

Lecture 1

Culture and Development UGRC 229

INTRODUCTION to AFRICAN STUDIES

Course Facilitators

- **Prof. Albert K. Awedoba (DPhil)**
- **The Teaching Assistant**
- **You, the UGRC 229 class**

Website

E-resources: papers, notes, etc posted on UGRC 229 website in **Sakai** LMS (on the UG website). Under **Quick Links**.

POWERPOINT Presentations to enhance learning & teaching. These too will be made available eventually, but not immediately after lecture.

We are therefore encouraged to share knowledge. Note taking is advised, but listening and understanding are more important.

Description of Lecture 1 and 2

The aims:

- 1. Generate interest** in African Studies.
- 2. Provide background information** on Africa and perspectives on its histories, peoples and cultures.
- 3. Serve as spring board** from which the topics and subjects for subsequent lectures on Culture and Development will be launched.

Course Objectives: I

- Enable students appreciate the contemporary value of African Studies as an area of enquiry.
- Assist students engage with discourses on African realities.
- Encourage students to appreciate African Identities.
- Help students develop a sense of Self Determination in the global world.

Course Objectives II

- Make students aware of the negative stereotypes about Africa and encourage them to challenge these stereotypes.
- Develop appropriate methodologies / frameworks for examining Africa and its past through multi-disciplinary approaches.
- Highlight some of Africa's contributions to world civilizations and knowledge generation.
- Enhance students' knowledge in specific areas of African Humanities and the Social Sciences

Course Requirements

- Assessments
 - Interim assessment (30%)
 - Final exam (70%)
- Course activities may include some/all of ff:
 - **Formal instruction**
 - Group discussions
 - Class presentations
 - **Tutorials**
 - **Essays/written assignments.**

Week 1: General Intro

The Value of African Studies in Today's World

- **Learning objectives**

At end of Lecture 1, students should be able to:

- Understand the **distinctive nature** of Africa
 - Explain various (mis)representations of Africa
 - Appreciate significant African contributions to world civilization.
 - Appreciate the African Identity

WHO IS AN AFRICAN?

Who is an African?

- How are African identities constructed in the face of the mosaic of identities that peoples of African ancestry living within and beyond the continent bear?
- To what extent do all categorized as Africans or as having an African pedigree perceive themselves as Africans?
- To what degree are all who perceive themselves as Africans accepted as such?

More Questions

- Are there levels of “Africanness”, and are some more African than others?
- How do African identities interface with other identities and citizenships in Africa?
- And what are the implications of the contentious nature of African identities and citizenship for the projects of **pan-Africanism**, the making of Africa-nations, and Africa’s development trajectories?

Are these men Africans?



Barack Hussein Obama 44th
President of the United States



Dr. Guy Scott – Vice President & later
Acting President of Zambia

Defining Africanness

Multilayered-ness

- **Legal** - e.g. citizenship, parentage, naturalization
- **Conceptual**
 - **Philosophical:** shared value systems & world views for example, “ubuntu” – *I am because we are*; Belief in the ancestors
- **Cultural:**
 - tangibles (buildings, monuments, artifacts);
 - intangibles (skills; highly developed oral traditions; knowledge systems, etc.)
 - Is geography alone enough?

Concept of the African Diaspora

What do you know about the concept of the African Diaspora?

Defining Africa

- **Race?** - range of racial types on the continent
 - South Africa describes **itself as the rainbow nation**
- **People of African descent?** Large concentrations in Northern & Southern America, the Caribbean. Also found in India, the Middle East, etc.
- **Politics?** - citizenship in one of the **53** countries of the AU – see the constitutive act; long term residence in an African country?
- **Geography?** - Countries on the African Continent/Map
 - Africa is not a country, but a continent.
- **Allegiance?** - Dedication to African heritage & aspirations

