African Political Philosophy, 1860-1995
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VITHREE BASIC TYPES OF DISCOURSE

The previous chapters constitute a 'long and winding road' through African political discourses. They have proved at least one point, namely that these discourses, rather than reproducing European examples, as is often alleged, constitute a diverse and rich heritage intimately connected to the political history of Africa itself. I want to proceed now with a systematic inventory of this heritage.

In the opening chapter, I stated that the venture of this study involves hermeneutics, analytics and criticism. In the three historical chapters, I have assumed the role of the hermeneutic, attempting as Thomas Kuhn said: "to learn to think like" the historical authors. In the present chapter, I will adopt the more detached view of the analyst, while assuming the role of the critic in the final chapter. From the analytical point of view, the intellectual structure rather than the historical context or the political role of discourses is of interest. A philosopher's analysis should uncover assumptions, oppositions and the heuristics that shape the ground-plan of a tradition; like making an X-ray that passes through the surface tissue of ideas, while exposing the intellectual bone structure.

At first glance, the historical material exhibited in the previous chapters already indicates that the search for a single ground-plan of modern African political thought is misguided. The political conceptions of, for instance, Blyden, Horton, and Babu are as incompatible as the physics of Aristotle, Newton, and Einstein. This fact of basic paradigmatic diversity compels me to formulate the philosopher's task in terms of a plural form, namely uncovering different ground-plans of African thought.

The diversity of African political thought is clearly not a matter of historical periodization. In fact, authors that may be a century apart in time can appear to be very close in ideas. Kanduza Chisiza in the 1960s, for instance, reads like an echo of Africanus Horton in the 1860s, while George Ayittey in the 1990s revives the spirit of John Mensah Sarbah around 1900, and Leopold Senghor himself recognizes his proximity to Edward Blyden's thought.

The intellectual currents run parallel to the flow of time. Depending on the theoretical starting point, philosophers appear to be compelled to follow similar approaches, thus reproducing similar models of thought. Although discourses are contextually conditioned, as I argued in the historical chapters, they unfold models of thought that reappear in different contexts.

Examples can be elucidating at this juncture. When the theoretical starting point is the idea of 'modernization' or 'development, then the stage is literally set for a particular line of exposition. It creates a 'topology', one could say, which locates every factor within the framework of a developmental

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413 e.g. Shepperson 1960, 1961, 1964; Geiss 1968; Davidson 1992.
414 Kuhn 1977, p. 10
415 Another example could be the differences between Anyanwu, Chisiza and Amin; authors who I will discuss later.
416 I will refer to Ayittey in the next chapter.
process (involving 'lower' and 'higher' stages, a basically linear transformation process, and a positive valuation of this 'development'). A common image representing this topology is that of a statistical curve indicating growth. Once the setting of the stage is taken for granted, it will give its particular cast to every issue under discussion.

The intellectual stage can also be set differently. The central image being, for instance, that of a circle marking off a domain, separating 'inside' and 'outside', and thus defining purity and pollution, or authenticity and alienation. Within this particular stage-setting, the issue of development is not simply that of growth but involves vital choices, such as between 'indigenous' and 'alien' forms of modernization. Within the modernization framework such a choice does not even emerge.417

The analysis of such basic models of thought is the necessary philosophical complement to historical analysis. In its absence one can claim to be a competent historian, but not an interesting commentator, let alone an efficient critic of political thought. The philosopher's investigation needs to go deeper than that of the historian. The greatest historical detail nor the widest empirical scope can uncover basic paradigms. The philosophical exercise is reconstructive, which means that, based upon the historical material while not identical to it, a discursive order or a 'model of thought' is presented. The claim of such a reconstruction is that various historical discourses have an intellectual bone-structure which is the same as or similar to the reconstructed model of thought.418

The agenda of the present chapter is to actually reconstruct such models of thought. For that purpose, I will follow a bottom-up strategy. First of all, I will take a retrospective view of the historical discourses, then I will reconstruct the basic models of thought. The result of the analytic and reconstructive labour forms the condensation of my historical study. In the final chapter, I will use the reconstructed models as an analytical tool for my inventory of African political thought at the end of the 20th century.

**Authentic Africa**

"Black Consciousness", Steve Biko stated:

is based on the self-examination which has ultimately led them [the blacks] to believe that by seeking to run away from themselves

417 The accusation of 'anti-modernism', often directed at movements that are criticizing modernization, can only be conceived within the modernist topology. The 'stage' in a non-modernist conception is simply set differently: it suggests to accept some (e.g. indigenous, or Islamic) but to reject other (e.g. alien) modernization processes.

