**Bringing African Scholarship Back In:  Lessons from the pan-African political project**

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**Abstract:**

The chapter explores the value of previously marginalised narratives to discussions in International Relations. In particular it focuses on the potential contributions of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere to contemporary discussions of citizenship beyond the bounded understanding associated with the nation state. Through a questioning of the Négritude movement and the pan-African project the chapter suggests that lessons can be learnt for both contemporary cosmopolitanism and citizenship studies through a re-reading of the narratives of scholars that have been previously excluded or written out of International Relations theory.

**Introduction:**

In discussions of continent wide models of solidarity and pan-national collaborations contemporary discussions often refer to the European Union as the only real attempt to economically or politically federalise. Often marginalized, and widely ignored, narratives of a political attempt at collaboration are those of Senegalese president Lépold Sédar Senghor’s Universal Civilization and the pan-African movement of the 1950s and 1960s associated with the work of Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah and Tanzanian president Julius K Nyerere. Any reference to the European project is intended only to highlight the narrative focus often found in contemporary discussions, it is not intended to conflate two very different models nor to suggest that the value of analysing African approaches in anyway depends on the existence of a European alternative. As such not only the similarities but also the differences between these projects will be a key element of the discussion and the lessons taken from this analysis will be intended to standalone as valuable interventions to our understanding of transnational politics. Building on this, this chapter will ask whether there are lessons to be learnt from a re-reading of this time period for contemporary International Relations and will seek to address the often negative discussions associated with the African continent in international discourse. In doing so, the aim is to demonstrate the centrality of Africa to understanding and developing conceptions of pan-national citizenship and ideas of citizenship beyond that of the nation state.

Associated with the views of the presidents and political class of the newly independent states, and attempts at collaboration in Kenya, Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania to name just a few, pan-Africanism was a ‘manifestation of fraternal solidarity among Africans and people of African descent’ (Padmore, 1972, p.95). It was, according to George Padmore, viewed by scholars and politicians involved in the movement as an ‘an aid to the promotion of national self-determination’ (Padmore, 1972, p.106). He suggests that, contra to contemporary concerns regarding European integration; pan-Africanism was viewed as an approach to strengthening sovereignty rather than to weakening it, strengthening the economic and political autonomy of member states through a bond of cooperation and collaboration. In making such claims Kwame Nkrumah recognized that ‘divided we are weak; unified, Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world’ (Nkrumah, 1961, p.xi). Such a bond of co-operation intended not only to strengthen the economic position of member states but also, according to Léopold Sédar Senghor, to present a model of citizenship and collaboration suitable not only to fit ‘Africa and the twentieth century, but first of all to fit man’ (Senghor, 1962, p.17). In making these claims Senghor talked of the necessary role for African politicians and scholars in shaping and developing what he referred to as the Universal Civilisation; an international community grounded on his view of a ‘culture in its universal dimensions’ (Senghor, 1962, p.90). In his 1962 monograph ‘Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism’, Senghor argued that, ‘Europeans claimed to be the only ones who have envisaged culture in its universal dimensions’ but, he argued, that this was, in fact, not the case. Rather, ‘we had little difficulty in demonstrating that each exotic civilisation had also thought in terms of universality, that the only merit of Europe in this regard had been to diffuse her civilisation throughout the world, thanks to her conquests’ (Senghor, 1962, pp.90-91). Yet even as Senghor made this response to European scholarship in 1962 his model disappeared again from common discourse raising the important question of African narratives being ‘invisibilized and written over’ as suggested by Wai and Iniguez de Herdia (2017) in the introduction to this very volume. There are interesting similarities to be drawn here between Senghor’s views and those of contemporary cosmopolitans who recognise a basic universal conception, ‘a folk philosophy, and implicit in that folk philosophy are all (or many) of the concepts that academic philosophers have made central to their study in the West’ (Appiah, 1992, p. 87). Rahul Rao suggests that Western Cosmopolitanism fails to recognise the value of particularism, fraternity and solidarity that can be achieved whilst remaining within a universal or cosmopolitan framework:

‘While the material self-sufficiency of elite cosmopolitan theorists confirms them in their individualism and enables them to recommend the repudiation of particularistic attachments such as ethnic solidarities, such attachments are often a resource for effective political action and mutual support among the less powerful’ (Rao, 2012, p. 170).

In making these claims, the chapter is able to suggest the value of ‘bringing these scholars back in’ to discussions surrounding universal and pan-national citizenship and accepting their views as providing lessons for contemporary international relations scholarship. This is not to suggest that a critical engagement with these ideas is not important, in particular the somewhat essentialist claims made by Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah in terms of their reliance on race based citizenship. Whilst these critiques will play an important role in analysing the scholars’ ideas, the importance of reintegrating their voices into discussions of international relations, to reversing the ‘writing over’ process, remains fundamental to our ability to learn and develop. In fact, engagement with these critiques further highlights the importance of these ideas to furthering our understanding, in particular the value of engaging with dialogues emanating from these ideas and the possible influence these broader dialogues, as well as the scholars themselves, can have for our understanding of International Relations.

