcare, on top of productive and subsistence work.. Women accepted into the Party were not even allowed to bear arms during the war of liberation, although they did have arms within village committees. They were indeed, in Stephanie Urdang's phrase, fighting two colonialisms. Nevertheless, there were, as Urdang has also pointed out, a variety of implicit principles and explicit ground rules that both Cabral and the PAIGC *(Partido africano para a independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde)* laid down, such as no polygyny amongst Party members and a commitment to achieving equal status for women. This commitment may not sound like much, but in the historical context it allowed many of the younger women a political-social space hitherto unthinkable – so much so that there is little wonder why many women were amongst the earliest and most enthusiastic supporters of the PAIGC (Cabra1 1972b : 86 ; Urdang 1979 : 85-92, 123-25). Again, concrete knowledge of extensive variation in practices within given ethnic groups towards women, lent to adjusting to, although never being accommodating with, crude patriarchy. Gender roles had begun to change, but there was clearly no erosion of gender power ; yet it was fundamentally important not to assume gender roles, nor their pre-determined outcome in everyday practice, even if the long term goal was one of beyond the obvious one of autonomy[28].

Received attitudes towards women were one of the many aspects of peasant, ethnic cultures that Cabral and the PAIGC also had to alter in a principled way, but cautiously and realistically too (Cabral 1969b : 58-59 ;

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28. This is large debate, which I cannot elaborate on here. However, even here, there is contestation with respect to what this might mean. Many African and « third world » feminists argue, not only that there are differences between women and men (which of course means there are likely to be different spaces for action between sexes), but also that there are circumstances where their liberation is bound up with that of men. In addition, this discourse of autonomy, according to MOHANTY (1991, 53-54 *cf.* AAWORD 1982 : 105 ; MIKELL 1997 : 341) is partly born out of an analysis of « sexual difference » in the form of a cross-culturally singular, monolithic notion of patriarchy or male dominance leads to the construction of a similarly reductive and homogenous notion of what I call the « third world difference » - that stable, historical something that apparently oppresses most if not all the women in these countries. And it is in the production of this « third world difference » that Western feminisms appropriate and « colonise » the constitutive complexities which characterise the lives of women in these countries.

160). There was a balance to be kept between forging commitments and building a constituency and between instilling trust and confidence, while not abrogating longer term goals and a fidelity to principles. The balance entailed, amongst many other things, addressing the needs of those whom they wanted on side. It would also mean understanding how these various social groups fitted into a wider network of patronage and dependence, and ensuring that where they fitted would not unduly upset the ultimate purpose of laying the groundwork for the post-colonial state and society. Take, for example, the itinerant traders and village craftsmen, the Dyulas. They are a traditional ethnic, middlemen or a long-distance trading class, found across of the breadth of the Guineas, Senegal, Mali, and Ivory Coast ; and the modern Dyulas are Muslim, Mandingo-speaking traders who arose during colonialism. Depending on which community they were associated with, or in fact how close they were to the commodity chain and Portuguese colonialism, could be one of the conduits for either support for, or resistance to, national independence, or – through their links to the local *chefes do posto* – self-interested agents of repression. Yet, by their very nature, they could also be a means of communication, one of their traditionally historical roles between communities, part of a network for spreading information about the goals of independence. Aware of their political fickleness and of the Dyulas' concern, like all traders, with buying cheap and selling dear, Cabral was under no delusions that they constituted a disinterested network of distribution and communication. He nevertheless asserted their possible utility for the liberation struggle and ultimately for the building of after independence (1966 : 61, 1969b : 39). In this, Cabral, once again, shows remarkable pragmatism and a lack of dogmatism with regards to ethnic disposition and economic interest, suggesting both the fluidity of ethnic relations, and the mutuality involved in achieving certain goals of self-interest, however seemingly naive : exchange on the one hand, economic welfare on the other.