418 The proposed method is like Max Weber's method of constructing ideal-types, that is a 'pure form' or 'ideal-type' of an abstract phenomenon. Such a "reines Gedankengebilde" presents a complete and fully consistent image, ignoring contingent and contradictory elements which the real historical case may have, and bringing out as clearly as possible the internal structure of the phenomenon. See e.g. Weber 1904/1956, especially p. 234-244.
and emulate the white man, they are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. Black Consciousness therefore expresses group pride and the determination of the black to rise and attain the envisaged self.\footnote{Biko 1978/1979, p. 92 in the essay "Black Consciousness and the Quest for True Humanity".}

The Nigerian philosopher K.C. Anyanwu, formulating his "African Political Doctrine" within a rather different 'unpolitical' philosophers' discourse, stated: the spirit of this work is to identify and remove all the beliefs, ideas and thoughts that impede the manifestation of the African spirit. If it is allowed that the African spirit is dead and that this work is merely a post-mortem then the African people too are all dead. How can a people be alive when its God and spirit are dead?\footnote{Anyanwu 1984, p. 374}

Both appeals for authenticity echo Blyden's ardent summon: "Be yourselves...if you surrender your personality, you have nothing left to give the world."\footnote{Lynch 1971, p.60. Compare also Casely Hayford (1911/1969, p. 160): "What shall it profit a race if it shall gain the whole world and lose its own soul?"; and Blyden (1887, p. 71-93): "the African must advance by the methods of his own. He must possess a power distinct from the European."}

The arguments of Biko, Anyanwu and Blyden are not part of the same struggle or representing the same positions within the political spectrum. Neither did Biko and Anyanwu derive their ideas from Blyden's works. Their historical (and political) distance, however, does not preclude intellectual proximity. The setting in which their acts of argumentation take place is basically similar. They share an intellectual world or, phrased differently, they belong to the same intellectual family, which I will call the family of identity discourses.\footnote{My use of the notion of 'family' does not involve the claim that thinkers actually traced back their intellectual ancestry along these lines or were actually influenced by previous generations in that very 'family'.}

At issue is now to determine the genetic code of this family, that is, the intellectual ground-plan underlying their type of discourse. For that purpose, let me first take a comprehensive look at relevant forms of identity discourse.

After Blyden, identity discourse returned in a number of variants in the twentieth century. First of all, identity discourse appeared in the discourse of Négritude, which defended the beauty and unity of the African mode of being and underlined its clear difference from the 'Western' mode.\footnote{The idea of an 'African personality', supported at times by Nkrumah and others, also includes this idea of a phenomenologically coherent Africantité.}

Négritude was mainly concerned with characterizing Africanté at the phenomenological level. Unlike Blyden, it did not give much attention to the theoretical underpinnings of these characteristics with reference to natural evolution or God's creation.\footnote{Yet there are definite biological implications of the concept of race used.}

**Ethnophilosophy** is another example of identity discourse. It shares the Blydenite thrust towards defining what is essentially African. Here, however,
the essence is sought in African cultural traditions (or 'the' African cultural tradition), rather than in race or African personality. A similar strand of thought, in this case inspired not by philosophy and ethnography but by historiography and linguistics, was developed by the Senegalese scholar Cheikh Anta Diop. Other orientations, such as African-American Afrocentrism and South African Black Consciousness, combine racial, psychological, cultural and historical grounds to argue for a deeply rooted African identity.

The classical example of identity discourse remains Blyden's work. His philosophy is a rather complete and ideal-typical formulation covering the whole range of questions from the genesis and order of the world to its phenomenology and normative implications. First of all, however, Blyden is exemplary in capturing the sentiments, worries and drives that are characteristic of identity discourse. Blyden experienced being thrown into a world that is burdened with the world-historical drama which has started with the appearance of the white man in Africa. For Blyden, this drama entailed much more than the handicap of exploitation and injustice, it was a threat to the very existence of the African as an African. In the light of the magnitude of this drama, the basic affirmation of identity discourse, namely that there is something like 'the African', instantly became more than a factual statement. It was a performative statement as well, expressing commitment and pride and defining a mission. It dissected the world into grand (racial) units (black and white), separating friend from enemy.