EXERCISE 1

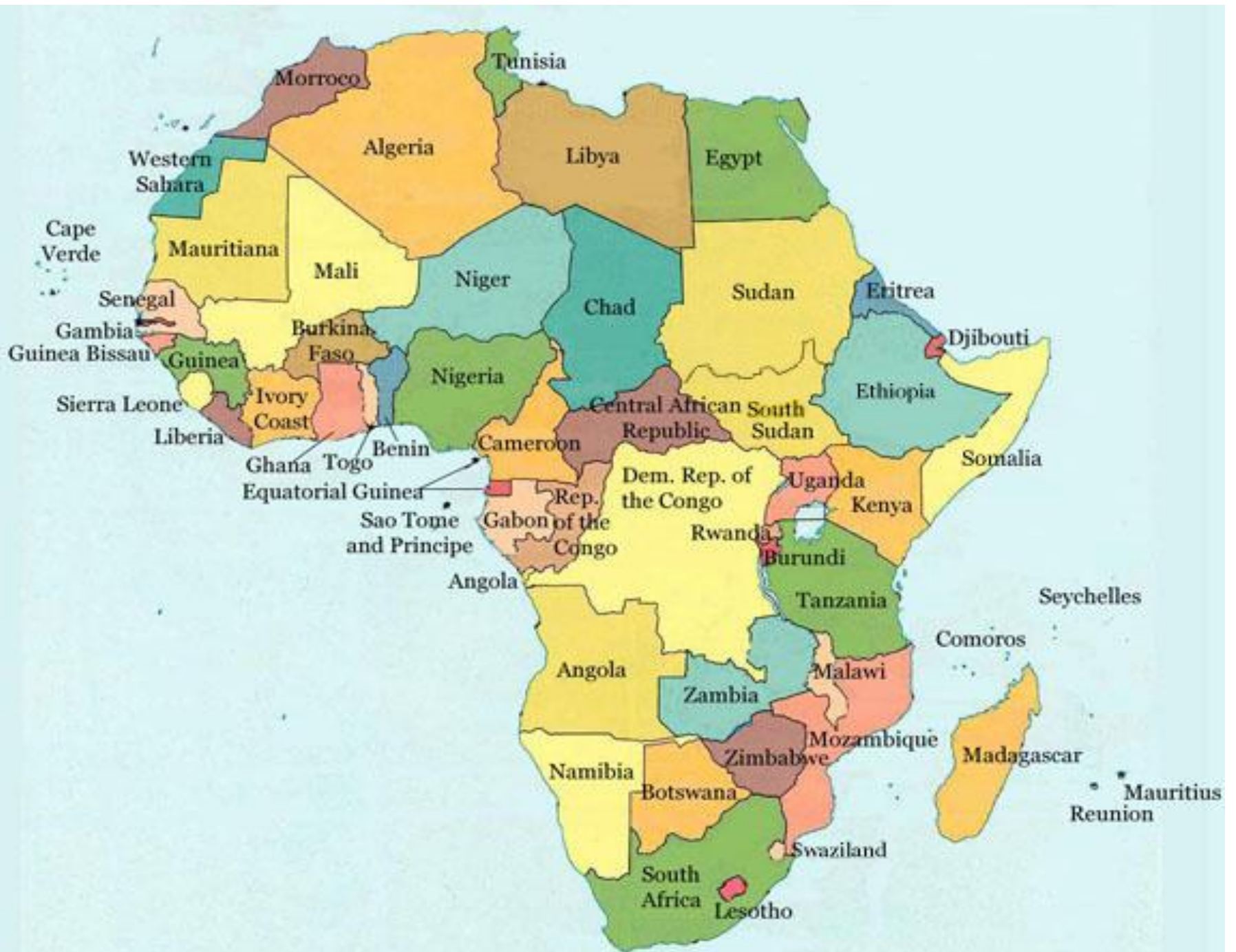
Blank Map Activity

Identify the following countries on the blank map of Africa provided:

- a. Sao Tome and Principe
- b. South Sudan
- c. Malawi
- d. Botswana
- e. Burundi
- f. Western Sahara
- g. Eritrea
- h. Cape Verde
- i. Tanzania
- j. Kenya
- k. Mali
- l. Senegal
- m. Ethiopia
- n. Gabon

A blank map of Africa





How many countries in the AU?

The African Union (AU) is a union of 54 countries in Africa. The only African state that is not a member is Morocco.