Originating in the 1890s as a scholarly protest movement and engine of solidarity, made famous by the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois (1903/2008), the post-colonial presidents suggested pan-Africanism had value beyond an imaginary sense of fraternalism; viewing it instead as a potential model for political organization on the continent; an approach they believed could change the economic position Africa found itself in in relation to Western and Eastern powers. Julius K Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah were heavily involved in the Pan-African movement as well as the continent wide struggle for independence; whilst Léopold Sédar Senghor’s conception of Négritude heavily emphasised an understanding of identity divorced from national boundaries and borders but heavily attached to a conception of race and a desire to overcome colonial oppression. What makes this element of their political thought particularly interesting is the reliance and emphasis on African values, both within their own political states, and as a foundation for the arguments they made for a collaborative African project.

The broader pan-African movement with which Nyerere and Nkrumah are often associated originated in the late 1890s, early 1900s with the first pan-African conference taking place in London in 1900. The movement is associated with a wide range of politicians, activists and scholars, becoming particularly popular in the 1920s when it was associated with W.E.B DuBois, and the activism of Marcus Garvey. It was grounded in a response to oppression, alienation and a loss of dignity deemed to be shared by all individuals of African descent spread across the globe. Similarly to Senghor’s Négritude it relied on a common identity associated with individuals of African descent that tie them together. Scholars such as Peter Esedeke (1977) and Robert Chrisman (1973) recognise that the pan-African vision ‘has as its basic premise that we the people of African descent throughout the globe constitute a common cultural and political community by virtue of our origin in Africa and our common racial and political oppression’ (Chrisman, 1973, p.2). Thus to ‘regain dignity is the mainspring of all their actions…the intellectual superstructure of Pan-Africanism has meaning only if one constantly reminds oneself that at its roots lie these deep feelings of dispossession, oppression, persecution and rejection’ (Legum, 1965, p.15). It is the focus on a shared identity, and what this concept actually means that has been a key element in the critique of this approach to transnational politics, in particular the focus on essentialism and race. As such, a detailed discussion of these critiques, focused on the work of Kwame Anthony Appiah, Dismas Masolo and Achille Mbembe will be included as well as the potential lessons that can be taken from the existing dialogues highlighted, as, as previously stated, it is not only the successes of the movement, but also its critiques and failings that can provide justification for the importance of reintegrating these voices into international scholarship.

Pan-African intentions famously existed in the policies of Kwame Nkrumah, Julius K Nyerere, Ahmed Sekou Toure, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Jomo Kenyatta, amongst others, and debates regarding suitable aims and methodology for collaboration divided the continent, leading not only to the failure to either federalise or cooperate, but in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, a reversal of favourable trade agreements and collaborations; to the extent that ‘between 1975 and 1985 the East African Community folded, the border between Tanzania and Kenya was closed and Tanzania went to war with Uganda’ (Smyth and Seftel, 1998, p.246). Tensions increased around discussions of collaboration and cooperation as suspicions arose surrounding the various motives of the leaders arguing for a federalised continent. Relations with Kwame Nkrumah, in particular, faulted as his intended dominance was recognised by other leaders. It became apparent that as the Pan-African movement moved towards a political ideal in the 1960s there was a noticeable rise in personality politics in which, as already suggested, Nkrumah in particular advocated for a federalised continent in which he was able to play a dominant role. Many of those advocating for a system of collaboration, as with the majority of power politics, saw their own model as superior and themselves at the centre. As the West African Pilot observed in the early 1960s: ‘in Africa a struggle for leadership has already developed; until recently it was a tournament between Nasser and Nkrumah but Africa today contains many stars and meteorites, all of them seeking positions of eminence’ (The West African Pilot, cited in, Legum, 1965, p.55). As the movement increased in popularity questions were also raised as to what a pan-African state should look like. Nkrumah argued for a ‘United States of Africa’, whilst Julius Nyerere supported regionalised blocks, and other leaders such as Ahmed Sékou Touré and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt had yet further ideas. Not only did this lead to problems of leadership, but also of vision, and eventually the pan-African movement of that time period began to break down.