Blyden's more strictly theoretical arguments (presented in more detail in chapter 3 of this book) can be summarized as follows:

1- The various aspects of 'Negro' identity fit together into one complete mode of being, including a mode of social life (African communalism), of religious life and of psychological make-up (the African Personality). It makes sense, therefore, to speak of 'The African', 'The African culture' and 'The African mode of being' beyond the observable individual Africans, African cultures and peoples. The major cultures in the world define their specific mode of being.

2- This African mode has deep roots. Blyden not only traced African cultural traditions back to classical Egyptian times but he also considered the African race to be the evolutionary human adaptation to the continent's physical conditions. Africa belongs in a historical and biological sense to the 'Negro' race (Blyden's term for African). The African mode is, therefore, fundamentally distinct from other modes of being, and Western influence is fundamentally alien to Africa.

3- Finally, Blyden's identity discourse provides a normative framework. Blyden considered the 'Negro' and 'his' history to be the expression of the benevolent plan of God. Creation involved different races, each with its particular qualities and own world-historical mission. This divine

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425 Diop 1981. See e.g. also Keita 1984 or Vansina 1992 a and b for a discourse which focusses on African cultural traditions.
sanction makes it not only *natural* but also *obligatory* for `Negroes' to guard their identity. In Blyden's terms, the 'Negro' should follow his 'racial instincts' and develop his own strengths. Racial self-respect as well as avoidance of acculturation and mixing of races are therefore central to Blyden's type of identity discourse.

The next step in my investigation, namely the detection of the 'genetical code' or the ground-plan of the family of identity discourses, can now proceed with the description of Blyden's core ideas. Before embarking on this venture however, an assumption which may contradict my argument has to be defeated. One could argue that Blyden is in fact not exemplary for an identity discourse because his central notion of 'race' is rather atypical. In addition, the notion of race itself has completely lost credit today because of its connotation with fascist thought and the fact that it has lost meaning even in the biological sciences. Interestingly, further inspection shows that there is not a fundamental gulf between a Blydenite discourse on *race* and today's identity discourse on *culture*. If we systematically substitute "African Culture" for Blyden's "Negro Race" and something like "essentially African cultural dispositions" for his "Negro racial instincts" then Blyden's argument remains intact. In fact, it will read like a contemporary text of, for instance, an ethnphilosopher like Anyanwu.426

The similarity of a discourse on 'race' and one on 'culture' also reveals that the differences between the central *notions* used are not significant indicators for the ground-plan of a discourse. My conjecture is that a **combination of two assumptions** determines the ground-plan of Blyden's discourse.

The first assumption is an essentialist idea of culture (or 'race', or 'psychological type' for that matter). Blyden had a conception of culture as a kind of `body', an `entity' held together by a strong internal coherence or *essence*. Such a cultural entity defines a complete 'mode of being'.

The second assumption concerns the relationship of individuals or groups to the cultural entities. The assumption is that people `belong' to a culture. The mode of being defined by a culture is not something that can be shaken off easily, an individual is anchored in it and can only be 'authentic' within his or her culture.

Together, these two assumptions result in a clear picture of the 'natural' interrelation of cultures, groups and individuals:

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426 One could argue that the fact that Blyden happened to formulate his views in terms of 'race' and not 'culture' is merely an historical accident caused by the dominance of 'scientific racism' in Blyden's age.
The combination of these two assumptions is essential for an identity discourse. The following graphic representation shows that by itself the first assumption (cultural essentialism) allows the possibility that people move in and out of these essentially defined units, defining themselves differently at different times, or eclectically combining aspects of different cultures in their own way.

If only the second assumption is maintained (authenticity-within-a-culture),
then people are bound up with their culture, but this culture itself does not constitute a solid identity. It permits the possibility that these cultures are multi-strained, fluid, mixing and contextually constructed units.\footnote{The two requirements for the definition of 'solid' identities also apply to an essentialist theory of psychological types (certain theories of 'the African personality') or of historical traditions (concerning 'the African tradition' or 'the Bantu tradition').}

Following the terminology of Samir Amin and others,\footnote{Amin 1989, Balibar & Wallerstein 1991.} the discursive logic defined by these two assumptions can be called 'culturalism'. Culturalism hypostatizes culture while assuming a tight connection between an individual and its culture. This, I claim, is the hidden genetic code of the family of identity discourses which underlies the similarities between Blyden, Anyanwu and Biko. They define cultural (racial) units and perceive the natural place of people to be within their unit.