The AU was established on 26 May 2001 in Addis Ababa and launched on 9 July 2002 in South Africa, with the aim of replacing the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

MISREPRESENTING AFRICA

What they used to say & some still say about Africa.

- ❖ Continent without history?
- ❖ A people with no civilization?
(savages, barbarians, primitives)
- ❖ Africa is the 'Dark' continent?
- ❖ Africans have inferior minds?

Africa the continent of crisis?

Two types of narratives about Africa

Except Africa Narrative & the Doomsday Narrative

Except Africa

Development works everywhere in the world but **not** in Africa. Therefore Africa has to change rather than that development policies should be tailored to better meet the needs of Africa. [**Point: Africa must change to fit development paradigms**]

Doomsday narratives

There is a crisis of **overpopulation** in Africa, poverty, drought, **over utilisation** of scarce resources, environmental crisis, **corruption**, ethnic tensions, civil **wars** all of which are resulting in a terrible crisis that requires external interventions to halt. The solution has to come from outside since African states are not competent to solve problems they [themselves] have created.

- **EBOLA continent?; annual epidemics of cholera?**

BAD GOVERNANCE?



Nelson Mandela



Silvio Berlusconi



Idi Amin



Hugo Rafael Chavez



Slobodan Milosevic



Kwame Nkrumah

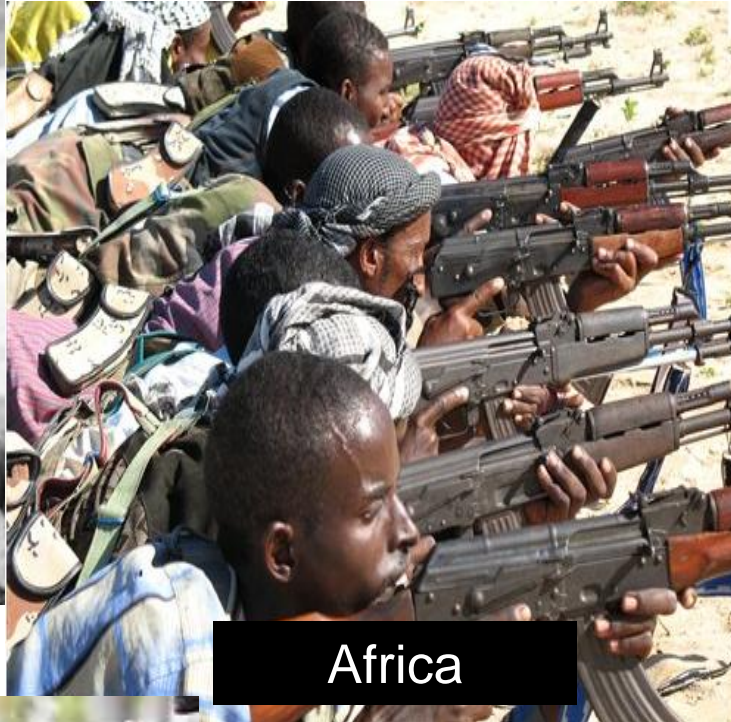
Who they Were

- Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías was a Venezuelan politician and the President of Venezuela from 1999 until his death in 2013.
- *Silvio Berlusconi*, one of Italy's longest serving post-war prime ministers, and one the country's richest men. He ran out of luck when he was convicted of tax ... He was eventually convicted and sent to jail.

