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## **Origins and development of scientific psychology in *Afrique Noire*<sup>1</sup>**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This article charts the origins and development of scientific psychology, a Euro-American “article of export” (Danziger, 2006, p. 271), into *Afrique Noire*. This ‘export’ commodity is “an indigenous psychology rooted in a particular cultural tradition” – European Enlightenment (Berry, 2006, p. 260). The paper develops in six major themes: scientific psychology’s emergence and growth; factors shaping it; its Africentric indigenization; recent advances in the science and applications of psychology, and Africa’s potential to contribute to the discipline. It terminates with reflective musing on the state of the discipline vis-à-vis human diversity and Africa’s marginal status in it.

*Afrique Noire* or Africa south of the Sahara excludes North or Mediterranean Africa. It has a population of over 750 million peoples, shared unevenly amongst 47 countries, which are diverse in ecology, ethnic and linguistic composition, political structures, and other important cultural traits (Serpell, 1984). Whereas Diop (1960) perceived a cultural unity underlying Black Africa’s huge diversity, Maquet (1972) felt “a certain common quality” (p. 3) emerging from similar

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a substantially reconceptualized and reorganized update of “Factors influencing the development of psychology in sub-Saharan Africa” (Nsamenang, 1995a). I

patterns of ecological adaptations and the historical traumas inflicted on *Afrique Noire* by slavery and colonization. African ideas, practices, issues, and social thought have blended into an African worldview which constitutes “a very different *psychological frame of reference* from that which informs contemporary Western developmental psychology” (Serpell, 1994, p. 18).

This paper reconstructs one footpath of the origins of scientific psychology in *Afrique Noire* by situating psychology within its broad and more complex politico-ideological background. It endeavours to capture the factors and attitudes that impact the discipline in its local and national African contexts to reveal its current status as “a work in progress,” except for South Africa to which the paper only refers in passing. It sketches recent disciplinary ‘advances’ in Africa and draws attention to how an Africentric perspective in psychology could enrich theoretical visions and methodological strategies to extend the frontiers of the discipline.

Regarding developmental psychology, Ingelby (1995) noted that its tools were constructed to suit, reveal, and constitute members of the Western world, or, more accurately, the modern child. Thus, the narrow scope of the theories and methods of a Euro-American psychology cannot aptly fit African social thought and praxes (e.g., Bulhan, 1985).

### **EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF PSYCHOLOGY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

Africa has been and remains a major recipient of external influences that have been imposed unsolicited (Nsamenang & Dawes, 1998). Scientific psychology arrived in Africa with colonization in the context of anthropological research (Peltzer & Bless, 1989) as well as in allied service sectors like health, education and evangelism. Like every colonial import into Africa, it has retained an imperialistic and racist identity (Owusu-Bempah & Moffitt, 1995) in the sense that its theories and methods are still Eurocentric and its primary focus is on topics that reflect this externalized orientation, thereby largely losing “sight of the soil out of which the

existing [African] society has grown and the human values it has produced” (Westermann, 2001).

Compared with psychology’s status in other world regions, the state of scientific psychology in Black Africa is inchoate (Nsamenang, 1993), except in South Africa where legislation and ethical codes in the discipline “are relatively well developed, compared with most European countries” and “second only perhaps to the USA and Canada” (Wassenaar, 1998, p. 142). As the discipline stands today, *Afrique Noire* occupies an outlier position in the psychology world and, given its limited capacity to generate and share its own psychology; it is a net importer rather than a generator of psychological knowledge. However, it is slowly evolving into a professional discipline, a fledgling science that still occupies only the fringes of academia and society in most African countries (Nsamenang, 1995). Very few Africans and their governing class know the meaning (Eze, 1991) and potential applications of psychology.

The evolution and development of scientific psychology in sub-Saharan Africa has not been uniform. Variation exists across and within countries, regions, and language blocks in the orienting models, resources, conditions for training, research and applications as well as in the number of psychologists and their integration into research, policy and service programs. Whereas countries like Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon, have been ‘struggling’ to establish the discipline, formal psychology institutions and services already exist in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Psychology has long been established in South Africa, where it is said to be more similar than it is different from psychology elsewhere in the world (Painter & Blanche, 2004). In general psychology seems to be more ‘advanced’ in English-colonized Africa than French-Portuguese-Spanish-colonized

countries, a state of the field that reflects the mindsets of its Euro-American exporters and their Anglo-driven values.

### **FACTORS SHAPING SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

The current state of academic psychology in Africa is determined more by imported forces than by endogenous African factors. In the paragraphs that follow, we present three major constituencies of influence, viz, science and disciplinarity, an African voice, and the critical discourse of folk versus scientific knowledge systems and techniques. The central message is that in Africa scientific psychology is neither taught nor practised under the same conditions as in its natal continent, Europe, and the most fertile land, the United States, in which it has flourished to overwhelm the field.