That being said, this chapter will argue that taking into account the limitations and failings of the political pan-national project at this time, and the critiques of essentialism levied against the approach, there are important lessons to be learnt from the time period and choosing to ‘bring Africa back in’ to discussions of international collaborations will provide valuable lessons for understanding international relations (both in and with Africa, but also elsewhere) in the future. Due to the limited intervention of this chapter into the debate I will be focusing on the work of only three primary scholars in analysing the potential lessons for contemporary discussions that can be garnered from a reading of 1940s, 1950s and 1960s pan-national discourses: Kwame Nkrumah, Julius K Nyerere and Léopold Sédar Senghor. This is not to suggest that the views of thinkers such as Ahmed Sékou Touré, Gamal Abdel Nasser and Jomo Kenyatta, amongst others, do not equally provide lessons for understanding ideas of post-national citizenship; rather, that these three scholars provide a broad sample of notions of how collaboration or federation would work and are thus a valid starting point for reintegrating the lessons of the post-colonial period to discussions of post-state citizenship. I am carrying out this work in the context of lessons that can be learnt from these scholars for an understanding of citizenship that goes beyond the borders of the nation state, concentrating instead on the values of continental and universal models of understanding and collaboration for the betterment of contemporary citizens. The remainder of the chapter is divided into four sections: Intervening in the current conversation (intended to further ground this discussion in the literature), Lessons for Cosmopolitanism, Lessons for Citizenship, and finally, a brief discussion of the legacy of the three scholars on later revolutionary movements on the continent by way of supporting my concluding remarks.

**Intervening in the current conversation:**

It is important when advocating for the reintegration of scholars into conversations to be clear about exactly which conversations these particular scholars have something to contribute. As such, this chapter feeds in to recent debates (Stephens & Squire 2012, Isin 2012, Balibar 2012) that aim ‘to uncover alternative spatialities and temporalities of citizenship’ (Stephens & Squire, 2012, p.434). In doing so the chapter presents an argument for the importance of including previously marginalised voices in these discussions; voices that offer a unique understanding of citizenship guided by cultural, temporal and political influences and experiences. Borrowing from Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s (2017) chapter in this volume the purpose of this discussion is the ‘reconstitution and reproduction of Africa not as a pupil of Europe but as a site of power, knowledge and influence’. The intention of this chapter is not to develop a new model of citizenship or to suggest that discussions of post-national citizenship do not already exist in the literature. Rather it is to build on previous work (Bird, 2016) that emphasises the value of integrating historical understanding of pan-national citizenship emanating from the African continent into contemporary discussions in this area.

When embarking on discussions of successful pan-national collaborations the most common example discussed, either favourably or negatively, is the European Union. There exists a current literature focusing on a conception of pan-national citizenship within the boundaries of the European Union. For example, in his 2001 discussion of the difference between understanding individuals as members of the European Union or as citizens Jeffrey Checkel refers to two conceptions of pan-national communities: ‘(1) they may provide domestic agents and actors with new understandings of interests and identities (constitute them); (2) they may simply constrain the choices and behaviours of self-interested agents with given identities’ (Checkel, 2001, p.180). It is in terms of the first conception that I argue Nyerere, Senghor and Nkrumah intervene on the topic of pan-national citizenship and identity. Whilst EU integration, especially in terms of the recent migration crisis, maintains a strong focus on national borders and identity, and is established alongside the rights and duties owed to the state, the initial project set forth by particularly Nkrumah, but also early on, Nyerere, emphasized pan-African citizenship and identities as a positive force for transforming the continent beyond an understanding of the nation state. They viewed individuals from across the continent as primarily Africans, and secondly as having loyalties to particular bordered nations. Senghor even went so far as to critique ‘territorial nationalism as he strongly believed that the unitary state was now historically outmoded’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017) and could not provide a successful model for the future. Underpinning such thinking is the recognition that ‘both colonisers and colonised will have to create a new civilisation and a new humanism (Wilder, 2015, p. 143) that looks beyond the model of closed national borders and starts to see citizenship as a pan-national project, separate and unique in its origins to the European project, with valuable lessons for our understanding of citizenship beyond national borders.

**Lessons for Cosmopolitanism:**

Pan-Africanism was, for Nkrumah, based on the improved opportunities it had the potential to create for Africans interacting with the rest of the world. He claimed that, ‘a union of African states will project more effectively the African personality: it will command respect from a world that has regard only for size and influence’ (Nkrumah, 1961, p. xii). The concept of an ‘African personality’, like similar language discussed by these scholars such as African identity, is unclear in its definition, and often utilised to cover a multitude of ideas. Concepts such as these have, in recent African scholarship (Appiah, 1992, Masolo, 1994, Mbembe, 2001), been broadly critiqued as unhelpful theories, in fact ‘part of the politics of re-presenting’ (Masolo, 1994, p.291) that are often associated with colonialism due to a failure by these scholars to properly critically engage with history becoming instead ‘a matter of liturgical construction and incantation rather than historical criticism’ (Mbembe, 2001, p.2); critiques which are important to keep in mind whilst analysing the concepts presented, but do not suggest that said analysis cannot provide lessons for International Relations and should thus remain silenced. Nkrumah’s usage, whilst unclear regarding what he means by the concept, takes it to refer to all factors he views as specific to, and special about, what it means to live, work and exist within the African continent. He takes this to be a shared concept, specific not to one country, area or cultural group but to the continent as a whole which can form the foundations of pan-Africanism. The hope behind pan-Africanism was that it would provide the conditions for Africa to reassert itself in global politics. He supported an African system of government founded on traditional African thought systems, run and dictated by Africans (rather than external colonial rulers), for the benefit of Africa. He suggested that it was clear that the solution to African problems needed to come from Africa, because ‘divided we are weak; unified, Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world’ (Nkrumah, 1961, p.xi), economically, politically and culturally. Such a conception of a ‘force for good in the world’ is a theme that is common across the three scholars. The focus beyond the borders of the African continent playing an ‘essential role in the edification of a new humanism, more human because it will have reunited in their totality the contributions of all continents, of all races, of all nations’ (Senghor in Wilder, 2015, p.52) establishes the thinking of the three scholars as being a vision for human, rather than bordered citizenship, demonstrating the importance of these works for contemporary cosmopolitanism’s understanding of the ‘citizen of the world’.