CONFLICTS



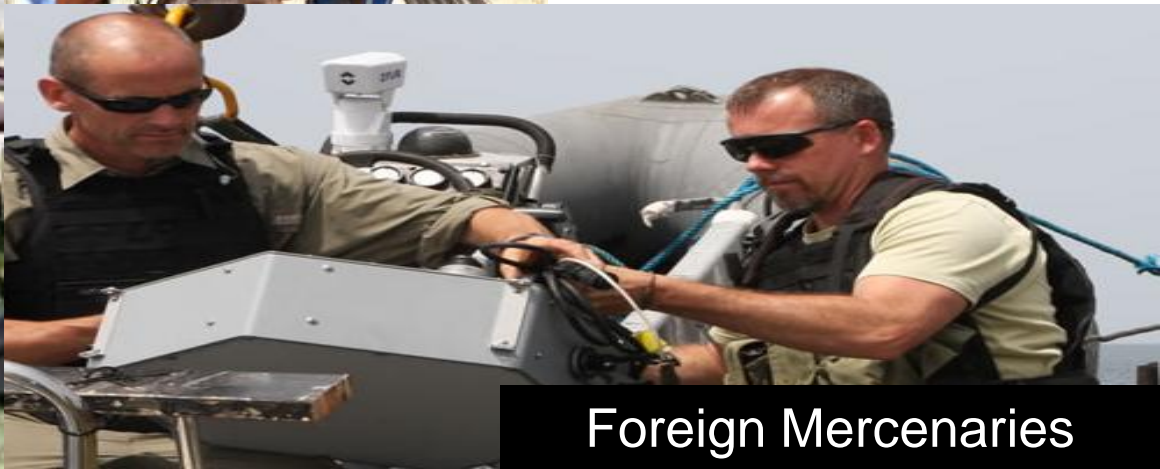
Child soldiers



Africa



Bosnia

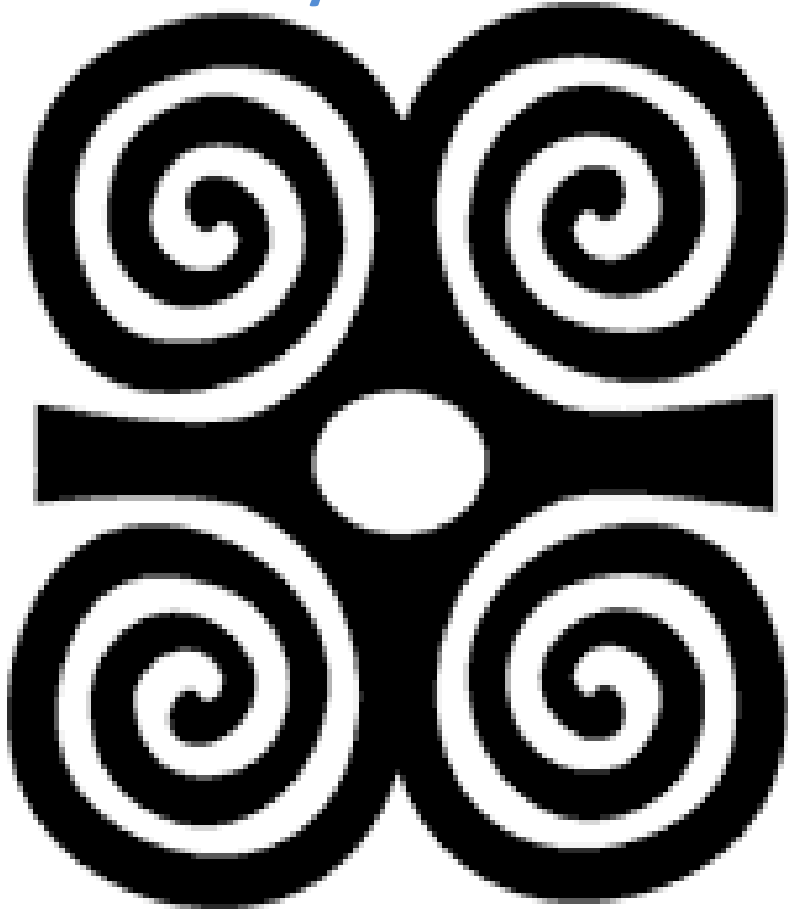


Foreign Mercenaries

Representing Africa:

Dwaninmen (Ram's Horn)

Adinkra symbol of the Akans



What are the GOOD representations of Africa?

Humility, Strength, Wisdom
and Learning

Fact is:

Contemporary Africa has contributed positively to global knowledge production and civilization in many areas including the ff:

- Agriculture
- Academia
- International Trade and Commerce
- **Even in science and technology**

Coffee: An African Tree Crop

Coffee originated **wholly** in Africa.

- There are three types of coffee
 - Arabica (originated in Ethiopia)
 - Robusta (originated in Congo)
 - Liberica (originated in Liberia).
- The highest quality of coffee is Arabica.

