



HAL
open science

ANTICOLONIALISM & NATIONALISM: DECONSTRUCTING SYNONYMY, INVESTIGATING HISTORICAL PROCESSES

Michel Cahen

► **To cite this version:**

Michel Cahen. ANTICOLONIALISM & NATIONALISM: DECONSTRUCTING SYNONYMY, INVESTIGATING HISTORICAL PROCESSES. Éric Morier-Genoud. Sure Road ? Nations and Nationalisms in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, Brill Academic Publishers, Leyde (Pays-Bas), xxvi+270 p., 2012, "African Social Studies Series", 28), 978 90 04 22261 8. hal-00690557

HAL Id: hal-00690557

<https://hal.science/hal-00690557v1>

Submitted on 23 Apr 2012

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Accepté pour publication, in Éric Morier-Genoud (ed.), *Sure Road ? Nations and Nationalisms in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique*, Leyde, Brill, avril 2012, xxvi+270 p., pp. 1-30, ISBN: 978 90 04 22261 8 (“African Social Studies Series”, 28). La pagination de ce fichier de pré-publication correspond exactement à celle de la publication.

CHAPTER ONE

ANTICOLONIALISM & NATIONALISM:
DECONSTRUCTING SYNONYMY, INVESTIGATING
HISTORICAL PROCESSES

Notes on the Heterogeneity of Former
African Colonial Portuguese Areas

Michel Cahen

In this chapter, the historical connections between anticolonialism and nationalism will require the discussion of universal concepts, while also exploring the particularities of Portugal’s former African Empire. The general idea is to contest the interchangeable use of the words ‘anticolonialism’ and ‘nationalism’, as well as to understand why these words are used so interchangeably.

I do not support the theory of the African ‘imported State’, as put forward by Bertrand Badie some years ago,¹ because in defining a State the first task is not to describe it, but to explain its functions or “duties”.² From this point of view, African independent States, even if they are completely neo-colonial, are new States, new historical productions (even if globalized) and they are responsible for new tasks in linking their legitimacy with the world economy. Of course there can be no state without a certain historicity.³ But there was no such thing as a “colonial State transmission”, because there never was a “colonial State” in each of the

¹ Bertrand Badie, *L’État importé. L’occidentalisation de l’ordre politique*, Fayard, Paris, 1992, 334 p.

² The same debate exists over the characteristics of the Portuguese state under the rule of António de Oliveira Salazar: the methodology of description of the state leads to the conclusion of huge differences with the regimes of Hitler or Mussolini, and therefore to a definition of the Portuguese state as ultra-authoritarian but not ‘fascist’ when the analysis of its functions militates for such a definition, which is my personal point of view. On this specific debate, see Michel Cahen, « Salazarisme, fascisme et colonialisme. Problèmes d’interprétation en sciences sociales, ou le sébastianisme de l’exception », *Portuguese Studies Review* (Trent University, Canada), vol. 15, no. 1, 2007 [issued 2009], pp. 87-113.

³ Jean-François Bayart, ‘L’historicité de l’État importé,’ in J.-F. Bayart (ed.), *La greffe de l’État*, Karthala, Paris, 1996, p. 11-39. It is worth noting that Bayart maintains the idea of “imported state”, nevertheless insisting on its historicity, which seems to me quite contradictory...

colonies.⁴ What there was is an imperial administrative apparatus of European States. The imperial administrative apparatus was not a State, or even a proto-State, any more than the Nazi police and State were a local State in France during World War II. They were a part of the German State. One may consider the imperial state apparatus as a kind of nationalization of Chartered Companies, which existed previously, a kind of estate but not a state.⁵ The colonial administration did not “prepare” the African independent State, except during the very late years, a very short period of time on a historical scale. On the contrary, over a far longer period, the colonial administration first broke the African States, and then went on to weaken the African tradition of the State. The colonial period was a time of State recession in Africa. African countries are still paying for that, but their present states, which succeeded the European administrative apparatus chronologically, are new States, not States in which only the leadership has changed.

That said, I am not denying the existence of neo-colonialism, but the neo-colonial nature of the African State stems from the peculiarity of modern integration in the world economy, and not only from the sociology of colonial transmission. Here, the focus is on the very nature of the State. But beyond this level of analysis, when we look to social and cultural history, I am the first to acknowledge that there has been sociological transmission of a huge range of things, not least ideology, all of which Balandier called a ‘colonial situation’.⁶ But this “transmission” paradigm applies not only to leaders, generals or social scientists from Africa; but also to European leaders, and to us, European social scientists, when we consider Africa.

⁴ Examples of the use of the concept of « Colonial State » applied to colonial Africa may be found in, among others, John Lonsdale & Bruce Berman, ‘Coping with the contradictions: the development of the colonial state in Kenya,’ *Journal of African History*, no. 20, 1979, pp. 487-506; Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, Yale University Press, New Haven - Londres, 1994, 356 p.; Frederick Cooper. ‘Grandeur, décadence... et nouvelle grandeur des études coloniales depuis les années 1950,’ in ‘L’État colonial’ (dossier), *Politix* (Bruxelles, De Boeck), 2004, vol. 17, no. 66, pp. 107-136, pp. 17-48 ; Pierre Boilley, Jean-Pierre Chrétien & Christine Deslaurier, *La transmission de l’État colonial*, Karthala, Paris, forthcoming. Out of Africa, see for instance Romain Bertrand, *État colonial, noblesse et nationalisme à Java : la Tradition parfaite (17ème-20ème siècle)*, Karthala, Paris, 2005, 760 p. (« Recherches internationales »).

⁵ The archetype would obviously be the « État indépendant du Congo » (1885-1908), but its official recognition by the Belgian state in 1908 did not change its nature. It is worth noting that, in the Portuguese empire, Chartered companies existed up until 1941.

⁶ Georges Balandier, ‘La situation coloniale: approche théorique,’ *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie*, (Paris, Presses universitaires de France), vol. 11, 1951, pp. 44-79.

That is particularly true of the nation-state. But, bearing in mind that, for obvious reasons, the view of the nation-state in Africa stems from the European model, I will also explain why a certain kind of Marxism has reinforced this Eurocentrism. I am not saying that “Marxism is not for Africa”, far from it, but there is no doubt that a certain kind of Marxism has increased a local tendency towards Eurocentrism.

Avoiding confusion of concepts: state, nation, nation-state

Now and then, the nation-state is confused with the state, with the terms sometimes used interchangeably. For example, when former Portuguese colonies gained their independence in 1974 and 1975, it was said that new nations had appeared. Why “nations”? States yes, republics certainly, but why “nations”? Similarly, the anticolonial struggle was widely spoken of as the national Liberation Front. Why “national”? What was liberated? Doubtless liberation from colonialism, but is this automatically national? In the same way, talk of “new nations” led to the use of next step concept, that is to say “nation building processes”.

If we refuse this tautological assertion – if there is a state there is a nation, and since there is a nation there is a state – and if we refuse the automatic nature of the creation of the nation from the state, there is a whole range of other questions to be considered. How do we define what a nation is? We will return to this question later. Why is there a need to build a nation in order to stabilise and legitimise a republic? Why should a republic have the status of a nation, or have a “nationalising” policy, in order to apply the state-building agenda? Why should a nation-building process, or even nation formation (as defined by Lonsdale in his discussion of state-building and state formation)⁷ be the required path to stability for a State?