Mobilising Pluriethnic Communities

Cabral's social analysis here, then, was no academic exercise in social anthropology but was concerned with the practical problems of understanding how class *and* ethnic alliances throughout rural and urban Guinea might be formed. These coalitions were meant to cut across the spatial dimension of country and town, tribal, religion and gender ; they constituted the chief problem in attempting to mobilise various groups in Guinea. For instance, it had been assumed that the leaders of the Fulas, and the Manjacas, the last of the major ethnic groups in Guinea to fight against the Portuguese during colonization, would readily join the liberation struggle and lead all *their* peasantry to mobilize and support the struggle. Such assumptions were made without giving due consideration to the fact of accommodation and the interests of the ruling groups within the communities, many of whom saw the move towards a more egalitarian form of government entailing a threat to their control over their dependents, if we are to believe the PAIGC reports and Cabral himself (Cabral 1969b : 46). In addition, it didn't give sufficient weight to the histories of groups of peoples, their leadership or the people within the communities themselves, wishing to

remain relatively autonomous from centralized power *outside* their community because of their long history of independence, and also because the role that religion played in the lives of the subjects within these communities. This was an area that Cabral appears to have been remiss in his understanding of the historical sociology of the peoples, despite his knowledge of their social relations (Lopes, quoted in Rudebeck 1992 : 53, and Galli 1989).

Furthermore, besides the tightness of kinship ties between ruler and ruled within certain societies, popular mobilization was impeded by the absence of land hunger and of a large landless proletariat, and the veiled forms of exploitation that the peasantry as a whole suffered. The situation of Guinea contrasted with that of other Portuguese colonies, and settler colonialism in general where in many ways the *raison d'être* for popular revolt. This contrast meant finding a language appropriate to the circumstances, one that could address the peasantry and mobilize it to support the independence struggle. Speaking of colonialism, much less the rhetoric of imperialism, was therefore insufficient for peasant comprehension. Cabral used a technique that he imparted to other Party members to query peasants so as to draw out peasant grievances through concrete questions and examples from their own experience.

> « Why are you going to fight ? What are you ? What is your father ? What did your father do up to now ? What is the situation ? Did you pay taxes ? Did your father pay taxes ? What have you seen from these taxes ? How much did you get from your groundnuts ? Have you thought how much you will earn from your groundnuts ? How much sweat has it cost your family ? Which of you has been imprisoned ? You are going to work on road-building : who gives you the tools ? You bring the tools. Who provides your meals ? But who walks on the road ? Who has a car ? And your daughter who was raped. Are you happy about that ? « (Cabral 1969b : 159 ; Chaliand 1969 : 74-78).

These down-to-earth questions derive from what is in fact an extended and sophisticated heuristic method, the purpose of which is to draw out the resistance to the cultural hegemony that imposed a limited view of the world. It intended to show that the seeds to resistance are within a people's own understanding of their confrontation with the alien state and those who impose the terms of economic activity and enforce foreign dominance. Cabral urged the peasantry to think about the reasons for participation in the independence struggle and established grounds for consensus participation in post-colonial construction. In short, Cabral roots the mobilisation of the peasantry in its own economic and social welfare, indeed its own self-interest ; but in so doing, Cabral was always ethnically specific, and by extension, culturally and socially apposite.

What, for example, would be the implication of the non-Islamicized ethnic groups having a relatively egalitarian pattern in the distribution of land ? If the land is collectively owned, even though the instruments of production and the product of labour were distributed individually, then the relatively equal allocation between dependants would hardly induce the head of the household to be sympathetic to change. Cabral saw the antithesis between collective ownership of land and familial possession of tools and produce as one of the major contradictions in Guinean society (see Cabral 1966 : 61). Although he did not elaborate on why this contradiction should be so central, one must assume that he was pointing out a problem to be resolved politically, a tension between collective ownership of land and

household or individual possession. The latter was not so much a tension between use rights and inheritance rights, but rather a possible hindrance to the indefinite aims of collective agriculture that are most definitely based upon forms of collective identity, which Cabral must have known could not possibly be applied across the board irrespective of identity There is, one suspects, an implicit assumption of the possibility of even narrow selfish concerns inherent in individualistic agricultural production, as opposed to the reciprocity of collective or communal agricultural practices which socialists, including Cabral, have been conventionally enamoured of. If Cabral and the PAIGC did see it as a problem they did not express it ; respect for individual household production and distribution became embedded in the Party's programme (Cabral 1969c : 170)[29]. A model of egalitarian collectivism was emphasised by Cabral in the programmatic documents of the PAIGC, where « co-operative exploitation on the *basis of free consent* will cover the land and agricultural production, the production of goods and artisan articles » (Cabral 1965b : 247 - my emphasis). Market socialism embodying ethnic pluralism ? We do not know, but Cabral certainly believed in both administrative and economic decentralisation that was built upon the agronomic farming practices and the extant property systems of the given communities.