A number of fundamental features of the identity type of discourse derive logically from the two basic assumptions of culturalism. Together they constitute a consistent \textit{model of thought}.

1. In the first place, a culturalist ground-plan creates a dichotomous worldview; a world divided between 'We' and 'They' or between what is 'indigenous' and what is 'alien'. Whether it takes the form of the master-slave opposition (Blyden) or that of Negro-African as compared to Hellenic cultures (Senghor), black versus white (Biko) or conqueror versus conquered (Ramose) the 'We' is positioned opposite to a \textit{concrete} opponent. Instead of a 'We' being marked off from everything else (from an amorphous 'They'), 'We' and 'They' are locked into an opposition where the one defines the other and vice versa. What is 'African' is characterized by stating its differences from what is 'Western'.\footnote{Examples abound: communalistic versus individualistic, holistic versus analytic, emotion.
The dichotomous world-view is also expressed in the typical line of presentation of culturalist arguments. Mostly they proceed by contrasting 'Africa' with 'the West'. Substantiating factual claims about what is 'African' is achieved by sketching its differences from the 'Western' model. Where empirical descriptions or references to empirical studies of African cultures are expected, contrasts of stereotypical models are presented.\textsuperscript{430}

2. Because cultures are viewed as being defined by their essence differences between cultures are necessarily perceived as being 'deep'. Cultural 'roots' are traced back in long historical genealogies.\textsuperscript{431} European culturalists search for their roots in ancient Greece, whereas African culturalists search in ancient Egypt. The 'We' is projected back into history. In its best representations, this concern with cultural roots has resulted in studies that contradict established views on Africa and uncover 'Western' culturalist bias. Such is the case, for instance, in E.W. Blyden's account of his travel to Egypt, in C.A. Diop's historical and linguistic investigations, and, rather as a negation of Western culturalism, in M. Bernal's \textit{Black Athena}.

3. According to a culturalist view, the elements within each cultural unit are considered to belong 'naturally' together thus forming an organic whole. This whole is vulnerable because the intrusion of alien elements can disrupt the organic equilibrium; a unit conceived as a historically fabricated \textit{bricolage} could never be disrupted in such a way. Within a culturalist framework, therefore, penetration by alien elements tends to be perceived as negative while mixing and hybridity tend to be perceived with distrust.

4. The typical way to depict a culturalistically conceived unit is by using a circle to encompass the 'We'. The boundary that is drawn thus is 'overconditioned': it is assumed that racial, cultural, continental and linguistic boundaries more or less coincide. The human world is assumed to be carved up between a limited number of grand units whose boundaries and differences can not be erased. This view of the world as divided into \textit{culture-continents} induces many reflections upon difference, value and 'relativity', such as between the

\textsuperscript{430}See e.g. Anyanwu 1984, p. 371 on his method. Argument-by-contrasting is often a simple indicator of a culturalist discourse. Blyden's \textit{African Life and Customs} is a beautiful example but also Menkiti 1984, Anyanwu 1984, and a host of others. A culturalist and a non-culturalist strategy of presentation can be compared well by contrasting Menkiti's and Gyekye's accounts of the concept of person, in Wright 1984 p. 171-181 and p. 199-212. Menkiti constantly contrasts 'the African view of man' with the western one; Gyekye simply explains the concept of person in a particular African (namely Akan) culture.

\textsuperscript{431}The rhetoric of genealogy is analyzed in a magnificent way by David Chioni Moore starting off from Alex Haley's book \textit{Roots}; see Moore 1994.
'Orient' and the 'Occident', or 'Africa' and 'the West'. It also inspires idealistic ventures of 'intercultural' exchange or understanding. Such ventures clearly make sense only within such a culturalistic view of a carved up world.

We see here how the basic assumptions of culturalism lead to the unfolding of a more comprehensive model of viewing the world. Various individual discourses will evolve in their own way within the framework of this model. They can take the form of discourses on race or on culture, discourses with cultural revivalist or with political ambitions, conservative justifications for authoritarianism or radical inspirations for anti-white resistance. All, however, are determined by the basic assumptions of the model of thought.

It is interesting to note that such determinations may also ensue in various forms other than the logic of a model of thought. A broader phenomenology of each type could be delineated, tracing its typical imagery, sentiments, philosophical inclinations, favourable words, and aspects of style. It is curious, for instance, to notice how often culturalist publications are given a cover depicting an African mask, or to observe the preference for domestic or rural images to illustrate what is African, and the choice for Anglo-Saxon mechanism, rather than, for instance, German romanticism to illustrate what is essentially European. Similarly, the culturalists' preference for philosophical essentialism and holism could be further investigated. At this point, however, I will not pursue such a phenomenology but close this section with a summary of the main characteristics of the identity model of thought.