Again, I must insist that this reasoning is not intended to imply that a nation-state is “no good for Africa”. On the contrary, I disagree with phrases like “the crisis of the nation-state in Africa”. No doubt there is a crisis of the state in Africa, and no doubt the ideology of many of these states is a “nation-statist ideology”. But is it because a

⁷ Bruce BERMAN & John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley. Conflict in Kenya and Africa*. 1. *State and Class*. 2. *Violence and ethnicity*, James Currey,, Londres - Heinemann Kenya, Nairobi - Ohio University Press, Athens, 1992, 223+vii p. et 504+viii p. (Eastern African Studies). See too John Lonsdale, « Ethnicité, morale et tribalisme politique, *Politique Africaine* (Karthala, Paris), no. 61, March 1996, pp. 98-115.

state is “broadcasting” a nation-statist ideology that this state is in fact a nation-state? We must not forget that a nation-state is the state of a nation first. Ideology and political discourse exist and have effects, including those on identity, and these effects must be studied. But there is nothing fated about this process, and a political discourse, an ideology, may provoke support and “membership” as well as reluctance and open resistance. That means a nation-statist ideology will have effects, but these effects may not lead to the formation of a nation; ideology alone cannot be sufficient to mould the very nature of the state of the nation. Conversely, the crisis of the state in Africa today is very much the crisis of the non-existence of nation-state, the crisis of “land-states” without a nation filling the whole area of the former colonial space, without a “sense of nationhood” throughout the land – in short, the crisis of the “gatekeeper state” as Frederick Cooper has called it.⁸

The problem stems not just from the colonial “artificial borders” which mark unbelievable territories, but also, and above all, from the very nature of colonisation, from which the lack of historicity of the borders and territories derives.⁹ From this point of view, it is obvious that the issues of the nation are not the same in Latin America and in sub-Saharan Africa. But is this the case just because Latin-American states gained independence 150 years before Africa? This is one factor, but probably not the most important one.

At least three categories of colonisation

Former colonies have experienced three kinds of evolution in relation to their former “mother countries”: (1) independence without decolonisation, (2) decolonisation without independence, and (3) independence with decolonisation.

⁸ Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, 230 p.

⁹ In any case, focusing the discussion on the “artificiality” of the borders is not very relevant, since all borders are essentially “artificial”. The French Revolution tried to defend the concept of “natural borders” (seas, rivers, mountains, etc.), because, besides the Enlightenment ideology, it was in its own interest: the Pyrenees as a border with Spain preserved the French ownership of Northern Catalonia, the Alps allowed for annexing of Savoy from the Kingdom of Piemont, and the river Rhine allowed for annexation of the area which now forms Belgium. The issue is whether a border is social, human, that is to say historically produced. For research on African borders, the African Borderlands Research Network (<<http://www.aborne.org/>>) is an invaluable resource.

Let us stop confusing independence and decolonization

The first category is most widespread in the former Spanish and Portuguese Americas. Independence was a political break, but in no way an anticolonial movement. What defines a colony is not primarily the fact that the subject territory is part of an imperial state. The Ancient Greek colonies were independent from their former mother cities, yet they nevertheless retained a clear identity as colonies in Sicily, Southern Italy and the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea. What defines a colony is the nature of the society produced by a conquest – not all conquests produce colonies, but there is no colony without a conquest. Indeed, in South America the independence revolt was not only led by the settler class, but it also included (more or less) the *colonial* society as a whole, with all its social milieus, including black slaves: but did independence put an end to the appropriation of Indian land and destruction of their political structures? In such cases the new country is independent but it remains a colony, only now it is a self-defined colony. This is what Abel Quijano calls the coloniality of power,¹⁰ which seems quite different from postcolonial theory (even if this author is frequently associated with that approach).

This process was most extreme in Portuguese America as it was the metropolitan state which decided to stay in its colony, finding refuge during the Napoleonic wars, but afterwards refusing to return to its mother country. The “grito de Ipiranga” (1822)¹¹ never meant for the state to stop being Portuguese, but that from then on it would build the *Império* not from Lisbon but from Rio. It was Portugal’s colony, but

¹⁰ Aníbal Quijano, ‘Colonialidad y modernidad/racionalidad’, *Péru Indígena* (Lima), vol. 13, no. 529, 1992; same title, in Heraclio Bonilla (ed.), *Los Conquistados. 1492 y la Población Indígena de las Américas*, Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogotá, 1992, pp. 437-447; ‘Colonialité du pouvoir et démocratie en Amérique latine,’ in A. Alvarez Béjar et alii, *Amérique latine, démocratie et exclusion*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 1994, pp. 93-101 (Futur Antérieur); ‘Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social,’ in ‘Festschrift for Immanuel Wallerstein/Part I’ *Journal of World-Systems Research*, vol. 6, no. 2, Special Issue, 2000, pp. 342-386; ‘Colonialidad del poder, eurocentrismo y América Latina,’ in E. Lander (ed.), *La colonialidad del saber, op. cit.*; ‘Colonialidad del Poder, Globalización y Democracia,’ *Trayectorias* (Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexique), vol. 4, no. 7-8, 2001-2002, 23 p.; ‘¿Qué tal raza?’, *Río Abierto* (Lima), 11, 2004; ‘Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification,’ in Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel & Carlos A. Jáuregui (eds), *Coloniality at Large. Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Durham, London, Duke University Press, 2008, 630 p.: 181-224; ‘La revanche des Indiens? Le contexte global de l’Amérique latine. Réponse aux questions de Yann Moulier-Boutang,’ *Multitudes* (Paris), no. 35, 2009, pp. 97-102.

¹¹ On the banks of the River Ipiranga, the Portuguese regent Pedro (later Emperor Pedro I) issued the *Grito do Ipiranga* (« Independence or Death! »), the declaration of Brazil’s independence from Portugal, on September 7, 1822.

it became a self-defined Portuguese colony. This is why the first name of the state was *Império brasílico*, not *brasileiro*; they were simply building the same Empire from a new location. Indeed, the moment we might consider to be the birth of Brazil in 1889 (with the end of the Empire and the birth of First Republic) did not mean that the country was no longer a colony: since the *national* identity had slowly been transferred, but not the *social* colonial formation, it was no longer a self-defined Portuguese colony, it had become a self-defined Brazilian colony.

It must be stressed that this idea applies not only to the ruling class, but to the whole of colonial society. For example, while one may concede that Bolivarian or Brazilian independences took on a strong elitist character, the Cuban revolution of 1898-1901 was a popular revolt which was by no means restricted to an elite uprising. But it was a colonial society (not just the colonial ruling class) which took power, expelling the Spanish state, within a framework shaped entirely by colonial history, since the Indian population had disappeared.¹² So when Brazilian colleagues say “We were colonised by Portugal”, I answer, “Begging your pardon, no, you were the colonisers for Portugal,” because a large majority of today’s Brazilian population comes from colonial society (and I include Black and mixed-race Brazilians, as although slaves were the most exploited social class, it was a class within the colonial society, not within colonised societies, which were limited to the indigenous Indians). In Latin America, to a greater (Argentina, Chile, Brazil, most of Mexico) or lesser (Paraguay, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador) extent, it was the coloniser who fashioned society.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is completely different and belongs to the third category (independence with decolonisation). African societies were defeated and conquered, exploited and humiliated, partially acculturated and socially “reshaped”, but these African societies continued to exist. The coloniser did not bear society, and only represents a small minority of the total population. The domestic mode of production (referring to Claude Meillassoux’s concept)¹³ was not destroyed, but was subjected to capitalism. The new states of today may be perfectly neo-colonial, but they are no longer colonies, meaning that true decolonisation occurred.

¹² I do not discuss here the fact that Cuba was almost recolonized (by occupation) by the United States of America up until 1934. At the moment of the uprising, the American intervention did not change the *popular and colonial* nature of the movement.

¹³ Claude Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, 212 p. [translated from the French ed., 1975].

Let me touch briefly on the second category, that of decolonisation without independence. With respect to Portugal, we have two examples: Goa and Macao, which were decolonised by integration into another country. Furthermore, General Costa Gomes (the second Portuguese president after the Carnation Revolution of April 1974) thought the same would occur with East Timor – which actually happened between 1975 and 1999, by integration into Indonesia. Another significant case in this category is that of the French “Départements d’Outre-Mer”, where there is the complete institutional assimilation of the territories into the French Republic.

Going back to the first and third categories, what are the consequences for a nation? They are enormous on at least two levels.