Thus it was also important to emphasise those aspects of the struggle which Cabral saw as ultimately determining the outcome of the society that he and the Party wanted to create. Of particular importance were two combined aspects of mobilisation – what Lars Rudebeck (1974 : 244 ; 1992) has called the intransitive and transitive forms of mobilisation – to bring the peasantry into matters affecting it. Intransitive mobilisation refers to an understanding by the people of the various social and economic circumstances in which they find themselves ; transitive mobilisation refers specifically to those Party initiatives on matters of policy and organization. Central to both forms of mobilisation is the emphasis on the importance of participation (Cabral 1969b : 92-98). Participation, being both a goal and a means of achieving goals, was central to Cabral's project of bringing about an institutionally sound, democratic post-colonial society and state. He believed that the forms of embryonic participatory networks existing within some ethnic groups could be a good place to begin organizing the peasantry.

Mass participation would be the means through which the organizational form of independence would take shape, in the shape of a decentralized decision-making process focused upon the needs of the peasantry. Cabral states :

> « Our new administration will be strictly without those chains of command familiar in colonial times – governors of provinces and so on … Above all, we want to decentralize as much as possible. That is one reason why we are

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29. The collective ownership of land and the seemingly egalitarian pattern of social organisation would serve the basis for the transitional mode of agricultural organisation, as well as the basis of the system of planned production and distribution under the aegis of the new post-independence state (CABRAL 1969b : 171). Cabral also believed the collective traditions of people were also useful in other respects. He considered the Balantes' decentralised and democratic age-group social organization to be amenable to supporting the independence struggle. Age cohorts were open to leadership of the liberation struggle because such groupings made it easy enough to mobilise younger age groups for armed struggle, as the competition of young fighters seeking to prove themselves coincided with the aims of the liberation struggle (CHABAL 1983 : 69-71).

inclined to think that Bissau will not continue to be our capital in an administrative sense. In fact, we're against the whole idea of a capital. Why shouldn't ministries be dispersed ?… Why should we saddle ourselves with the paraphernalia of a presidential palace, a concentration of ministries, the clear signs of an emergent elite, which can soon become a privileged group ? » (Davidson 1981 : 109).

Along with politically decentralised administration, Cabral also emphasised that a diversified and more productive agriculture would be the « first priority » (quoted in Davidson 1981 : 109 ; 1965 : 239-240). Cabral knew the needs of a changing political regime under the duress of economic survival and the pressure of economic development. Cabral's policy statements and Party programmes recognised the need to transform subsistence into surplus farming, but also recognised that such a transformation could only be worth anything democratically, if it were under popular collective control. There was the creation of village committees that gave ordinary peasants some sense of empowerment through local decision-making ; the development of new schools, giving people the expanding horizons that literacy creates ; and the development of a rudimentary, but extensive health care system (Cabral 1968 : 120-22 ; Chabal 1983 : 114-30)[30]. That the gains in political and social reorganization and cultural vitality were not matched in the economic field, whether during the independence struggle and certainly not after independence in 1974, and which laid the foundation for the coup in 1980 and much of the devastation, politically and economically to the country thereafter, only adds to the poignancy of Cabral's realization of its fundamental importance (Davidson 1983 : vii-xiii ; Rudebeck 1982 : 2-12, 1992 ; Chabal 1983a ; Galli 1989).

There was finally the problem of « tribalism ». Normatively, Cabral's concern with tribalism, or the politically divisive aspects of ethnicity, as with his concern with racism, was in fact typical of his broadly humanistic outlook, and his concern with looking beyond the racial and/or ethnic dimensions of nationalism to the founding of a new state and society. Like Fanon, Cabral consistently refused to allow people to view exploitation in the reduced state of a « them and us » or Black-White antinomy. Domestic exploitation, as with class or ethnic exploitation, had to be addressed too ; it was also the hindrance to the re-integration and redefining of self that came with the moral instrumental assertions of nationalism. There could be no movement towards an understanding of the structure of domination and exploitation if the obvious was masked : that Africans also partook in the exploitation of other's labour and would continue to do so in the absence of the appropriate political and institutional checks upon them (Cabral 1969b : 76, 86, and Cabral quoted in Chaliand 1969 : 90-91).