Nyerere made similar claims regarding the purpose of unity. A divided continent was, for him, one of the greatest risks facing a newly independent Africa. He strongly believed that squabbling within the continent would weaken the relative position of every nation as well as the continent in its entirety. In his speech ‘Africa must not fight Africa’, Nyerere defended his belief that ‘the weakness of Africa is a constant invitation and a constant encouragement to the exploiters of Africa to suck Africa with impunity. Only a strong Africa can stop this. But there can be no strong Africa and no salvation for Africa except in unity’ (Nyerere, 1968, p.219). Unity, for him, would provide an opportunity for the citizens of the continent to live a life of fulfilment and growth. It was his belief that the current problems were rooted in Africa’s constant economic race to the bottom as a method for encouraging investment, as well as the continents choice to politically imitate and court the West or East to encourage aid. Nyerere, similarly to Nkrumah, supported a system of unification; although, unlike Nkrumah he supported a project of collaboration rather than federalisation as the only solution to these problems. As this chapter will demonstrate in the coming paragraphs, such ideas have even greater prevalence underpinning Senghor’s discussions of Négritude.

However, before moving on to a discussion of Senghor’s position it is important to clarify that in discussing a unified African identity Nyerere, in particular and Nkrumah to a lesser extent, did not ground their arguments in a denial of difference; they did in fact recognise that Africa was a continent made up of diverse political and cultural situations that should be maintained and in fact glorified. However, it was their argument that these cultural and political differences, rather than being seen as barriers to unification should in fact be included in a Pan-African model that was able to recognize and celebrate them:

‘It is no use waiting for differences of approach, or of political belief, to disappear before we think of working for unity in Africa. They will not disappear. If we are ever to unite, the differences must be accommodated within our growing unity, and our growing unity must be shaped in a manner which allows for the existing differences’ (Nyerere, 1973, p.13).

In making this claim Nyerere recognised the political and cultural differences that were causing fractions amongst those political figureheads supporting collaboration, in particular the differences, previously discussed, in what that form of collaboration would indeed look like and the political differences between socialism and capitalism that existed on the continent. Whilst in reality this escalated to a situation in which between 1975 and 1985 “Julius broke off the East African Community and made it impossible even to send a letter between Kenya and Tanzania, and so it lasted for nearly 10 years” (Bailey, 1998, p. vi); whilst at a similar time, Tanzania went to war with Uganda and the dream of a federation of East Africa was lost (at least in the time period in which Nyerere remained in power), it is still possible to take lessons from Nyerere’s experiment. Not least the need to accept in both theory and practice the importance of recognising difference when embarking on a model of collaboration. The failure to achieve this in reality for Nyerere in fact in part leading to the fracturing of the East African Community as the political differences between a socialist Tanzania and a capitalist Kenya supported by Eastern and Western powers became too difficult to overcome. The lesson here for contemporary attempts at post-national citizenship is the importance of both recognising and supporting difference and not using it as a justification to close and strengthen borders. Such lessons are particularly interesting for considering a Cosmopolitan political approach.