Colonisation categories and nations

Firstly, imagining the nation is a completely different process when the coloniser was the producer of the society or when the coloniser “merely” invaded an existing foreign society. Obviously the borders which shape the country are just as artificial in both cases. But in the former (independence without decolonisation), the colonisers are the ones who “shape” the territory, their territory, the society, their society. They are no longer foreigners. They went and settled there as Spanish or Portuguese people, with an already formed identity (it is debatable whether the identification process was the same at the time of the Kings or at the time of national revolutions: but they settled with a kingdom/national identification that had already been formed, as a part of a formerly imagined community, and the shift was much more political and economic than national). This process is one of the duplication of the former nation, accompanied by a slow process of differentiation.

In the second scenario, African societies were not destroyed (at least, not as in the Americas), and the coloniser did not build a settler society (with the partial exception of Algeria, South Africa and, to a lesser extent, Kenya, Southern Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique).¹⁴ The settlers remained foreigners within African societies. But these *colonized African societies* were placed in, and divided by, territories decided by

¹⁴ Even in these cases of settler colonization in Africa, the African societies have survived and were not exterminated (except in a few cases), or completely marginalized as in North and South America. The settler societies have remained more or less tiny minorities.

the coloniser outside the context of a *colonial society* (like in Latin America). Spaces like “Angola” and “Mozambique” (as well as “Gambia” or “Senegal”) have only a colonial relevance, not a colonial *and* national one as in the Americas. Why would the Ndaus of *Núcleo Negrófilo de Manica e Sofala*, in the fifties, or the Macondes of Mueda in 1960, fight for “Mozambique”, something almost completely foreign to them? They wanted to free the land, their land, and had no reason to accept the piece of land the coloniser had outlined on the map.¹⁵

Secondly, there is the question of the mode of production. When settlers and other segments of the colonial population came to America with their slaves, they brought with them a way of production which was already part of the first capitalist world-system to which their former nations belonged. I would not deny the existence of differences: for example, in the Portuguese world, the *capitanias* and *sesmarias* in Brazil were not exactly the same as those from Portugal at the time of the Reconquista,¹⁶ or similar to the *prazos* of Mozambique,¹⁷ and although at that time there were many Black slaves in Portugal itself,¹⁸ their numbers would never reach the same level as in the Americas. But on the grand scale of the Empire, it was all part of the same slavery and long distance trade-based economy; there was systemic unity between colonies and mother land. In Africa, the landscape became completely different after the Berlin Conference when effective conquest of the land became necessary in order to legitimise colonial sovereignty. Traditional social relationships were not totally destroyed but were integrated within the new economy of imperialism. This is what Marxists called the “articulation of modes of

¹⁵ On these cases of African anticolonial nationalisms, see Michel Cahen, ‘The Mueda Case and Maconde Political Ethnicity. Some notes on a work in progress,’ *Africana Studia* (Porto), no. 2, 1999, pp. 29-46; M. Cahen, ‘L’anticolonialisme identitaire : conscience ethnique et mobilisation anti-portugaise au Mozambique (1930-1965),’ in Colette Dubois, Marc Michel & Pierre Soumille (eds), *Frontières plurielles, Frontières conflictuelles en Afrique subsaharienne*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 2000, 462 p., pp. 319-333.

¹⁶ António Vasconcelos Saldanha, *As Capitanias. O Regime Senhorial na Expansão Ultramarina Portuguesa*, Centro de estudos de História do Atlântico, Funchal, 1991, 343 p.

¹⁷ Allen F. Isaacman, *Mozambique : the Africanization of a European institution : the Zambesi prazos, 1750-1902*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1972, xviii-260 p. ; Malyn D.D. Newitt, *Portuguese Settlement on the Zambesi. Exploration, Land tenure and Colonial Rule in East Africa*, Longman, London, 1973, 434 p.

¹⁸ José Ramos Tinhorão, *Os Negros em Portugal. Uma presença silenciosa*, Caminho, Lisbon, 1988, 460 p. (Universitária, 31); Didier Lahon, *O negro no coração do Império : uma memória a resgatar, séc. XV-XIX*, Secretariado Coordenador dos Programas de Educação Multicultural, Lisbon, 1999, 103 p. ; Jorge Fonseca, *Escravos no Sul de Portugal : Séculos XVI-XVII*, Vulgata, Lisbon, 2002, 261 p. (Rota do escravo. Estudos, 2) ; Isabel Castro Henriques, *A Herança Africana em Portugal*, CTT Correios de Portugal, Lisbon, 2009, 238 p.

production”, “domestic mode of production” being globally used for the greater profit of colonial capitalism.¹⁹ In Angola and Mozambique, this was evident in the system of forced labour: for six months of the year (Mozambique), or for one year out of every two (Angola), male *indígenas* [natives] had to work for the coloniser because their traditional and non-monetised economic activity was not recognised as work (therefore they were considered to be lazy vagrants). But this forced labour was not a modern process of proletarianisation: African workers were compelled to return home, and in order to oblige them to do so, part of their already low wages were only paid after they had returned home rather than at the end of the contract, at the workplace. Why? Officially, it was to allow them to “rest”. In reality, it was to allow them to help their wives restore domestic cultures, because these cultures were essential to colonial capitalism, enabling the payment of Africans below the cost of their social reproduction. Proletarianisation would have implied a sharp increase in the salaries, allowing Africans to live only from them. Highly gendered forced labour system was far more profitable for modern capitalism.

Turning to Latin American and Sub-Saharan African societies, we can now easily understand that the state in the former will correspond immediately to the kind of economy that the colonial society produced; and when it was necessary to adapt something, the mother state could be expelled to create a self-defined colonial state. This state is essential to the functioning of its economy, and for the functioning of its society. Even if the colonial society is strongly segregated into various social classes and milieus, it remains one society, not two, and the real other society, the colonized Indian society, is comprehensively marginalised. The state, and indeed the country itself, are defined by the colonial society. It allows for a strong process of identification among the majority of the population, and this majority may bring with it the majority of the rest: national relevance is therefore hegemonic, even if there are always some margins.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the domestic mode of production survived throughout the 20th century, though combined with capitalism. It is now disappearing through the acceleration of the processes of urbanisation. There has been no unification of the market, no unification of space, and many different migration trends. In Angola and

¹⁹ Bruce Berman & John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley... 1. State and Class*, *op. cit.*; Claude Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal and Money...*, *op. cit.*; Pierre-Philippe Rey, *Colonialisme, néo-colonialisme et transition au capitalisme*, Maspéro, Paris, 1971, 527 p. (Économie et socialisme, 15).

Mozambique railways are east-west, not north-south, and link the two countries to the British territories and economies of the interior only. What is this “space”? Any independent state built on the basis of such a space will face huge problems to be seen and felt by heterogeneous peoples as representative. It does not represent the peasant economy because that is not its function. It had to accept the relevance of its borders without any consultation of the nations it embraced in its colonially-defined land, and even if these borders cut across long-established African nations. Consequently, it cannot perceive the new nation as the necessary result of a very slow, multi-century process of merging from the former nations without destroying them, because it needs to achieve contemporary legitimacy by building a new nation quickly; it needs to become a colonial-based physical nation immediately. This is why the nation-statist ideology is always, in this context, a paradigm of authoritarian modernisation: this modernisation may become effective through unbridled capitalism or so-called “Marxism-Leninism”, but, as a model of development, it always contains dense, high-technology islands that are quite unable to breathe dynamism into the surrounding peasant economy. This by no means prevents ethno-clientelist behaviour by those in power, but the state ideology has to be that of an already existing nation, with great consequences for day-to-day policies that cannot be based on the cultural and social demands of its populations.