#### *The science and disciplinarity constituency*

Centuries prior to the evolution of scientific psychology, human cultures shared a folk psychology (Nsamenang, 2001). An intrusive ideology sprouted from an ‘Enlightened Europe’ and was cultivated into progressive positivism and instrumental theory of the universe to overwhelm all others. An offshoot of the ideology that purports emancipatory force was sharpened by social Darwinism into an absolute faith in the boundless feats of science. The ‘faith’ fanned out assumptions that glorified science and logical positivism and disdained oral traditions, religion, and spirituality, the forte of African and other non-Western peoples. “In its positivist quest, psychology rejects all unseen postulated forces or entities as nonsense” (Holdstock, 2000, p. 64). Accordingly, it pays little or no attention to the tacit wisdom embedded in Africa’s oral sources of knowledge like proverbs, folklore, and practices. Current methods and tools of the discipline cannot capture or translate them easily into Euro-American psychological jargons. Thus, the ethnotheories and modes of knowing and functioning in Africa’s oral

traditions are the most vilified and rejected, hence the difficulty to niche modes of African psychosocial functioning into the discipline's knowledge base and the polemics of having to justify scholarship on indigenous African knowledge systems and lifestyles. In fact, African studies "are unpopular, suspect, or simply insignificant" (Staniland, 1983, p. 77).

Scientific psychology was thus transplanted into an Africa that possessed its own unexplored epistemologies and techniques. This scientific discipline is one of "the most important, systematized set of values and ideas that have been imported to assist the modern sectors of developing societies in achieving conceptual systems compatible with those of the developed world" (Moghaddam & Taylor, 1985, p. 1145). It is essential to acknowledge and accept that the "imported disciplinary organization of psychological knowledge may not be appropriate at all times and everywhere" (Danziger, 2006, p. 269). Africa's systems nevertheless stand resilient in the face of centuries of neglect and suppressive forces.

Psychology's insidiously forceful value is Darwinian, depicting it as a technological tool that improves in historical time with Westernization. Scientific psychology implies civilization as "something that belonged to Europe as a treasure that shall be enjoyed by the entire planet" (Mignolo, 1998, p. 33). Accordingly, Europe 'invented' a civilizing mission, which rationalized colonization and missionary outreaches (Ngaujah, 2003).

*Systemic National Factors:* Even a cursory glimpse of the national psychological scene in most countries of *Afrique Noire* would indicate that most Africans, including its governing elite and policy planners of tertiary education, are more familiar with and disposed to incorporating the disciplines of economics, sociology and anthropology than that of psychology. Psychology is a marginal discipline in academia, policy development and practice. In most countries it is fragmented and further undermined through incorporation into training service staff in education,

health, and social and missionary work instead of developing as a separate professional or academic discipline. In Cameroon's university, for example, psychology was offered in the philosophy department (Nsamenang, 1993) and attained the status of a full-fledged academic department circa 2003. A further illustration is the story of psychologists in Malawi who discovered tolerant attitudes and receptivity to the healing systems of ethnomedicine and biomedicine but their recommendation for the integration of traditional healers into the health care system was ignored. Despite widespread use of the traditional healing system, the Malawian Ministry of Health persisted in developing a Western-style health care system in which the ubiquitous indigenous healers occupied only an informal role (Carr & MacLachlan, 1994).

The nascent state of psychology in sub-Saharan Africa comes through the fact that except for universities in South Africa, no university in *Afrique Noire* had a department of psychology in 1962 (Peltzer & Bless, 1989). Even by the mid-1980s not more than 20 African universities had a psychology department and less than 10 had a history of research that extended beyond 10 years (Serpell, 1984). In British West Africa, psychology was first taught as a course in 1949. According to Eze (1991), a department of psychology was first established in the region in 1964; the first undergraduate psychology degree was awarded in 1967; a Master's degree in 1975; and a Doctorate in 1982. The first laboratory of experimental psychology in the sub-continent was established in Zambia in 1965. Whereas post-graduate studies in psychology began in Zambia in 1984 (Peltzer & Bless, 1989), the University of Yaounde in Cameroon established a department of psychology in 2003, the University of Buea offers only educational psychology at the master degree level, and at the University of Dschang psychology is a unit in the Department of Philosophy. In the West African region, universities in Nigeria and Ghana run psychology

departments and psychology is a core course in teacher training, social work, and health personnel education. Mentorship in graduate studies and research is remarkable for its scarcity.

The low ratio of psychologists per population is consistent with the low recognition of the discipline in much of the continent. Although the situation has obviously changed, even Nigeria, the most populous African country, had only 58 academic psychologists (Commonwealth Universities Yearbook, 1985), for a population of 116 million. It is safe to assume that the number of psychologists in Nigeria has increased over the last two decades but the ratio is still small for Nigeria's teeming population.