IDENTITY MODEL

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<tr>
<th>cultures as circles</th>
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<tr>
<td>basic concern</td>
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<td>(existential)</td>
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<tr>
<td>fundamental features</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLARITY</td>
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<td>WORLD</td>
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Modern Africa

On the stage of identity discourse the African predicament is enacted as a world-historical drama of cultures. Identity discourse's loud claim to represent the truly African perspective could make one overlook the fact that there are also other types of discourse in Africa. For many African intellectuals the flagrant development deficit has been a more pressing intellectual challenge than culture. The issue of development puts the practical problem at the top of the agenda of how to catch up, economically and technologically, with the rest of the world.

Looking back at the historical authors discussed so far, the concern with development resounds, although in clearly different ways, among a wide range of authors such as Horton, Casely Hayford, Azikiwe, Awolowo, Nkrumah, Busia, Chisiza and the modernizers that have dominated post-independence government administrations. Whether we consider Azikiwe's idea of a Renascent Africa, Nkrumah's of the New African, or Busia's idea of Democratic Africa, the intellectual horizon is constituted by the idea of modernity. Their differences concern the details of what this modernity entails and the way to proceed, but not the perspective of working towards a modern Africa.

Next to the family of identity discourses, therefore, a family of, what could be called, modernization discourses can be identified. 'Modernization' is not defined here in the limited sense of a development theory within the structural functionalist tradition of the social sciences, but as an orientation in political thought, provisionally characterized by its concern for development and its ideal of building a modern Africa. The challenge of the present section is to uncover the intellectual ground-plan upon which this orientation is built. Let me first take a comprehensive look at the main genealogical lines of the family before attempting to capture its genetic code.

The optimistic universalism of the Mid-Victorian African educated elite of the 1860s and 1970s, exemplified in my discussion in chapter III by Africanus Horton, constituted an early start of a modernist type of discourse. The modernist spirit took an interesting turn in the last years of the nineteenth century. Colonial policy and discrimination of the African elite fostered a revaluation of African heritages, for instance in the Aboriginals Rights Protection Society (ARPS) and among theorists such as J. Mensah Sarbah and J.E. Casely Hayford. Modernization is vital, they argued, but from our own roots and not in the form of importing foreign models. African traditions, in their view, are the very basis for development and not its main obstacle, as Horton had perceived it. The idea of modernization from indigenous roots has been a continuous element, especially in Gold Coast - Ghanian intellectual life throughout most of the century, with intellectuals such as Danquah, Sekyi, Busia and today with Boahen, Gyekye, Wiru and Ayittey.

Another strand of modernization thought was carried by the young nationalists in the 1940s and 1950s in particular. For Azikiwe, the Nigerian
Youth Movement (NYM) and the Zikists Africa's modern future would be the product of the Young African who has cast off colonial prejudice and the 'Hat-in-hand-me-too-Sir' submissiveness of the older generation of elite Africans. The Young African is a self-conscious modernizer and a believer in basic liberal democratic values and in rapid industrialization. Together with the very similar albeit leftist inspired modernism of Padmore and Nkrumah, this belief in the Young African making a New Africa has been the major inspiration of the nationalist leaders during the struggles for national independence and the first decade thereafter.

Exemplary for a modernist orientation is Africanus Horton's view of Africa's marginalization. Africa, at one time producing glorious civilizations, has landed at the margins of global development because of unhappy historical circumstances. There are no inherent obstacles to return to prominence because, as Horton the medical doctor observed, biologically the races are essentially equal. Psychologically, Africans show great vitality and as regards material resources Africa has great potential. Escaping current marginalization, therefore, is a practical task. It requires that Africans themselves take the initiative to revolutionize their societies and cultures by absorbing as many beneficial influences as possible, especially scientific and technological expertise, and applying these to the benefit of development.

Horton's basic narrative already contained the ground-plan of a modernist model of thought. The centre-piece is a thoroughly universalist view of humanity. Biologically, all humans are equal. Culturally, therefore, no essential differences are expected, so that there is basically one human civilization. When actual differences are observed within humanity, such as differences in development, then these have to be accounted for by factors such as history, human action and material resources. From this central universalist assumption a number of views derive:

1. The fact of a single human civilization which is gradually advancing in science and technology implies that for developing countries there is not really a question of development objectives. Since 'we know where to go', there can only be questions concerning strategy. The modernization model suggests a pragmatic attitude of identifying the conditioning factors for rapid development and trying to realize such factors.