If this state, despite all of the weaknesses that have been pointed out, can guarantee social, economical and cultural progress for the people of the first nations (the so-called “ethnic groups”) integrated within the colonial space – even with a paradigm of authoritarian modernisation, a kind of enlightened despotism as it were – this guarantee of progress could create an identification process. For example, it was better for the Germanic people of Alsace to be French rather than Prussian because, in the context of post-revolutionary France, it was socially better to be citizens of the Latin French state than subjects of the Prussian king. Therefore, despite being ethnically Germanic, Alsatians preferred to become French. The matter of social progress is a fundamental one in the processes of identification. But is the state in the capitalist ultra-periphery able to guarantee this progress? I think not.

For an identification process to work within a still virtual community of human beings, it requires the pre-existence of more or less similar social relationships among a population group. The pre-existence of a certain kind of social relationship in the Basque Country came long before the feeling of being ‘Basque’. If a state is able to

modify and unify these social relationships in a manner to which people respond positively, it will lead to a process of identification. But it is not nationalism per se which creates the nation. Ernest Gellner argued, in his most famous works,²⁰ in favour of such a thesis, but without, in my opinion, resolving the problem: if nationalism, per se, creates the nation, who creates nationalism? And why does this nationalism run in some sections of the elite and the population, and not in others? In fact, nation and nationalism are the same dialectical process which one may call the political expression of a social movement of identities, closely linked with long term trajectories of social life. Nations are not a programme,²¹ but a long historical process.

What peculiarities does the Portuguese Empire present?

In this global context, what are the peculiarities of the Portuguese Empire? Since the publication of William Gervase Clarence Smith's wonderful book *The Third Portuguese Empire*,²² I consider the debate about the "economic" or "uneconomic" nature of Portuguese imperialism to be over.²³ It is not necessary to create a special category for Portuguese imperialism. It was an economic imperialism as a whole, in which the links with Brazil were far more profitable than the ones with Africa up until the 1950s, although obviously its political and "mental" aspects should never be underestimated.

Portuguese imperialism in Africa is part of the diversified family of European imperialisms. Therefore, what is specific and relevant to our discussion? Far from a culturalist approach, and far from insisting on the unique nature of the motherland of Luís de Camões, I will focus on three specific characteristics, which are nuances rather than huge differences:

²⁰ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, Blackwell, Malden (Mass.), 2006, liii-152 p. (New perspectives on the past) [1st ed. 1983]; Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism*, Phoenix, London, 1998, x-114 p.

²¹ Unlike seems thinking Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992 [2nd ed.], 214 p.

²² Gervase William Clarence-Smith, *The Third Portuguese Empire 1825-1975. A Study in Economic Imperialism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985, X-246 p.; see my comments: 'Lénine, l'impérialisme portugais, Gervase Clarence-Smith,' *Cahiers d'itudes africaines* (Paris, EHESS), no. 107-108, 1987, pp. 435-442.

²³ GW Clarence-Smith was explicitly answering to the book by Richard James HAMMOND, *Portugal and Africa, 1815-1910 : a study in uneconomic imperialism* Stanford University Press, , Stanford (Ca.), 1966, xv+384 p.

Portugal, the first to go

First, we have to remember that Portugal was the first European state to travel all the way around Africa. This did not lead to “five centuries of colonisation,” since the effective conquest of 95 % of the colonial area occurred in the ten years or so following the Berlin Congress of 1885. But in tiny areas, small old colonial elite social milieus emerged, often mixed-race and comprising Portuguese, African, Arabic, Indian, Shirazi and Chinese people. Although very narrow demographically, the old Creole social milieus were very important in the genesis of the anticolonial movement, even if the majority of these milieus strongly identified themselves with Portugal. The Portuguese Empire of the 20th century is not the only such case: outside of it, but also from luso-brazilian history, we can observe examples in Lagos (Nigeria), Benin, the Agudas;²⁴ we have famous cases in Liberia and Sierra Leone, although these Creolities are “imported” (the kriol elite came from the USA or England and were not locally produced as was the case in the Portuguese empire); we have some cases on the coast of Senegal, where there are some small areas of former colonisation but officially and definitely recognized by French Third Republic only in 1879 (the ‘Quatre Communes’). But it is within the Portuguese Empire that old Creolities have been most important.²⁵ Thus, when Portugal actually conquered colonies that it believed it had owned for a long time, what occurred was not a turning point between “pre-colonial” and colonial stages, but the turning point between *ages of colonisation*. Even if there was no permanent Portuguese presence in these lands, there were former trade roads of *lançados* (Senegambia) or *pombeiros* (Angola), a former commercial presence and, in Mozambique, the famous *Prazos*

²⁴ The Agudas (from the name of [S. João Baptista de] Ajuda, or Ouiddah) are a creole milieu stemming from slave traders and slaves from the Coast of Guinea, settled in Brazil and returning to Africa during the last period and after the end of the trade. Andrzej Krasnowolski, *Les Afro-Brésiliens dans les processus de changement de la Côte des Esclaves*, Wrocław, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolinskich [Polish Science Academy], 1987, 197 p., [16] p. of plates; Kadya Tall *et al.*, 1995, *Le comptoir de Ouidah, une ville africaine singulière*, Karthala, Paris, 191 p. ; Olabiyi Babalola Yai, ‘Les "Aguda" (Afro-Brésiliens) du Golfe du Bénin. Identité, apports, idéologie : essai de réinterprétation,’ *Lusotopie* (Paris, Karthala), vol. 3, 1997, pp. 275-284; Milton Guran, *Agudás : os "brasileiros" do Benim*, Editora Nova Fronteira/Editora Gama Filho, Rio de Janeiro, 2000, xv-290 p. ; Nancy Priscilla Naro, Roger Sansi-Roca & David Treece, *Cultures of the lusophone Black Atlantic*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2007, ix-256 p.

²⁵ I call Creolities those social milieus produced by, or at the close periphery of, the imperial state apparatus. Therefore it is not a racial category, but a socio-cultural one. Creoles may be white, mixed-race or completely black, but *obviously* not native (in the English meaning of Native, that is to say traditional, indigenous).

da Coroa.²⁶ But the geopolitics of the first age of colonisation were not the same as those of the new capitalist colonialism. Again, it was in Mozambique that the difference was most prominent: while the former colonisation was centred between the Zambezi river and the Querimba islands, with Moçambique island as the colony's capital, the new colonialism migrated further to the South, in order to connect the new colonial economy to South-African capitalism. This change in domestic politics had wide-ranging social effects, with the marginalisation of most of the former elites increasing regional heterogeneity in the country, and heterogeneity in the relationship towards the modern state, a trend which has continued right up to the present day. It is not surprising that segments of these marginalised elites were often in favour of Renamo.²⁷ In Angola, the effects of the two ages of colonisation were different, because Luanda remained the capital city, which explained the very important standing of Creole families in the genesis of the MPLA.²⁸ But there was a comparable marginalisation of the south-western part of Angola, in the Benguela and Namibe areas, after the decline of links with Brazil. In São Tomé e Príncipe, the former elite of the *Filhos da Terra* (Sons of the land), or *Forros*, which Portugal never succeeded in subjecting to forced labour, and whose refusal to work in agriculture became a factor of identity, managed to control the independence processes and nationalise the *roças* (cocoa plantations) in order to prevent their appropriation by the workers who actually worked on them, that is to say Mozambicans, Angolans or Cape Verdeans. These are three different cases, but nevertheless three cases where understanding the weight of former elites stemming from the first age of colonisation is crucial to understanding the way the present day nation sees itself.

No social space for an African elite

Secondly, even if Portuguese imperialism was economic on the whole, it was also certainly very bureaucratic, the colonialism of poor capitalism.

²⁶ A. Isaacman, *op. cit.* and M. Newitt, *op. cit.*

²⁷ Renamo, *Resistência Nacional de Moçambique*, Mozambique National Resistance, a guerrilla movement backed by apartheid South Africa in order to fight "Marxist Frelimo". Frelimo, *Frente de libertação de Moçambique*, Mozambique Liberation Front, created in Dar es Salaam in 1962, which gained independence for the country in June 1975 and is still at power today.

²⁸ MPLA, *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*, Angolan People's Liberation Movement, created in 1960 in Tunis (officially in 1956 within Angola), which gained independence in November 1975 and is still at power.