Why Arabica, when it originated in Ethiopia?

The Coffee story: Global Commodity

- Coffee was introduced into Dutch colonies in Java in the 1690s.
- In 1720s coffee was carried by the French and Dutch into botanical gardens in the Americas, Dutch Guinea (Surinam), Haiti and Santa Domingo.
- Robusta and Liberica species were also carried into South America.
- By the nineteenth century **Yemeni and Ethiopian production in international trade in coffee had become insignificant.**

Coffee: A Global Commodity

- In recent years coffee production has rapidly expanded in Africa with Ethiopia, Tanzania, Rwanda and Kenya becoming significant producers of Arabica and Côte d'Ivoire of Robusta (mainly used in producing Nescafe).
- Paradox: While **producers get a small percentage of the total price** if the coffee value changes, in recent years the government of Ethiopia has successfully got different varieties in Ethiopia internationally recognised for their heritage and **gained a premium price paid** for these varieties in European markets.

Cocoa: A South American crop successfully cultivated in West Africa

- Cocoa is largely produced in West Africa - over 80% of global production originating from West Africa (the two dominant producers are Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana producing around 70% of global supplies).
- Cocoa is a South American crop originally introduced into Sao Tomé and Príncipe off the coast of Cameroon, from where it was subsequently smuggled into the Gold Coast by Tetteh Quarshie.

The story of COCOA cont.

- By 1820s Gold Coast emerged as most important producer contributing 70-80% of Global supplies. Largely produced by rural farmers for export rather than for domestic consumption, it exemplifies of successful agrarian capitalism in Africa (Polly Hill).
- During the 1970s Côte d'Ivoire overtook Ghana as major producer. Competition also came from Brazil and Malaysia, however as international production became increasingly competitive the West African producers were able to out compete others.

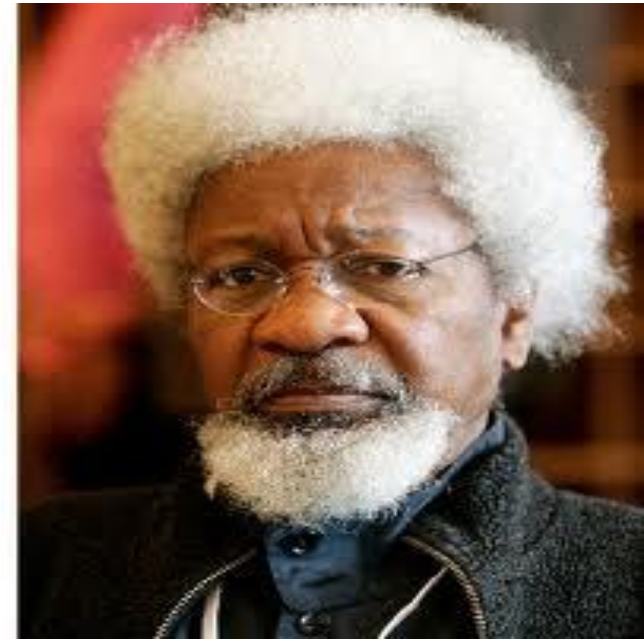
Coffee and cocoa

Examine the differences and similarities of the coffee and cocoa stories.

Positive Representation Africa

Wole Soyinka: Nigerian poet, playwright, and novelist.

- He has written many plays, poems using the mythology of the Yoruba. He addresses social and political issues in Nigeria and Africa
- In 1967, he was jailed for 22 months for secretly meeting with Ojukwu of Biafra to try and prevent civil war.
- In 1986 he won the Nobel prize for Literature, the first African to win the prize for new literatures.
- In 1994, he had to flee into exile to escape imprisonment by Abacha.