2. The basic equality of mankind suggests that it does not make sense to dwell too long on questions of race and culture. One can have a critical attitude towards other cultures but finally it is a matter of pick-and-choose what is helpful for a 'great leap ahead' in one's own development. The model suggests

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432 Africanus Horton took such a purely common-sense attitude to this question that sophisticated commentators such as L.C. Gwam accused him of being "...too emphatic on the mundane; too materialistic; too bitter in tone; and...too silent on the deeper instincts of the native African." (Gwam 1964, p. 10) For others, however, it may be refreshing to read Horton's statement about women, of over a hundred years ago, that: "no arbitrary infringements on their rights should be tolerated"; quoted in Nicol 1969, p. 96.
strategies of integration rather than of isolation.

3 As far as political systems are concerned, there is no reason not to learn from experiences anywhere in the world. Being in a relatively weak position, as Azikiwe argued, it may be even less advisable for Africa to experiment. Modernists therefore preferred the modern nation-state and the standard institutions of democratic politics (or those of a socialist polity) as these were said to have proved to work.

Horton's solid universalism constitutes, I claim, the intellectual 'genetic code' of modernizationist family of theorists. Their shared basic concern with the issue of rapid development matched a universalist view of human progress thus defining a shared model of thought.

Interestingly, the whole set-up of the world in the modernist view is quite different from the one suggested by the identity model. Instead of a partitioned world, characterized by more or less static differences, we have here a single humanity in a process of perpetual development. Where the identity model suggests a graphic representation in the form of different circles, the modernization model suggests one unit within which a differentiation along a development curve should be depicted.

As in the case of the identity model, family members show similarities in quite different areas from that of patterns of reasoning alone. They appear, quite often, to share many aspects of style, person and background. Horton, Casely Hayford and Azikiwe were intensely exposed to cultural plurality already at an early age. All were successful, self-confident and highly competent modern Africans motivated by a practical sense of achievement rather than by indignation over injustices of colonialism or racial discrimination. Being advanced in a Western type of education, they did not conceive of 'the West' as a vague ideal but as a concrete complex of institutions and ideas from which one can learn and pick-and-choose. Even the most 'Anglophile', Africanus Horton, was selective in his preferences.

MODERNIZATION MODEL

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<th>development (pragmatic)</th>
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Development as 'take-off'

433 Some call this 'detribalized'. The case of Danquah or Busia (being in fact 'neo-traditionalist modernizers') is different: the solidity of their tradition was so clearly beyond doubt that culturalist affirmations were rather unnecessary.
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<th>fundamental features</th>
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<td>primitive - modern</td>
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<td>WORLD</td>
<td>a single human civilization developing towards universal modernity</td>
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<td>TO BE DONE</td>
<td>to make a 'great leap ahead' along the universal path of development</td>
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<tr>
<td>METAPHOR</td>
<td>'take-off'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXAMPLE</td>
<td>modern society in the West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIELD OF FOCAL ATTENTION</td>
<td>technology/economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEORETICAL KEY WORD</td>
<td>modernity</td>
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<td>voluntarism</td>
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Liberated Africa

With the existential drive of identity discourse as well as with the pragmatic drive of modernization discourse the most pervasive enkindling sentiment of modern African political thought has not yet been identified. Much of African thought had a directly political concern, namely liberation due to the indignation caused by colonialism.

The basic idea of liberation may be symbolized in Zambia's famous independence statue of a black man standing up and breaking the chains that shackle him. If any concrete African is imagined to have been depicted there, then it is probably Kwame Nkrumah. In a way, he is both symbol and spokesman of African liberation. Nkrumah exhibits the essentially political nature of Africa's problems. Underdevelopment and cultural alienation, as he argued, are not more than symptoms of Africa's seminal problem, namely its state of subjugation. "Seek ye first the political kingdom, and all things shall be added unto you" was Nkrumah's famous dictum.