I am not speaking about bureaucracy within the administration, for example, but about social milieus which can be characterised by their bureaucratic functions. Portuguese settlers were first of all civil servants, trade employees, skilled workers in state-owned ports and railways, soldiers or priests. This hypertrophy of the tertiary sector led to a very small part of the colonial population having close links with commodity production – either as bourgeois, or white workers as in South Africa. The myth about the “lusitanian peasants within the Tropics” was just that; more than 80% of the colonial population was crammed into the main cities, and the most rural segments of the colonial population were Indian, Chinese and mixed-race people, not white people. In this context, there was almost no social space for the emergence of a new urban (as well as rural) African elite, because white people occupied the whole sphere of wealth creation. The tiny new African elite occupied the same jobs as lower-level whites, only they were socially bureaucratic jobs. This elite had very few links with the rural economy and traditional peasant hierarchy; in short, it was entirely the product of 20th century Portuguese colonialism. Once again, this is more evident in Mozambique than in Angola. In Angola, as the late Christine Messiant demonstrated, it was more a slow process of differentiation among the *assimilados*,²⁹ which may in part explain the Coup attempts by Nito Alves in May 1977. In any case, we never or rarely see an African bourgeoisie, or African trading petty bourgeoisie appearing, but a social milieu of tertiary-sector employees entirely produced by the modern colonial state. I do think that this constitutes a sufficient explanation for the kind of Marxism of the MPLA and Frelimo, or “revolutionary democracy” that the PAIGC and MLSTP³⁰ advocated as a possible structuring discourse that could be understood within the elite, expressing its desire for subaltern westernisation.

The third characteristic, and this time not a structural but a contextual one, was the need for an armed struggle. Portugal was not alone in this case, since the United Kingdom experienced the Mau-Mau revolt in Kenya, and France the war in Algeria, not to mention Dutch Indonesia and French Indochina. But with Portugal, the whole of the decolonising

²⁹ C. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola colonial, histoire et société. les prémisses du mouvement nationaliste*, P. Schlettwein Publishing, Basel, 2006, 444 p.

³⁰ PAIGC, *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*, African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, founded in 1959 by Amílcar Cabral, launched a successful guerilla war in Guinea, obtaining independence for the two countries in 1974 and 1975 ; MLSTP, *Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe*, Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe, in power in the archipelago from 1975 to 1991.

process had to be a violent one. Obviously, the intensity and duration of the war served to radicalise the situation.

This brings us back to the links between nationalism and Marxism.

Nationalism and Marxism

As we have seen, not only was the mindset of this very small elite shaped by its origins within or close to the state imperial apparatus, but Marxism also encouraged a certain kind of functionalist view of the nation. More specifically, this was the kind of Marxism which seemed relevant to the small elite who had studied in France, Switzerland, Portugal or Eastern European countries. This Stalinised Marxism advocated a one-party system with the state as the main actor in the economy, homogeneity of the nation with only one language, corporatist labour unions and authoritarian management of workers and peasants; none of which was foreign to the small, new, colonially-shaped African elite, educated at the time of Salazarist Portugal. If there was a will for political change, the social model remained “very Portuguese”. But this Marxism also offered an explanation for the nature of the revolution to be achieved, which could solve the problem of the illegitimacy of a nation conceived within a merely colonial space.

In the Marxist tradition, bourgeois revolution is closely linked with national revolution. Indeed, Marx analysed capitalism as the crucible of the modern nations through the unification of a market. We could have a long discussion as to whether capitalism created this unified space, or if it slotted into a space that had already been shaped by the late feudal state.³¹ But nobody will deny that market unification had major consequences for the mindset of a more modern state and nation. In France, it has often been said that it was the Revolution that created the nation, and in Germany the nation that created the state. There is no space here to enter in the criticisms of both theses, but in both cases,³² there is no doubt that the bourgeoisie played an important role in the shaping of the nation. To varying extents, the bourgeois revolution was also a national revolution at the same time.

³¹ I discuss this issue in my article ‘Lusitanidade, "lusofonidade" e modernidade. Uma exploração nos conceitos de identidade e de nação,’ *Episteme. Revista interdisciplinar da Universidade técnica de Lisboa* (UTL Lisbon), 2004, vol. 5, no. 13-44, pp. 123-139.

³² See my book *Ethnicité politique. Pour une lecture réaliste de l'identité*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1994, 176 p.

But we then have two quick shifts amongst many Marxists epigons: first, the bourgeois revolution was no longer occurring only at the same time as a national revolution, the bourgeois revolution *was* the national revolution and the national revolution *was* the bourgeois revolution. Secondly, what occurred (or seemed to occur) in Europe became universal: everywhere, the national revolution was the stage of the bourgeois revolution. Therefore, for many Marxists, the decolonising process in Africa was a late stage of the bourgeois revolution, after the end of “feudalism”, even if this feudalism was subjected to imperialist capitalism.

But there was a problem: the Soviet Union could not tell its African friends they were reaching the stage of the bourgeois revolution. Soviet theoreticians therefore applied to Africa and some Asian countries an actualized version of the thesis of “non-capitalist development” stemming from the Sixth Congress of Comintern (1928),³³ that is to say neither capitalist nor socialist. And the more radical experiments were qualified as National Democratic Revolutions (NDR), or, with a more Maoist accent, People’s National Democratic Revolutions (PNDR). Even if it was not acceptable for the anticolonial fighters to be characterised as agents of a bourgeois national revolution, this global Stalino-Marxist paradigm stressed the idea that the anticolonial revolution was a national revolution per se, either by liberating the nation or by creating a new nation. Creating the state was creating the nation: the problem of the modern legitimisation of a state rooted in a colonial space was thus solved.

This was not just the application of theoretical cosmetics to justify things to the outside world. It was primarily an explanation for the narrow milieu of the radical elite itself, allowing them not to question the colonial relevance of the territory, not to have to recognise the relevance of other nations (the first nations, generally spoken of as “ethnic groups”), or of other legitimacies produced outside the imperial state apparatus which was familiar to the new elite. This was an ideology adapted to a habitus rather than a political discourse, even if it was also a political discourse denouncing all kinds of “separatism”, “tribalism” and “obscurantism”...

What we have to remember here is that this kind of Marxism, or the influence of the kind of Marxism that captured or influenced the elite, increased confusion within

³³ Although it does not cover all Marxist criticisms of the soviet concept of “Non-capitalist way of development”, the article by Hooshang Amirahmadi (“The Non-Capitalist Way of Development,” *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 1987, no. 19, pp. 22-46) may be useful.

the state and the nation, and within the nation and the party, the crucible of the nation. But it was not the “fault” of Marxism if there was this confusion: it was because the elite needed this confusion that this kind of Marxism was an operational tool. It was not because they were taken by this Marxism that there was a one-party state; it was precisely because the elite wanted a one-party state to build a modern and homogeneous nation quickly that it chose to use that kind of Marxism. Marxism was thus, in a certain context of bureaucratic colonisation and the need for armed struggle, the way the elite found to express its desire for a nation. It also explains why it was, at the next step, very easy to abandon this Marxism, which was a tool and not an identity.

Creating the nation through armed struggle?

But did armed struggle not have “nationalising” effects, merging fighters of several ethnic origins? Yes and no. Firstly, the same could be said for the colonial army which recruited soldiers from all over the colony during the Africanisation process of the colonial war: the idea that the war spread a sense of nationhood by way of the draft could be applied to Guinea or Angola, as well to as Portugal. Secondly, it takes more than a ten year period for a sense of national identity to be created; nation formation is a historical process of the crystallisation of an identity, rooted in the pre-existence of common social relationships. The will for a new State, for a “government of our colour”, may crystallise within ten years, but will not produce a national identity per se. Thirdly, if the war of liberation had unifying effects, it also had dividing ones: the first age of colonisation of African society was not a peaceful one, and it is unsurprising that one could find African people who preferred European power to an African power. Why, for example, would the Bitonga people of Inhambane see Gungunhane as an anticolonial hero, when he was a resolutely predatory king whose dynasty had arrived after the Portuguese?³⁴ How could the Bacongos, during the great uprising of 1961 in Angola, see Ovimbundu people as their allies, when the latter were working in coffee plantations for the settlers who had seized their land one generation before?³⁵ And so on.