Cabral considered tribalism to be a minor contradiction within the Guinean context, however, in that it had not played any considerable part in the independence struggle. Nevertheless, he also believed that tribalism had become one of the more reactionary and politically exploitative dimensions of community fostered by what he believed to be the political ambition of

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30. Despite these achievements, the new regime was not able to develop the economic infrastructure that would enable a marked extension of social welfare and political democracy. With the exception of some increased gains in rice production in the early 1960s in the northern regions (ZARTMAN 1967 : 69), and some success with the diversification of agriculture by means of seasonal experiments with various kinds of vegetables (RUDEBECK 1974 : 176 ; 1992), there were none of the technological, material, or even political gains envisaged by Cabral.

unscrupulous political leaders elsewhere in Africa to maintain a political power base at the expense of national well being (Cabral 1968a : 144-145 ; 1969b : 61-63). If Cabral would have understood the distinction between the negotiated political reconfiguration of political tribalism – of using identity to achieve division between communities and to make personal and political capital from it – the « ethical ethnicity », a commitment to values that sustain a sense of identity and community – he would have done so, especially in light of the incomprehension of many traditional chiefs and elders, many of whom, even when they recognised the utility of independence from the Portuguese, could not get used to the corrosive effects of national liberation upon existing patterns of social order and respect within the traditional communities. For instance, elders often no longer had control over younger members of the village, some of whom had become directors of the *poder popular* and *tabancas,* or village committees, amongst other institutions within the emergent political communities organized by the Party.

Towards a Participatory Democratic Post-colonial State

These institutions, from village courts to primary and secondary schools and from the introduction of medical personnel to the development of village co-operatives, as well as the constant process of cadres encouraging self-criticism in the face of the needs and demands of the peasantry, were all seen as necessary investments in social and human capital, given the absence of development. Self-criticism, a standard form of ideological control for communist regimes at the time was seen by Cabral as a means to obtain political honesty among the leadership and a way of ensuring a bond between the leadership and the people. In so doing, leadership would exemplify a principle of radical democracy (Cabral 1965 : 120, 1965 : 93-95, 239, 245-47 ; 1970 : 55).

Cabral hoped that the practice of radical, revolutionary decentralised democracy, coupled with the administrative and symbolic capital of the Party, might provide some political stability and an extension of the value of participation and democracy for what was in effect the emergent post-colonial state. It is for this reason that Cabral saw no conflict between a unitary party at the national level and participatory institutions at the village level, since peasant participation served a pedagogical function, advising the people as to the meaning and operational significance of participation and citizenship (Cabral 1968 : 121-122 ; Rudebeck 1974 : 108-111, 124-134, 1992 ; Davidson 1981 : 127-134, Andreini & Lambert 1978 : 37-39, 52-56 ; Luke 1981 : 321-325)[31].

Actually, the creation of these institutions was one of the major achievements of Cabral and the pre-independence PAIGC. That the political and economic reconstruction would collapse a few years after Cabral's death is perhaps testimony to their institutional weakness, whatever their normative status. However this political and economic reorganisation was developed to ensure that, among other things, communities did not, like

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31. This symbolic capital, unfortunately, was one of the instruments that many nationalists have tried to use to stay in power, and with often tragic consequences, as the case of Guine-Bissau indicates. In the 1994 elections, as an excuse not to relinquish power, João Bernardo Vieira and the PAIGC attempted to legitimate themselves as the party of continuity and history through exploiting their history of struggle against the Portuguese (KOUDAWO 1995).

narrow tribalism, degenerate into a divisive and destabilising force undermining the foundations for the post-colonial state and society. Cabral believed that to invest too much power or faith in the traditional chiefs, or even in some of the more sympathetic elders, could be risky. Whatever their orientation, supportive or adversarial, they had no right to rule independently of what they would contribute to the people's welfare ; and even given the fact that, as Cabral put it, the elders were the historical intellectuals of the societies of Guinea, they were the natural competitors with the Party for ideological leadership. The elders' function as intellectuals was inseparable from their function of control or domination ; they represented the past that could represent the future, but under the terms of participatory democracy. If the traditional leadership were able to disassociate their intellectual role from traditional forms of hegemony, if they were able to adapt to the new circumstances, then they could contribute to the task of political leadership (1969b : 58). Otherwise, simply to give elders and chiefs leadership roles, as elsewhere in Africa, would be to undemocratically « mortgage the future » (1969b : 93).