In contrast to the largely political aims of both Nyerere and Nkrumah, Senghor’s views on the value of collaboration were grounded not only in political goals for future development but also in the lessons Africa had to offer for the development of a universal understanding of culture; one based on the premise that ‘man (not only African man) remains our ultimate concern’ (Senghor in Wilder, 2015, p.224). Whilst there is a vast literature on the Négritude movement it is impossible within the remits of this chapter to consider it in any depth. However, a brief introduction of Senghor’s views is required to provide the context for the following argument. As a political, artistic and cultural movement Négritude originated amongst the diaspora communities in Paris in the late 1930s amongst the elites of West-Africa and the Caribbean. It remained a powerful tool of rebellion against the European colonisers until the start of the 1960s. On becoming the first president of independent Senegal, Senghor maintained a strong political and academic relationship with France, believing in the possibility of a Euro-African partnership. He supported a model of development supported by, and in collaboration with, Europe: ‘we must build our own development plan, based on European, socialist contributions and also on the best of Negro African civilisation’ (Senghor, 1962, p. 60). This is not to say that he intended to copy the West, but rather that he underwent a process of reimagining development and citizenship as a collaborative project, envisioning an understanding of a universal culture grounded in lessons from a broad range of cultural and societal norms. He suggested that having successfully re-built individual states, and a federal state of Africa, the continent should remain ‘freely associated with France in a Confederation’ (Senghor, 1962, p.15). In making these choices he was rethinking citizenship beyond the nation state, envisioning it instead as a process of confederation and collaboration in which he viewed his own citizenship as not being constrained by borders, instead seeing himself as an international citizen, or a citizen of the world, shaped by different cultural, social and societal experiences associated with his life in both Africa and the West. This ability to blend cultural experience in the creation of his own understanding of citizenship does indeed provide lessons for our conception of citizenship outside of state borders. However, Senghor’s ability to establish this blending is based on his own privileged position and the positive associations he has with French influence may not be shared by the Senegalese citizens who were unable to spend time receiving an education in Paris. This does not detract from the value of his vision for a human civilisation, but it does highlight the role that privilege plays in establishing it, feeding quite clearly into contemporary discussions in Politics and International Relations about individuals who feel that they have lost out in a globalised world; a factor that must take prominence when discussing contemporary cosmopolitanism.

That being said, parallels can be drawn with Senghor’s view and a form of moral Cosmopolitanism which views the philosophical underpinnings of personhood to be premised on an understanding of individuals as having equal and intrinsic moral worth. As Pauline Kleingeld argues: ‘moral cosmopolitanism is the view that all human beings are members of a single moral community and that they have moral obligations to all other human beings regardless of their nationality, language, religion, customs, etc. (Kleingeld, 1999, p.505). Senghor’s model of a Universal Civilisation recognises the value of nationality, religion, language and customs but suggests that these can be celebrated alongside an understanding of human civilisation that can be defined in humanist terms as universal. As such, it was Senghor’s philosophy that the achievement of African emancipation, as a result of a re-established sense of pride in both individual and collective Négritude, was not the ultimate end of the movement: ‘unlike so many of his political counterparts elsewhere in Africa, the politics of Senghor does not constitute an end in itself but is geared to the more encompassing aim of cultural liberalisation’ (Barrend van Dyk van Niekerk, 1970, p.29).

Alternatively, he viewed this as a fundamental first step in the creation of a new Universal Civilisation. A civilisation that would benefit, not only colonised people, but also Western cultures on which the notion of universality was, he argued, founded. It was his opinion that accepting Western culture as the foundation of a Universal Civilisation was a mistake. What he has been criticised for, however, is rather than offering an alternative understanding of politics, ‘the idea of a universality different from Western rationality is never considered’ (Mbembe, 2001, p.13), rather he contributes an African layer to our understanding of a concept grounded in Western Liberalism. The concept of civilisation, as it is presented by Senghor, is somewhat vague. However, based on the assertions made regarding its potential universality, it can be assumed that Senghor viewed it as a shared human condition under which different conceptions competed and as such lessons taken from it can be understood on this basis. It is possible to draw similarities with the concept of a “clash of civilisations” as presented by Samuel Huntingdon (Huntingdon, 1993). In contrast to Huntingdon, Senghor’s argument was not that different religious, or cultural, groups should compete until one was deemed superior, but rather, that the hierarchical condition should be reversed and a Human, or Universal, Civilisation should be created based on the best elements of all cultures. He viewed Négritude as setting the parameters for the emancipation of Africans to allow them to engage on equal footing with the dominant cultures of the time and to enable just dialogue between civilisations. Seeing it as enabling individuals to firstly recognise their own worth, and then draw on this to enable them to interact with other cultural groups as equals. His arguments for this will become clear in the following discussion. Similarly to Kleingeld’s definition of moral cosmopolitanism, this model recognised, at least in theory, that ‘all human beings should be regarded as "fellow citizens and neighbours" (Plutarch) regardless of their national, ethnic, religious, or other particular affiliations as worthy of equal moral concern and advocate impartiality and tolerance’ (Kleingeld, 1999, p.505) in establishing an understanding of what culture should involve.