³⁴ Malyn D.D. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1995, xxii-679 p.

³⁵ John A. Marcum, *The Angolan révolution. Vol. 1. The anatomy of an explosion (1950-1962)*, MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass), London, 1969, xiv-380 p.

If we want to be precise in the analysis of historical processes, the war of liberation expresses the desire and need for a new government of the territory, and it is easily understandable that this should mean a new state covering the colonial area. But that is all! The same is not true, for example, of Poland divided between Russian, Prussian and Austrian empires during the 18th century. Poland was already a nation which, in spite of being invaded, continued to exist under foreign rule, with its nobility, Catholic Church and Jewish Yiddish villages. Polish nationalism expressed the will to restore sovereignty politically: nationalism was the expression of a nation, nationalism was produced by the social movement of the nation. In the cases of the PAIGC, MPLA or Frelimo, the wish to expel the colonisers, to have new governments and ultimately to have new states, was made synonymous with new nations. But the desire for a nation was not produced by the social movement, it was (and has remained) a project, it was proclaimed, it stemmed from the political elite and was imposed to the social movement to deny the first nations' relevance and promote the homogenised New Man.

Shall we call it nationalism?

Shall we call this phenomenon nationalism? The term nationalism has traditionally been used to express two broad categories of political expression of the nation:

On the one hand, it can express the resistance of a nation which is submitted to a political context which is not perceived as being positive by all or part of its people: it is the nationalism of, or within, oppressed nations. I have already mentioned occupied Poland, but other examples include Arab nationalism (though not necessarily limited to a specific post-colonial country), Kurdistan, the Basque Country, Ireland, Tibet, Chechnya, and so forth.

On the other hand, it may express the nationalism of oppressive nation-states: Nazism, pan-Sinism, as well as French or Portuguese colonialism which are also a form of nationalism since they attempted to impose their nation (not only their domination but also their identity) on other peoples.³⁶

³⁶ Michael Löwy, *Patries ou planète ? Nationalismes et internationalismes, de Marx à nos jours*, Éditions Page Deux, Lausanne, 1997, 158 p.

It is obviously unsatisfactory to use the same concept for two such different political expressions. But they still have a point in common: they are the product of an existing nation or of the nation-state of that nation. They are the product of the social movement of the nation, or of the capacity of the nation-state to integrate the social movement of the nation.

If we now turn to Angola, Mozambique or Guinea, we see strongly socially-rooted movements against colonialism. Opposition to the coloniser produces a semblance of identity – the community of those who want to expel the coloniser. Is that enough to give root to a national feeling, which is to say a feeling of identity which is able to overcome local identities and be perceived as being more important? Identities are always mixed; a person may be a Kongo and an Angolan person, a Maconde and a Mozambican, a Balante and a Guinean, a Basque and a French person. However, a Scottish person may be British, but will never be English, a Catalan person may be Spanish, but never Castilian. This points to the problem of the “nation-statist state” which is identified only with one of the ethnicities of the state and places a brake on identification processes. If the Mozambican or Angolan states are identified by large sections of the population as a mainly Changane or Mbundu/Creole state, it will slow down the identification process with this state. The economic dimension of that includes populations feeling that all the wealth is given only to one ethnic group. There is then little sense in speaking about a nation if the people’s principal loyalty is not to that nation.

For instance, in the time of the Soviet Union, it could be said that there was a kind of “Soviet identity”, but the Soviet Union was never defined as a nation by its leaders: they spoke about the “Motherland of Socialism”, motherland but not nation. The nations remained Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, without a nation of nations in the same way as the British identity is a pan-identity of English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh identities. “Sovietness” was a kind of “lesser identity” that could be an accepted identity but was never embraced as a national identity. It could perhaps have been transformed into a feeling of a nation in five centuries, but History decided otherwise. If a local identity within a country³⁷ is far more important in day-to-day life than the so-called nation of a nation-statist state,

³⁷ It is worth noting that, if one does not oppose nationhood and ethnicity, a local identity may also be analyzed as national (why could a nation not be very small, given that Luxembourg is more than five times smaller than Mueda district in Mozambique?). It is not a question of size, but of history.

this state is not a nation-state. That does not mean that this state is weak, or collapsed or illegitimate – I said at the beginning of the paper that the nation was not an historic necessity for a State to be stable and legitimate. But this state will be a “no nation-state” and, to be stable, will have to invent politics of greater respect for all local identities – national or not. This kind of state, a common home for different peoples, is yet to be invented.

The state does not produce the nation. But if it did, which one would it be?

Can a state produce a nation ex-nihilo? As I have stated elsewhere several times, the answer is “no”,³⁸ but that depends on the stance we take on national consciousness. If we no longer accept the confusion between state, republic and nation – a very French or Portuguese confusion – it is clear that we are speaking about imagined realities;³⁹ that is, something which actually exists but on a subjective level. No “objective definition” of the nation, as Stalin attempted,⁴⁰ can work. Who are the members of a nation? Only those who feel they are members.⁴¹ What is a nation? Only the community defined by its members. Who is French, Jew, Zulu? Those who feel they are. This process of imagination stems from a long historical process of the crystallization of identity, and cannot be reduced to the relevant role of an elite.⁴² It is a dialectic process within and between all the social milieus of a society which perceive that there are enough shared social relationships to feel a sense of community. Still, we should not deny that the very existence of a state, even the neo-

³⁸ M. Cahen, ‘Mozambique : histoire géopolitique d’un pays sans nation,’ *Lusotopie* (L’Harmattan, Paris), vol. 1, no. 1-2, June 1994, pp. 213-266; *Ethnicité politique, op. cit.*; ‘Desigualtats, Etnicitats, Democratització : de la construcció de l’Estat sense nació a la nacionalització del món,’ *Studia Africana* (Centre d’Estudis Africans, Barcelone), 8, March 1997, pp. 143-160 (french version : ‘De la construction de l’État sans nation à la nationalisation du monde,’ pp. 19-44, in M. Cahen, *La nationalisation du monde. Europe, Afrique, l’identité dans la démocratie*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 1999, 256 p.); ‘Lusitanidade, lusofonidade’ e modernidade...’, *op. cit.*

³⁹ Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, *Imagined communities : reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, Verso, London, 1983, 160 p.

⁴⁰ Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the national question*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1945 [1913], 79 p.

⁴¹ Michel Cahen, ‘El potencial revolucionario de una categoría desechada : la etnia y las ciencias sociales aplicadas en África,’ in Albert ROCA ÀLVAREZ, *La Revolución pendiente. El cambio político en el África negra*, Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida, Lleida, 2005, pp. 107-152.

⁴² That is the feeling one may get when reading B. Anderson, *op. cit.*, and even more Eric J. E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [England], 1990.

colonial state, or of boundaries, even if they are “artificial”, induces processes of identity. The question is: to what extent?