The Marxist inspired nationalism of Nkrumah is probably the best known version of liberation discourse. Africa, in his view, was not simply struggling against European colonialism but against the more basic force of imperialism as the outgrowth of capitalism. The self-understanding of the struggle has shifted several times, however, in the last 150 years. For the Aboriginals Rights Protection Society (ARPS) in the 1890s Gold Coast, the struggle was that of the indigenous order, ready to adjust in its own ways to the challenges of modernity, versus the imposed order of the colonial intruder. The dominant view of the struggle changed with the full establishment of colonial power around the turn of the century. African resistance was by then not formulated anymore from outside the colonial system but from within. The actors formulated their demands as colonial subjects, referring to citizenship rights and the Wilsonian right to collective self-determination, while describing the struggle as a nationalist one, that is, as the struggle of colonially (and not 'traditionally') defined 'nations'. The Pan-Africanist congresses (from 1900) and, to some degree, the National Congress for British West Africa (NCBWA) in the 1920s) proposed a more comprehensive view of the struggle, namely as concerned with (parts of) the African continent, the black race as a whole or even all the coloured peoples of the world.

Characteristic of radical anti-imperialist thought, from Lamine Senghor, Kouyaté and Padmore in the 1930s and 1940s, to Nkrumah, Fanon, Cabral and the (ex-)Marxists of today, is its search for 'deeper' historical causes of the African predicament. The following basic assumptions about such a deeper order can be considered to constitute the ground-plan of the liberation type of

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434 This perspective is shared by many movements of what is sometimes called 'primary resistance' to colonial penetration.

435 As highlighted in chapters III and IV, the 'nations' of nationalists to a large degree developed into such units during the nationalist struggle itself, such as in the case of Nigeria and Gold Coast.
discourses:
1-The present world is not in its 'true', desirable state; it is, so to say, in a state of alienation that should be and will be overcome. Capitalism itself as well as its product imperialism will perish;
2-This world is a polarized world divided into the camps of the oppressor and the oppressed (rich and poor, or the colonizer and the colonized);
3-In a way, the system-created polarity already holds the key to its resolution. The oppressed will (and should) force the system to change.

This ground-plan of a world order, involving assumptions about types of social-economic order, about basic social oppositions and a historicist perspective, sets the stage for a complete model of thought. The ground-plan conditions a range of derivative positions:
A- The world is perceived in terms of socio-economic systems (colonialism, imperialism, capitalism etcetera), which has a number of consequences:
   . change is conceptualized as change of system: it is necessarily qualitative, not piecemeal change;
   . the issue of change is a political issue, involving changes in relations of power;
   . the horizon of political thought is not open: it consists of a definite alternative political-economic system (mostly a variant of socialism). Universal patterns of systems-change have to guarantee success of the struggle. Thus, discussions concerning ideals are not relevant: at issue are questions of strategy.

B- The 'untrue' nature of the present state suggests that liberation equals the establishment of a state where all basic social problems are solved. The new state is either achieved by moving forward (Marxist), by renaissance of the old (ARPS) or by 'returning' to true self-identity or "our own history" (Fanon, Cabral). These variants are expressed in the various key metaphors such as "breaking the chains", "the Wall Street octopus", "delinking", "de-alienation" and "unfolding".

C- Another consequence of the basic assumptions is that issues of cultural, ethnic and historical difference do not have a place in the model. Important differences are only those produced by the system itself, such as between imperialist and colonized nations or between internal oppressors, perceived as foreign agents or compradors, and the 'masses'.

Like in the case of the identity and modernization model, the liberation model of thought has a determining influence upon discourses built upon its ground-plan. Once a theorist starts reasoning from its premisses, he or she is induced to follow a specific path of argumentation, thus reproducing the patterns of a liberation model of thought.
LIBERATION MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>basic concern</th>
<th>liberation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fundamental features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLARITY</td>
<td>oppressor - oppressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>master - slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>a world torn apart by the system of imperialist capitalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO BE DONE</td>
<td>revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METAPHOR</td>
<td>'breaking the chains', delinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXAMPLE</td>
<td>the Chinese Long March (for the ARPS the Japanese Médji revolution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIELD OF FOCAL ATTENTION</td>
<td>political economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEORETICAL KEY WORD</td>
<td>exploitation, delinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOSOPHICAL INCLINATION</td>
<td>historicism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mechanism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The present chapter set out to trace recurring models of thought beneath the great variety of historical discourses in modern African political thought. The result of my analysis thus far provides the outline of what could be called a grammar of African political thought throughout the last hundred and fifty years. First of all, I have identified a certain order in the variety of historical discourses in the form of several 'families of discourses' (summarized in diagram 6.4 below). Subsequently, I have identified basic models of thought underlying the logic of each of these families. Such a model is said to be conditioned by a basic concern and set of assumptions (I used above the metaphors of 'genetic code' and 'ground-plan' for these basics). When thinking within the parameters of the ground-plan, a range of related features suggest themselves making up a comprehensive view of the African condition. Once a theorist is lured into the magic circle of a model of thought, his or her reasoning will unfold along similar lines as those of his accomplices.