Not only is it possible to draw parallels between Senghor’s conception of a Universal Civilisation and a Western conception of Cosmopolitanism it is also possible to take lessons from his model. Not least his focus on the need to work in collaboration with the ex-colonial states: ‘freely associated with France in a Confederation’ (Senghor, 1962, p.15). He was however clear that that relationship must be based on the grounds of equality; a key lesson from the movement. Senghor believed that the strength of the Négritude movement was in guiding Black people to recognise the value of their Blackness, and to use this to contribute to the future of not just Africa, but the world more generally. In defining this mission, he suggested that it was the role of Africans not only to shape their own future but rather to create a model suitable not only to fit ‘Africa and the twentieth century, but first of all to fit man’ (Senghor, 1962, p.17). However, he accepted that this would not be possible unless the various civilisations of the world, as he saw them, engaged with one another as equals.

One of the key criticisms of Senghor’s conception of the Universal Civilisation, as well as Négritude more broadly, comes from Achille Mbembe who condemns his focus on race and his approach based on the importance of contributing to a Western dominated notion of universality. As mentioned elsewhere, this chapter argues that it is not only the thinker’s successes that provide important lessons for International Relations but also the areas in which they have been critiqued. This critique in particular has value in this sense. Mbembe condemns Négritude and the ‘differing variants of pan-Africanism’ as emphasising the notion of race as serving ‘the moral basis for political solidarity’ and in doing so failing to critically engage with the notion of race as a distinguishing factor, fighting instead only against ‘the prejudice that assigns this race an inferior status’ (Mbembe, 2001, p.13) and not against the prejudice that views the notion of race, itself, as holding value at all. In doing so, he suggests that scholars such as Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah fail in their attempt to reimagine the universal as they fail to imagine it as being ‘different from Western rationality’ (Mbembe, 2001, p.13) seeing it instead as a blending of Black culture with the culture of the West (Mbembe, 2001). Mbembe’s specific critique of these scholars provides a valuable lesson for Cosmopolitanism more broadly and the continued need to critically engage with the concept of race itself. Whilst understanding of the critique is, as suggested, profoundly important, so is understanding the dialogue surrounding it. As Amy Niang discusses elsewhere in this book, for Senghor and scholars like him, ‘emancipation from Empire entailed a restoration of “Man”, of the subject as ontologically constitutive of Humanism’ (Niang, 2017) and as such his intention was to present a conception of civilisation based on his understanding of Man, his focus on race was his approach to achieving this and to readdressing the imbalance and inequality caused by colonialism. It is through discussions of historical, previously-marginalised narratives such as these that we can start to have this conversation, understanding why Senghor et al approached this topic as they did based on the reactionary nature of their thought to the colonial situation, but asking how this can be overcome and critically engaged with by contemporary International Relations scholarship.

**Lessons for Citizenship Studies:**

Having introduced the conversation in to which this chapter fits and discussed this in terms of Cosmopolitan interventions associated with Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah it is important to consider in greater detail how these interventions also relate to the contemporary discussions of citizenship previously referenced, in particular Étienne Balibar and Engin Isin’s discussions of post-national citizenship. This section will continue to build on previous work (Bird, 2016) that has argued for the relevance of the work of Nyerere and Senghor to contemporary discussions of activist citizenship, suggesting that they, as politicians and scholars, were able to rethink what it meant to be a citizen, beyond a bounded notion of nationalism and in terms that stood outside the colonial model. The notion of citizenship that will be discussed in what follows is that of the activist citizen as presented by Engin Isin. Isin understands ‘acts of citizenship’ to be those that establish an ‘actor’. He describes acts of citizenship as ‘those deeds by which actors constitute themselves (and others) as subjects of rights’ (Isin, 2009, p. 371); without which they would merely be passive citizens living within the conditions set out for them. In contrast:

‘Activist citizenship relies on the disruption of the status quo, the undertaking of a process of transformation that alters the framework in which the individual exists: If acts produce actors (or actors are produced through acts) then initially we can define acts of citizenship as those acts that produce citizens and their others’ (Isin, 2008, p.37).

Thus, what it means to be a citizen according to Isin is not simply to be a member of a village, a town, a nation, a continent or even the global community. Rather, citizenship results from a transformative act; a disruptive process through which the individual not only becomes a citizen in their own right, but also has an effect on the community or space in which their citizenship is engendered: they transform it in some way (Bird, 2016). As Isin argues ‘the concept of the act of citizenship seeks to address the myriad ways that human beings organise remake and resist their ethical-political relations with others’ (2008); thinking about what it means to be political in new and original ways. In what follows I argue that the scholars discussed in this chapter act in a way that disrupts the colonial understanding of citizenship associated with nation states and individuals and in doing so transforms our understanding of citizenship beyond the boundaries of the nation state. It is on this justification that I suggest a case can be made for the necessity of reintegrating these previously marginalised models of thought, ‘bringing Africa back in’ to discussions of citizenship.