In censuses within Tito’s Yugoslavia, citizens had to indicate their identity: Serbian, Slovene, Croatian, Bosnian, and so on. But they could also refuse to pick one of these, simply identifying themselves instead as “Yugoslavian”. This is most interesting because we know that the existence of a Yugoslavian state for seventy years had “produced” Yugoslavians who no longer felt that they were members of their primary nations. In the last census held within this Yugoslavia, however (with Tito already dead, but several years before the civil war), less than 10 % of the citizens said that they were Yugoslavian. Seventy years of the Yugoslavian state had therefore produced Yugoslavians, and a Yugoslavian nation existed, but it was a minority in Yugoslavia.⁴³

This example is useful for our examination of Portuguese-speaking Africa, and for Africa more broadly. I have no doubt about the existence of Mozambican or Angolan or Guinean nations – that is to say, national feelings delineating a community –, but the question is, what proportion of the population holds this sense of nationhood to be the primary element of their identity? Yugoslavia was a European country, able to promote social progress and therefore to encourage the identification processes. The situation is worse on the capitalist periphery. And in Portuguese-speaking Africa, particularly in Mozambique and the early post-independence history of Guinea (up to the 1979 coup) or Angola (up to the beginning of open clientelism and corruption in the middle of the eighties),⁴⁴ the paradigm of authoritarian modernisation, closely linked with the nation-statist ideology, slowed down the identification process. When Frelimo imposed “communal villages”, or banned traditional chiefs or rain rituals, when it prohibited African funeral associations, when it organised literacy campaigns only in Portuguese, including for old people, when it nationalised all schools, and so on, it was not primarily engaged in a socialist process, but rather attempting to launch a “nationalising” process, designed to impose the transformation of all inhabitants into modern European-model Mozambicans. This Frelimo state was so strange for a large part of the inhabitants that it seemed entirely foreign.

⁴³ Michel Cahen, *Ethnicité politique...*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Christine Messiant, *L’Angola post-colonial. 1. Guerre et paix sans démocratisation. 2. Sociologie politique d’une oléocratie*, preface by Georges Balandier, Karthala, Paris, 2008, 420 p. + 432 p. (« Les Afriques »).

But when this authoritarian policy does not bring social and cultural progress to these inhabitants, not only does it not produce the nation, it also provokes anti-statist reactions. The Renamo rebellion⁴⁵ may also be seen in this way: a reaction to the modern authoritarian state. Mozambicans will all recognise the fact that Armando Guebuza is the President and none of them will have any difficulty in recognising that they are “Mozambican”. But as social scientists, we must understand the exact meaning of such a word. Recognising political legitimacy, or at least the acceptance of a state, of a President, of a master, is not synonymous with the existence of a sense of nationhood. They may all be “Mozambican”, but that does not prevent people in Mambone or Mossuril from speaking of the “nation” when they speak about Maputo: “Dear comrades, may I introduce you this comrade coming from the nation?”, as they say when they introduce a leader coming from Maputo. Likewise, when peasants or urban people in Northern provinces are angry at a visiting leader, they may say, “Let him come back to Mozambique!”⁴⁶, acknowledging that being a member of a country is not, in itself, indicative of a national feeling, but may be the consequence of authoritarian policies which fall far from respecting the demands of local populations. From this viewpoint, the “Marxist-Leninist” paradigm and the neoliberal philosophy are not so different: peasants are always to be “organised”, to be “modernised”, to be “integrated”, or to be “forgotten” as in Angola! They are a problem for the state.

This project of the nation as opposed to the first nations, and as opposed to the original social relationships held by the peasant people, does not correspond to either category of nationalism that is laid out above. This project does not reflect the nation nor does it respect the long-term processes of identity crystallisation as they exist in History. It is always closely linked to a paradigm of authoritarian modernisation. It is striking to note that what has always remained, in spite of the many political turns of Frelimo or the MPLA, is the idea of nation-building: the ideology of the nation-building process is the key line of continuity in these parties and stalinized Marxism was only one stage in it.

⁴⁵ Renamo was backed by South Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa, but was able to express, in a certain way, the deep crisis of the peasantry that Frelimo’s policy of authoritarian modernization had provoked. Michel CAHEN, *Les Bandits. Un historien au Mozambique, 1994*, Publications du Centre culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, Paris, 2002, 354 p.

⁴⁶ I am indebted to Joana Pereira Leite (Lisbon), for this last example.

If we accept that this vision of the nation-building process characterizes a state as a nation-state, we make defining what nationalism is – already a complex range of political expression – even more difficult. It gives rise to confusion between the republic and the nation, and therefore the disregard for the former nations and all that is “not modern” from a modernist, statist point of view.

In Mozambique’s Frelimo, this disregard began very early on, and is clear even in the way it has written its own history. This is a very functional story, in which three “regional” movements (meaning “not national”), Manu, Udenamo and Unami,⁴⁷ merged into a front and therefore created the national movement, that is to say a movement covering the whole colonial area. Any attempt to continue these former movements would be *ipso facto* an attempt against the “nation”. This idea of the nation imposed the one-party system (the “One people, one nation, one party” slogan, based on the “For the Nation to live, the Tribe must die” precept). We know today that this merger of three movements did not occur; that Frelimo is a new organization stemming from strong pressure by Tanzanians and Americans. But the history of Udenamo, Manu and Unami is still to be written.

Nevertheless, the findings of my research do not correspond with the official history: the problem of Udenamo was not at all a “regional characteristic”, but was its leadership, since its president, Adelino Gwambe, was very young, radical and immature. Udenamo was not a “regional movement” of the centre and south of the country. The founding members were from these regions, but Udenamo grew strongly and included many Maconde people.⁴⁸ Indeed, Manu was a Maconde organization, but not the largest (thus not the most representative): the principal Maconde organization was the Mozambican African Association, MAA, which refused to merge with TMMU (Tanganhica Mozambique Maconde Union, close to Tanu⁴⁹ and was transformed into Manu) and, after the Mueda events (June 1960)⁵⁰ in which its leadership was arrested, joined Udenamo and not Manu. Two years after the foundation of Frelimo, this maconde base of Udenamo, the former MAA, joined Frelimo, the only movement

⁴⁷ Manu, Mozambique National Union; Udenamo, *União democrática nacional de Moçambique*, Mozambique National Democratic Union; Unami, *União nacional de Moçambique Independente*, Independent Mozambique National Union.

⁴⁸ M. Cahen, ‘The Mueda Case...’, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ Tanu, Tanganyika African National Union, J. Nyerere’s party which achieved independence in 1961.

⁵⁰ M. Cahen, ‘The Mueda Case...’, *op. cit.*

capable of making war. But the point is that at the very moment of the foundation of Frelimo, Udenamo was already an inter-ethnic movement with a modern program. And Unami could never be considered representative of Tete and Zambezia (thus “regional”) feelings, since the main African associations of these long-colonized regions never had any link with it:⁵¹ Unami was a very small group rooted in the border area south of Milange.

But Frelimo created the story of the history of its nation in order to establish its sole legitimacy.⁵² Nevertheless, from the historical rather than the social sciences viewpoint, the key question is not whether this story is true or false, but whether or not it works as a nation-building process. What I am sure of, is that this global ideological context caused deep disregard for African society, for the first African nations, for regional balance, and a bureaucratic and technocratic approach to development and urbanization –this is what I have called the paradigm of authoritarian modernisation and strong paternalism.⁵³ Along with other serious forms of social suffering, this legacy continues to create ethnic tensions in the country and counteract any feeling that the existence of this Republic is a guarantee of progress and that it could be good to identify with it. Even if Frelimo won the last elections (October 2009) with its best figures ever, this result is more a reflection of allegiance to a now well-stabilized power, within a context of state neo-patrimonialism and absence of any credible opposition parties, than evidence of a reinforced national feeling – which has been a major concern of President Armando Guebuza since his first election in 2004.⁵⁴

Nonetheless, the project of a nation does exist and, after Luís de Brito,⁵⁵ I suggest that we stop calling it “nationalism” and begin calling it nationism. This is not for the sake of inventing a new word, or copyrighting a new concept. It is to express a very different political and social process.

⁵¹ Sérgio Chichava, *Le ‘Vieux Mozambique’ : l’identité politique de la Zambézie*, PhD thesis, Political Studies institute of Bordeaux, 2007.

⁵² Lorenzo Macagno, ‘Fragmentos de uma imaginação nacional,’ *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais* (São Paulo), vol. 24, no. 70, 2009, pp. 17-35.