The result of this exercise can be summarized in the following two diagrams:

### Families of discourse in historical perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IDENTITY TYPE</th>
<th>MODERNIZATION TYPE</th>
<th>LIBERATION TYPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>polarity:</td>
<td>polarity:</td>
<td>polarity:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indigenous -</td>
<td>primitive - modern</td>
<td>oppressor -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alien</td>
<td></td>
<td>oppressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850 - 1900</td>
<td>Blyden</td>
<td>Horton</td>
<td>ARPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900 - 1940</td>
<td>Keyatta, Danquah (Garvey)</td>
<td>Azikiwe, Zikists</td>
<td>Padmore, Nkrumah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940 - 1960</td>
<td>Danquah, Awolowo, (Busia)</td>
<td>Azikiwe</td>
<td><em>The Spark</em>, Nkrumah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Families of discourse in analytical perspective

*The Spark*, Nkrumah
At this point in my argument, a final revenue of the analytical exercise in this chapter has to be registered, thus adding an important dimension to the
understanding of African political thought. I have focused above on characteristic differences of the basic models of thought and now I want to show the way they are related. After all, the various discourses address the same African plight and deal with a similar set of basic issues. These issues are, firstly, political, namely subjugation; secondly, economical, namely underdevelopment and exploitation; and thirdly, cultural, namely estrangement. Whatever the discourse and its underlying model of political thought, these subjects are always on the agenda. The different models of thought thus share an intellectual predicament.

The systematic interrelation between the models of thought expresses both this shared predicament and the essentially different ways in which these concerns are dealt with in the three models. My conjecture is the following: each model shares the problem agenda comprising of political, economic and cultural issues, while the characteristic features of each of the models derive from the basic concern which functions as 'anchoring point' of the model. I claim that always one of the basic concerns plays a constitutive role in the discourse and conditions the specific way in which other issues are conceptualized.

When, for instance, the concern for modernization and the connected polarity 'primitive - modern' plays a constitutive role, then these condition the specific way in which 'liberation' and 'authenticity' are conceptualized. 'Liberation' will not be interpreted as a dominantly political concept (such as in the liberation model) but as entailing primarily technological and economic advancement making the country a strong partner in the world. 'Authenticity' will not mainly refer to the cultural heritage (such as in the identity model) but to the free and open-ended development of individuals and communities.

The crux of this conjecture is that all three models of thought deal with all relevant issues of concern (development, liberation and authenticity). The basic concern of a model, however, conditions the specific way in which the other issues are conceptualized. The concepts, therefore, have a different meaning in each of the models of thought.

The differences between models of thought are, thus, not a simple difference in degree of priority given to economic, cultural or political issues. Blyden, for instance, was not just more concerned with authenticity than the
early African Marxist Tiémoho Garang Kouyaté while being 'less' concerned with *liberation*. It is rather the case that Blyden had a completely different view of what true liberation consists of.\(^\text{436}\) For Blyden political independence would not constitute real liberation unless it would include the regeneration of African authenticity.\(^\text{437}\) Thus, although discourses have certain concepts in common, these concepts have a different meaning in each of the discourses.

From the qualitative differences between the types of discourses it follows that there is no way of 'adding up' the different types to a 'complete' view of the African condition. Their discursive substances would not mix better than oil and water do.\(^\text{438}\) The logic of the models suggests that only when their basic parameters are abandoned such as the fundamental concerns or polarities, consistent alternative political conceptions are possible. (see chapter VIII)

\(^\text{436}\) In principle, Blyden did not object against temporary European political domination (see chapter III).

\(^\text{437}\) For Horton, to take another example, *development* is conceived of as pushing forward along the highway of civilizational advancement. This conditioned his view of 'liberation' as being not only casting off of external factors hampering such advancement but also of internally African obstacles in the form of 'feudal authoritarianism' and 'primitive' attitudes.

\(^\text{438}\) Each model of thought speaks of a different 'Africa' and defines a way of seeing the world. The theoretical framework effects the perception of every single major issue under discussion.