Cabral's attempt to limit the role of traditional chiefs was simultaneously an attempt to deal with the issue and meaning of citizenship in the modern world, as well as to confront patriarchy. The values contained within given communities, frequently designated as tradition, but always contestable in fact and practice, often limited mobility in thought and in social and political action, regularly through social control of the family by elders. Modern forms of participation, however, mean mobility, suggesting some breakdown of historically given ties that restrict access to ways of life chosen through new forms of decision making and participation, forms of participation that would also undermine the need for competition that often underlie ethnic politics.

There was a need, then, for making people see the benefits of their own participation in broader political life, for making them see what possibilities open up for them through participation. Cabral's stress on unity, coupled with participation recognised the need for national integration and a common sense of belonging to the nation amongst the various peoples in the emergent states. Ronald Chilcote, over thirty years ago (1968 : 387-388 ; Sklar 1967 : 531-38), had referred to Cabral's strategy as « developmental nationalism » – the attempt to create institutions through which groups and individuals within the fragmented civil society can identify with and work towards. National integration would require a gradual overcoming of the local horizons within peasant and, more broadly, Guinean life. The barriers to national unity include class and ethnic conflict and the lack of organisational, administrative, and extended economic resources to resolve conflict. Faced with these barriers, Cabral called for the consolidation of the « nation class », a term suggesting unity. The concept of « nation class » would serve to break down the psychological as well as geographical barriers of peasant-ethnic parochialism. It would also serve to combat the colonial economic interests and domination but also a self-serving petty bourgeoisie that might consolidate power for themselves (Cabral 1966 : 106).

Yet, to whatever degree Cabral believed that theoretical enlightenment should come from outside, and however much he may have thought that certain traditional assumptions and institutions needed at least to be modified, his intention was not to dissolve the community ties that

characterized the different cultures amongst the peoples of Guinea. Contrary to the claims of Judson Lyon, one of the few people to engage in some detailed analysis of Cabral's writings on ethnicity (1980 : 158-59), Cabral did not embrace nationalism because he lacked an ethnic group with which to identify. That is, his espousal of Marxism and nationalism cannot be explained from his own lack of roots in an ethnic identity. Lyon's explanation of Cabral's alleged lack of identity has obscured the reason for Cabral's insistence on the need for unity. It has failed to mention the very insecure social foundations of many emerging nation-states, and has omitted any reference to Cabral's insistence on the need not to homogenise different ethnic groups and their culture. Indeed, as we have constantly emphasised, Cabral's regard for those cultures accords with the principle of decentralisation (Cabral 1966 : 65 ; 1969a : 160 ; 1969 b : 39, 61-62). He went to great pains to tell Party activists to be aware of major cultural differences among different ethnic groups, not just along the various social axes of class, power and inequality, but also in the ways in which these axes often converge in shared identities derived from a shared lived experience. Yet, and perhaps, most fundamentally, what Cabral knew more than most, is that meaning and significance of nationalism, and the cohesion of the post-colonial state, the tolerance between communities, are all linked to socio-economic improvement[32].

Cabral's Theoretical Contribution

We asserted at the beginning that Unity and Struggle in the face of the many forms of difference, are the central themes in Cabral's work. The centrality lies in the search to find institutions consonant to the realties of social classes, ethnic groups, cultures and ideas, that could be used in socialist construction under the different and difficult circumstances of economic backwardness in a modern world, and under the fracturing and oppressing legacy of an equally backward colonialism. These were the weaknesses against which the people and the Party had to be constantly struggling (Cabral 1966 : 90), and which seem poignantly apposite in today's Guinea-Bissau, riven as it was until recently by civil war, where State-peasant relations are characterised by an antagonism between producers and the Party, and where the political and economic structures continue to discriminate against the peasant majority.