At the root of Nyerere and Nkrumah’s pan-African solution was what they referred to as a ‘sentiment of ‘African-ness’, a feeling of mutual involvement, which pervades all cultural and political life. There is, in other words, an emotional unity which finds expression in, among other things, concepts such as ‘African personality’’ (Nyerere, 1967, p.188). It was on the controversial grounds of a shared meaning of what it meant to be African, that it was claimed unification could be possible. This understanding of what it meant to be African placed a heavy emphasis on community and mutual involvement, which it was believed were grounds on which political differences between states could potentially be overcome. Nyerere and Nkrumah were arguing that a single African underlying philosophy, a ‘folk philosophy (Appiah, 1992, p.87) did exist. Similarities exist here between the views of these two African scholars and the work of contemporary citizenship studies. In particular, the recent conversation between Agamden (1993), Nancy (1991), and Esposito (2010) and Isin (2012) focusing on the possibility of post-national citizenship. Each of whom ‘investigate how community has been mobilised as a strategic concept invoking certain images against others in political struggles’ (Isin, 2012, p.450). Engin Isin argues that, ‘to imagine citizens without nations requires a genealogy of fraternity ‘(Isin, 2012, p.465), a value that I argue is present in Nyerere and Nkrumah’s ideas discussed above, in particular in their focus on a shared African identity or unified ‘African personality’. Such an understanding of identity is, as previously suggested, not without its critics. Appiah suggest that ‘race and history and metaphysics do not enforce an identity… we can choose, within broad limits set by ecological, political, and economic realities what it will mean to be African in the coming years’ (Appiah, 1992, p.176) and as such, what it means to be African historically. It is the argument of this chapter that Nyerere, in particular, has a response to this concern that ensures his conception of the pan-national citizen does not fall apart on the basis of accepting Appiah’s claims. This response will become clear in what follows.

The initial project set forth by Nyerere emphasized pan-African citizenship and identities as a positive force for transforming the continent. It viewed individuals from across the continent as primarily Africans. It is on this basis that the chapter suggests that the model presented by Nyerere and Nkrumah can be viewed as a transformative act of citizenship: the purpose was in altering the conception of what it means to be a citizen, expanding it beyond the limiting borders of national identity and viewing membership of the broader continent in terms of citizenship. Understanding, like Balibar, that ‘national identity, however effective it has been in modern history, is only one of the possible institutional forms of the community of citizens, and it neither encapsulates all of its functions nor completely neutralises its contradictions’ (Balibar, 2012, p.438).

In making this claim it is important to reanalyse Nyerere’s views on difference within the context of citizenship rather than cosmopolitan thought. Like contemporary scholars he recognized that ‘citizenship as a political principle cannot exist without a community, but this community cannot be completely unified’ (Balibar, 2012, p.438). As a reminder, it was his argument that differences, rather than being seen as barriers to unification, should in fact be recognised and valued by a pan-African model. This focus on difference does in some ways allows the theory to respond to Masolo and Appiah’s concerns regarding the ‘re-presentation’ of individuals as Africans when they may see themselves in distinct terms:

‘It is no use waiting for differences of approach, or of political belief, to disappear before we think of working for unity in Africa. They will not disappear. If we are ever to unite, the differences must be accommodated within our growing unity, and our growing unity must be shaped in a manner which allows for the existing differences’ (Nyerere, 1973, p.13).

Such conceptions of citizenship beyond the unified nation state, instead focusing on differences provide an example of a disruptive conception that has previously been ignored by traditional citizenship studies. This is not to suggest that these ideas are not being discussed now, as it is clear by the reference to Isin and Balibar that this is not the case, but rather, that a re-reading of these African scholars provides a previously marginalised contribution to these discussions. It is possible to make similar claims regarding Kwame Nkrumah’s views set out in his 1973 monograph, “The Revolutionary Path”:

‘We know that the traditional African society was founded on principles of egalitarianism. In its actual workings, however, it had various shortcomings. Its humanist impulse, nevertheless, is something that continues to urge us towards our all-African socialist reconstruction. We postulate each man to be an end in himself, not merely a means; and we accept the necessity of guaranteeing each man equal opportunities for his development…Any meaningful humanism must begin from egalitarianism and must lead to objectively chosen policies for safeguarding and sustaining egalitarianism’ (Nkrumah, 1973, p.441).