⁵³ Michel Cahen, « Mozambique : une impossible alternative dans la culture politique ? », in António Romão, Manuel Ennes FERREIRA, Joaquim Ramos Silva, *Homenagem ao Professor Doutor Adelino Torres*, Almedina, Coimbra, 2010 (Económicas, 14).

⁵⁴ M. Cahen, ‘Mozambique : une impossible alternative...’ *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ Luís Cerqueira de Brito, *Le FRELIMO et la construction de l’État national au Mozambique. Le sens de la référence au marxisme (1962-1983)*, Ph.D Thesis Université de Paris 8, , Paris, 1991, 350 p. ; L. de Brito, ‘Une relecture nécessaire : la genèse du parti-État Frelimo,’ *Politique Africaine*, no. 29, 1988, pp. 15-28.

Nationism is not the political expression of a nation, but the nation-statist ideology of an elite that is opposed to the existing (first) nations, seeking to mimic a centuries-long European process in a few years, and to build the new nation regardless of the desires of other inhabitants.

The heuristic usefulness of Portuguese-speaking Africa

All of this could apply to other countries, including some outside Africa. But the case of the former Portuguese empire, in particular Angola and Mozambique, is very useful because it was a more “radical case”: the expansion of a very old merchant nation, colonialism by weak capitalism in which the new colonial capitalism did not succeed in deleting the first age of colonisation, very bureaucratic colonisation, an old nucleus of Creole elites, a very small and socially bureaucratic new African elite, an armed struggle, a weighty paradigm of authoritarian modernisation, post-independence civil wars, the “structuring” role of stalinized Marxism among modern elites, the strong influence of the Portuguese model in imagining the nation, etc. These are the reasons that led to my announcement in an article published in the French journal *Revue Historique*, that I would no longer use expressions such as “national liberation wars”, “national liberation movement”, “nationalist fronts” or “nationalism”, preferring only “anticolonial movement” or “anticolonial liberation wars”, except when the above terms are related to political expression of indisputable nations.⁵⁶

Cape Verde as a counterexample

I have made no reference so far to the Cape Verde islands. It is not possible here to go through the history of Cape Verdean here, but it is necessary to explain why Cape Verde was not included in the discussion. For Guinea, Angola and above all Mozambique, I have explained how and why the acceptance of the relevance of colonial territorial space required a process of modern legitimisation by the rapid production of a nation, implying a paradigm of authoritarian modernisation. I am not discussing here whether or not it was possible to do otherwise, I am only studying

⁵⁶ ‘Lutte armée d’émancipation anticoloniale ou mouvement de libération nationale ? Processus historique et discours idéologique. le cas des colonies portugaises, et du Mozambique en particulier,’ *Revue Historique* (Paris, PUF), vol. 315-1, no. 637, 2006, pp. 113-138.

what actually occurred. I have explained how and why this paradigm slows down the nation identification process and provokes a founding crisis of nation-statist states which are not nation-states.

At the beginning of the article, I classified the end of European imperial power into three categories: independence without decolonisation (the case of Latin America), decolonisation without independence (the case of Goa, Macao, or French *Départements d'outre-mer*) and independence with decolonisation (the case of Africa and parts of Asia).

The case of Cape Verde does not quite fit into any of these categories. As in some countries in Latin America, society in Cape Verde was a complete “production” by Portugal, it was not an African society invaded by a foreign country. But after the 18th century decline studied by António Carreira,⁵⁷ the great majority of white settlers left the archipelago, leaving slaves, mixed-race foremen and the Catholic Church. So what is a slave society, colonial or colonized? Obviously slaves were colonised, since they were abducted and personally subjected to European civilization, but coming from a wide range of geographical locations and ethnic backgrounds, and continuing under European domination, they were unable to rebuild African societies. I am not saying that no African culture survived, I merely note that the social structure of Cape Verdean society is completely different from that of any society on the continent: no lineage kinship, no tribes, no traditional chiefs, no clans and their food taboos, no ethnicities, no age classes. It is a society made up of colonised persons but it is not a colonised society. It is a special case of colonial society in which the huge majority of the population is part of the most exploited social class of the colonisation, that is to say the slave class.

In Brazil this same class existed, but not as huge a majority of the population. Yet, it must be considered that slaves had been colonised as individuals, but individuals remaining within the colonial society, not forming a colonised society. Even *quilombos*, *mocambos* or *candomblés* never rebuilt African societies, but built small slave republics or historically slave-rooted religious groups.⁵⁸ From this point of

⁵⁷ António Carreira, *Cabo Verde. Formação e extinção de uma sociedade escravocrata (1460-1878)*, Instituto do Património Cultural, Praia, 2000 [3rd ed.], 548 p. See too Maria Emília Madeira Santos (ed., with Luís de Albuquerque for Vol. I), *História Geral de Cabo Verde*, 3 vols, Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, Lisbon / Instituto Nacional da Cultura, Praia, 1991, 1995, 2002, 523+642+540 p.

⁵⁸ Kadya Tall, 2002, ‘Comment se construit et s’invente une tradition religieuse ? L’exemple des nations de candomblé de Bahia,’ *Cahiers d’études africaines* (Paris), vol. 167, no 3, 2002, pp. 441-461; K. Tall, *Le candomblé de Bahia, miroir baroque des mélancolies postcoloniales*, forthcoming, Paris, 165 p.

view, Cape Verde could be compared with Haiti, another country of former slaves, but the comparison is difficult because the 1804 revolution in Haiti killed almost all of the whites, derailing the genesis of a mestizo Creole society.

Paradoxically, the slave history of Cape Verde engendered positive conditions for a nation formation process. The mode of production of the whole society was “automatically” that required by the state and the same as that of the colonial mother land, which provided a link to the world economy (though social formations were different in Portugal and in the archipelago, its slave economy was directly integrated into the merchant economy of the empire). There was no resistance of indigenous societies organised around a domestic mode of production which was neither mercantile nor capitalist. People were “automatically” organised as part of the world economy, even if it was the result of profound marginalisation; they did not constitute another system and there was no need for an imposed articulation of separate modes of production.

In this situation, the colonial apparatus of the European dominant state fitted in with the society: it exploited and dominated the people, but it was not a foreign power ruling over an indigenous society – everybody and nobody is a foreigner in such a situation. It was the local administration of a slave state over its slaves. The functions of the state were coherent with society. After the slow decline of slavery and extensive spread of Creolity, and above all after independence, the coherence of the state was reinforced within its population, thereby allowing an identification process.

In other words, the problem here was not of an authoritarian modernisation process, imposed by nation-statist ideology, which actually weakened the identification process.⁵⁹ Here, the modern state did not have to do that since the society had been entirely shaped by the coloniser – a situation which was never contradictory to the existence of resistance and revolts. *The authoritarian modernisation process had already been performed by slavery* which broke native social relationships and ties of lineage or ethnically-based horizontal solidarities, creating conditions, after slavery, for more individual autonomy, which is to say exactly what capitalism needs for its labour market. It also explains the fact that Creolity is not confined to a separate social milieu (as in Guinea-Bissau or Angola),

⁵⁹ Obviously, this statement deals only with a general framework, since there were some events in Cape Verde archipelago where PAIGC tried an authoritarian modernization reform, as in the case of the land reform in Santo Antão island during the 1950s, which provoked violent peasants demonstrations.

but is a feature of the whole society, from the “blackest” and poorest peasant to the “lightest” and wealthiest student, even if there are social tensions between these social milieus and class struggle.

This explains why the politics of the same party, the PAIGC, were so different in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.⁶⁰ Not only were there two different orientations, but the societies were completely different. In Guinea-Bissau, Creolity is not a national feature, but the distinctive characteristic of a socio-cultural elite.

In Cape Verde, there are some insularities but no ethnicities. This Republic is one of the few cases of the nation-state in Africa. That does not mean that it is a paradise, for it is not at all – except for tourists of course.

⁶⁰ Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau were a unique case in Africa up until 1979, with the same party holding power in two different states. The coup d'état by Nino Vieira in November 1979 put an end to this experiment dreamt up by Amílcar Cabral.