Production and class leadership of a united revolutionary peasantry by the PAIGC were to be the links through which any overcoming of this legacy would be established. It was hoped that an extended production and distribution network would be tangible evidence of the benefits resulting from their involvement in the liberation struggle. The other side of increasing well being would be political participation, the people seeing themselves contributing to an emerging nation and to their own well-being. Cabral adumbrated a model of development that used familiar, existing institutions

32. No one has done more to emphasise this in post-colonial Guine-Bissau than Lars Rudebeck, most recently in the aftermath of the so-called liberal transition to democracy in Guine-Bissau. In his voluminous writings, he has emphasised with detail and an exhaustive and searching political anthropology, the micro-political importance of development, where the meaning that one can give to participation and democracy will be shallow unless there are tangible socio-economic benefits (RUDEBECK 1997)

to develop people's self-consciousness and an awareness of their power to make their own history, but one that amended existing institutions and transformed popular culture to facilitate the development of a new nation state.

Cabral had no illusions about what it means to engage the people, or about the numerous unresolved questions concerning how to achieve development within a nation state, let alone the, now *passé*, goal of socialism in a country such as Guinea-Bissau. He had the clarity of purpose, the cultural sensitivity and the analytical acumen to realize that one must start from peoples' past in order to make their future. One must start with what might appear to be perhaps meagre resources of a peasant past, of a particular heritage or productive culture, and the social relations of particular ethnic groups in order to forge a future that is distinctively their very variegated own. Despite his developmentalism, despite his sometimes urban and typically, modernist nationalist hostility to the hierarchies of traditional rule, Cabral's eye for the particular always led him back to what must be the foundation for a viable political community : recognising the centrality of people's well being and their deprivation in the constant shaping and reshaping of their identities and difference. Within the context of Africa's recurrent economic crises, this, once gain, may seem like an obvious truism. But it is one that before Cabral few had viewed, and there have been few that have said it so well since. Cabral was despite, indeed because of, his nationalist project, an ethnic pluralist for whom people's identities mattered. Yet he also knew they were contestable ; Cabral had come to a critique of essentialist notions of cultural identity and ethnicity.

Although Cabral's theoretical contributions are drawn out from a particular methodological stance, and are located empirically in his focus on Guinea-Bissau and the Cabo Verde Islands, he raises some fundamental questions about social science and about field research, which remain at the heart of a kind of engaged research, which in turn prevail at the heart of power relations in Africa : knowledge in the service of liberation. He could never complete, but he certainly contributes to the debate about the significance, but also the conceptual elaboration, of the context for how we categorise ethnicity in Africa. Of particular importance is his emphasis upon production in the environment of ethnic differentiation and class formation – his understanding that ethnicity cannot be separated from class, and conversely, class cannot be separated from that ethnicity. Equally conse-quential is his acknowledgement of symbolic power within communities, which can sustain the relationship between ethnicity and community and the classes within them.

In Cabral we can identify a serviceable lineage to an *African* political and social thought rarely drawn upon despite the moral force of his personality, and in so many ways still useful to broaching and analysing a problem so central to African political theory and practice. Like all nationalists, Cabral was a normative theorist-practitioner. He thought about how values guide ends ; he wanted a theory, as much as a moral calculus, that would be appropriate to independence and thereafter ; and, in this instance, in attempting to sort out the relationship between politics and cultural values, he essentially examines and challenges the assumption that attitudes, as ethnic consciousness, directly determined political practices outside of the context of production relations. What Cabral called for, and which is now

standard for any satisfactory political science, is good historical and ethnographic accounts of politics that view culture as resources through which symbols and language are adopted instrumentally to achieve cultural and political ends. One of those points of contact is the intersection of interests with various forms of *both* symbolic and material power.

We might disagree with Tamarkin (1996) that ethnicity is the most effective socio-political agent in African politics, and cannot be suppressed. We cannot, however, disagree that its role needs to be reassessed, or that in and of itself ethnocultural identity is intrinsically antagonistic to the broad community of the nation-space. In addition, we can agree that a debate should indeed be had about the relationship between different ethnic value systems and that an arena should be provided in which a moral debate is engaged concerning the appropriate relations between groups and society. If the post-colonial state lacks legitimacy, in part because of its inability to manage ethnic relations, then so it lacks legitimacy for its inability to create, provide and redistribute wealth amongst its various peoples. When the necessary relationship between political stability and economic well being is considered a truism, but when, equally, the formation of ethnic politics is rarely seen through the prism of culture, class and labour, it might be time to begin looking afresh at these relationships. Cabral provided us with a beginning, which I believe ought to be pursued and developed.

2000
Pablo Luke Ehioze IDAHOSA
African Studies Program
Founders College
York University, Toronto

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