Throughout ‘The Revolutionary Path’, Nkrumah explicitly states that his interpretation of traditional African society is of a society that was rooted in a sense of humanism. He suggested in the above passage, that the notion that traditional African societies were egalitarian was uncontroversial. However, as with descriptions of what it means to be African, or have an ‘African personality’ mentioned previously, this is not the case. By failing to recognise the subjectivity of this claim, a situation is created in which his argument is lacking in evidence to support his assertion that traditional African societies were, indeed, egalitarian. However, that being said, the lack of evidence offered for the existence of traditional values does not take away from his argument that future political conditions should respect an egalitarian model and in this sense does not prevent us from drawing conclusions about the disruptive nature of his claims. His view placed a heavy emphasis on the rights of individuals to be viewed as citizens of a state rather than passive members and to treat all on a basis of egalitarianism that was missing from the colonial model. In this sense, not only can we draw parallels between the work of Nkrumah and contemporary discussions of ‘acts of citizenship’ we can also learn from his failures to implement the model he recommended. It is not just the successes associated with the three scholars that suggest the importance of ‘bringing Africa back in’; the value of analysing previously marginalised politics also exists in the opportunity to learn from their failings. In making this claim it is important to avoid falling in to the trap of depicting ‘the continent in terms of lack’ (Wai & Iniguez de Heredia, 2017) but rather to suggest that failures of implementation are a valuable resources for understanding post-national citizenship in the future, in particular Nkrumah’s failure to substantiate and support his reading of history.

To build on a discussion of the lessons that can be garnered from the scholars failures it is important to focus in more detail on the events that led to Nkrumah’s exile. His party (the CPP) was widely associated with corruption. It was suggested early on in his rule that the officials around him were more interested in personal, material wealth than in the protection and development of the people. Manning Marable (referencing Makonnen) concluded that ‘the rhetoric of the CPP was socialist. But watching the evolution of the regime from 1957 to 1966…virtually none of the CPP leadership was really interested in defending the material interests of workers and peasants’ (Marable, 1987, p.93) and, in fact, the ideology was being used, not to deliver favourable political conditions to the people, but rather to enhance the material wealth of high ranking party officials. Discussion of the failings of Nkrumah and his regime are included to highlight the distinction between theory and practice; in the case of Nkrumah, his failure to utilise his socialist model to deliver the correct political conditions under which the citizens could realise a condition of equality. The distinction between theory and practice, also referenced in the previous section in relation to Nyerere’s abandonment of the East African Community, is a key lesson to be taken from the pan-African movement. As Tom Young argues, there are a number of factors that affected the ability of the scholars to transfer theory into practice in relation to both their national, and more relevantly to this chapter, their pan-national projects:

‘Nkrumah spoke for many when he demanded social change ‘like jet propulsion’ but the harsh judgement must be that African elites understood as little of the former as they did of the latter…But it is also because the laws do not fit local communities and cultures who have alternative traditions and therefore other options’ (Young, 2003, p.5).

Young’s focus on the thinkers’ lack of knowledge and experience, alongside local traditions and communities, suggests that, whilst it is impossible to ignore individual agency whilst discussing the failings of the Nkrumah, Nyerere, and Senghor, the distinction between their theoretical claims and the practical implementation of their policies may in fact stem from other concerns and it is these concerns that provide lessons for contemporary international relations in the need to understand the requirements of social change, the effects of local traditions and the construction of communities when thinking in terms of citizenship.

**Legacy in Africa and Concluding Remarks:**

In concluding the paper I return firstly to the claims made in the introduction, of the value of reintegrating previously marginalised voices in discussions of International Relations. The chapter has discussed the arguments of the post-colonial Presidents that pan-Africanism had value beyond an imaginary sense of fraternalism; viewing it instead as a potential model for political organization on the continent; an approach they believed could change the economic position Africa found itself in in relation to Western and Eastern powers. In doing so, it has highlighted not only the role this model played in 1950s and 1960s Africa but the lessons for contemporary discussions of both Cosmopolitanism and activist citizenship that can be garnered from a reintegration of the work of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius K. Nyerere into the contemporary International Relations literature. In carrying out these discussions, the chapter has engaged not only with the scholars themselves but also with their critics, suggesting that lessons can be learnt not only from the scholars but also from those that have engaged with them. This has not been intended to highlight the notion of ‘lack’ within the continent, but rather that existence of engaging dialogues that have value to contemporary International Relations.

In ending this chapter I wanted to refer to the legacy of the pan-African movement in Africa and on the movements that followed; in particular the revolutionary movement of Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso in the 1980s. He argued that, ‘it falls to all Pan-Africanist people to give Africa hope by taking up the torch of Nkrumah’ (Sankara, 2007, p.247). Similarly, much of his rhetoric parallels the views of Senghor, specifically the continued hope for the achievement of a Universal Civilisation: ‘for we are convinced that we are headed toward a universal civilization that will lead us to a universal language’ (Sankara, 2007, p.269). And, similarly to all three of his predecessors, he argued for the importance of unity: ‘we firmly believe in unity between peoples. This unity will emerge from shared convictions, because we all suffer the same exploitation and the same oppression, no matter the social forms or how it may be dressed up over the course of time’ (Sankara, 2007, p.268). It has been the claim of this chapter that these lessons have the opportunity to step beyond the boundaries of the African continent of the 1980s and that bringing the voices of the pan-African movement ‘back in’ offers lessons for contemporary discussions of citizenship, Cosmopolitanism and International Relations more broadly.

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