Wole Soyinka

Positive Representation of Africa: Inventors

Inventors	Nationality	Inventions/Projects
Prof. Souleymane Mboup	Senegal	HIV-2 Virus (discover)
Dr. Oviemo Ovadje	Nigeria	Blood Auto-transfusion
Samuel Todo	Togo	Humanoid Robot
Jean-Patrice Keka	Democratic Republic of Congo	Space Rockets
Prof. Francis K.A. Allotey	Ghana	The Allotey Principle
Victor and Johnson Ohasa	Nigeria	Armoured Vehicle

African Positives

INVENTOR	NATIONALITY	INVENTION/ PROJECT
Simon Mwaura	Kenya	Multipurpose Mobile Remote control
Prof. Nii Narku Quaynor	Ghana	One of the Pioneers of designing and developing the internet
Abdoulaye Toure	Senegal	Solar Oven
Philippe Yoda	Burkina Faso	Plastic Recycling
Phillip Emeagwali	Nigeria	Connection Machine Supercomputer

Prof. Monty Jones: Renowned African Scientist

- Prof. Monty Jones- renowned plant breeder from Sierra Leone; he won the 2004 World Food prize for leading a team at the West Africa Rice Development Association (WARDA) which successfully crossed West African rice (*Oryza glaberima*) with Asian rice (*Oryza sativa*) creating the **Nerica** varieties (New Rice for Africa), a rare and successful hybridisation of rice.
- His approach is recognised to be innovative in its use of participatory methods linking farmers, extension agents and scientists



Ethiopian Airlines: A Successful Commercial Venture



- It was established by the Ethiopian government in 1945.
- It has survived the many crises that have plagued the airline industry since its establishment and has grown to become one of the major airlines in the world flying a wide range of routes the world over.
- “With its ten modern 787s and its confident global ambitions, Ethiopian Airlines has not just Africa, but the whole world, in its hands.” *The Economist* 3rd September 2012

Finally: What is African Studies

- A formally organized multi-disciplinary academic study of the continent of Africa and the African diaspora.
- The study of African Studies is three-dimensional:
 - i) research/knowledge production;
 - ii) dissemination of knowledge and teaching;
 - iii) the application of knowledge/transformation of knowledge into policies and social action.

Source: Gordon J.U (2013). Inaugural lecture, Kwame Chair, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

Accessing sources on Africa (1)

Documentary & Non-documentary

- Archaeology



- Provides information about how humans adapted to their environment

- Archaeological information is obtained through the excavation of specially selected sites, e.g. Ife Bronze works, Zimbabwe ruins, Pharaonic pyramids.

Accessing sources on Africa (2)

Linguistics

- Study of origins, use, structure, and changes of a language.
- A comparative study of languages can provide valuable historical information. E.g. a study of Bantu and W/African languages provide evidence of a common ancestor.
- Languages that are closely related share features.
e.g. Ga & Dangme or Waale & Dagaare deemed to have sprung from a parent language.

Shared Linguistic Origins

Evidence that languages are related genetically comes from shared words (cognates), sounds, grammar etc. Examples:

Eat = *di, dzi*, etc; **child/little** *bi/bu/vi*, etc.

Drink = *num, nyo, nyu*, etc. **meat** = *nam, nom, nimre*

‘Camel=*yoma* (Twi); *nyoromã* (Mande), *nyogma* (Dagaare)

Examine different Gh. Langs. for: **kill, die, dance, go/come.**

Accessing sources on Africa (3)

- **Oral traditions**

- folklore (traditional knowledge and beliefs) of cultures without no written language.

- Transmitted by word of mouth and consists, as does written literature, of both prose and verse (narratives, poems and songs, myths, dramas, proverbs).

- Often transmitted by specialists/experts.

- Can provide valuable facts and profound perspectives on life, e.g. court historians.

- Nearly all known peoples, now or in the past, have produced it.

Accessing sources on Africa (4)

New Media: new media offer information in multiple ways and provide a wide variety of sources

Written sources:

Primary sources

official reports, files, court documents, financial papers, newspapers, old family papers or official files.

Secondary sources

- Books (of analytical & scholarly articles)

Tertiary sources: encyclopaedia, bibliography

Institutional sources: museums , archives and libraries

Summary

In this lecture we have:

- ✓ Been given an **overview** of Introduction to African Studies
- ✓ Examined the distinct nature of Africa and its people.
- ✓ Identified some misrepresentations and negative stereotypes about Africa.
- ✓ Enumerated some significant contributions by Africans that (may) have been excluded in the dominant narrative about world civilisation.
- ✓ Identified several sources of data and information on Africa.

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