Another important determinant of psychological and other types of research is political will and stability. Uncertainty leads to unstable research leadership, which in turn, makes for short-term planning, rather than enduring lines of research. Political interference, such as the October 1991 arbitrary closure of Cameroon's Institute of Human Sciences by a Presidential decree (Nsamenang, 1993), is also inimical to progress. Lack of political will and stability is illustrated by the 1993 three-month workers' strike in Cameroon that paralyzed the nation. In Nigeria's Kwara Polytechnic (Students go on rampage, 1988) and Cameroon's Buea University (Ndongo, 2006), protesting students caused substantial destruction to research and pedagogical infrastructure, thereby further worsening capacity. The civil wars in Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Congo Democratic Republic reveal the impact of political instability in its starkest form.

*Influences from international and developed-world psychology:* The scientific method is not 'native' to the African soil; it was imported as a ready-made intellectual package (Kagitcibasi, 1984). The insensitivity of current psychological theories and tools to Africa's social thought and

indigenous knowledge is not simply an imperialist academic domination of Africans but also a self-imposed emulation of Euro-American models. Constrained by a heavy dose of received knowledge, a high degree of imitative and replicative research and an extensive scientific acculturation of African scholars and researchers, many African psychologists are largely unaware of the Eurocentric nature of the discipline. They inadvertently promote Euro-American values and epistemologies to the neglect of their own. As a result, the psychology developing in Africa, like that in India, is Euro-American in social cognitive content and value orientation (Sinha, 1989).

In most sub-Saharan countries, except perhaps in South Africa, sustained programs of research beyond the level of fulfilling university graduation requirements (Serpell, 1984) is conspicuous by its scarcity. This is made worse by an absence of standards and consensus on the meaning and significance of psychological research. A substantial amount of printed research is produced by itinerant Euro-Americans and obviously embodies their cultural imprints and vested interests and prejudices (Wober, 1975), whereas the bulk of research by Africans is unpublished. Many of Africa's outstanding scholars, including psychologists, have succumbed to the lure of Euro-American labor markets to work abroad (Nsamenang, 1992). Brain drain saps the lifeblood of Africa's fragile intellectual and service systems. Imagine, for example, that at least 23 percent of physicians trained in sub-Saharan Africa are working in industrialised countries (WHO, 2006); most of them acquired their expertise through the meagre resources of their countries. Africa is losing its most competent workforce daily to the lure of Western job markets, therein bringing its formal systems close to collapse.

Furthermore, most African governments prefer foreign experts and consultants, whom they literally treat as omniscient and infallible, therein undermining national experts, who are more

familiar with national sensitivities. Elsewhere, the author (Nsamenang, 2005a) mused over whether expertise is a procedural issue, a matter of possessing universal knowledge and applying it anywhere or that of possessing relevant knowledge about a specific place or given condition and applying it thereto. Africa's governing elite had better extrapolate from Davies's (1974) claim that Canadian nationality was a *sine qua non* for insight into Canadian society. Reliance on expatriates who earn inflated salaries or consultation fees (Machika, 1992) discourages lower-paid, less 'respected' African nationals (MacLachlan & Carr, 1993).

*The Research Environment:* Given the few opportunities for African scholars to interact with each other and the infrequency of voices expressing authentic African knowledge systems and issues in international psychological discourses, it is doubtful if psychology in Africa will soon impact the field. Several factors are implicated in this poor state of the discipline.

Among these are the extensive and expensive visa paperwork and the disbelieving attitudes and condescending practices to which African scholars are subjected in consular offices to obtain visas for foreign travel (see Nsamenang, 2006a). The cost often exceeds the monthly stipends of many African scholars, who have no available local, national or regional funding sources. As a result, many African scholars who receive full funding for international forums often fail to attend because visa and related travel costs are unaffordable. Some foreign colleagues and funding agencies misinterpret and sneer at this. Carr and MacLachlan (1994), for instance, imputed a "pay-me" attitude in Malawian scholars. Another factor is the unimaginably high cost of airfares out of and into Africa and tedious travel schedules that require sub-Saharan Africans to transit in European cities to reach other parts of the world, even in the Southern hemisphere. Many African psychologists give up on the demeaning process of having to justify these costs to donor agencies. Another overlooked factor is the intimidating climate of international forums,

such as inattention to African points of view and apparent disbelief that an African could be a psychologist or could imagine himself or herself to make a contribution to an otherwise Euro-American discipline (Nsamenang, 2006a).

These and similar attitudes undergird the reluctance or failure to acknowledge Africa's strengths and negation of its achievements. For example, whereas Richards (1985) lamented the ignorance of some expatriate agricultural and health experts he observed at work in Africa, Ford (1971) forthrightly confessed how their efforts in the trypanosomiasis program "almost entirely overlooked the very considerable achievements of the indigenous peoples in overcoming the obstacle of trypanosomiasis" (p. 9). He explained how, as expatriates, they "were feebly scratching at the surface of events" they hardly knew; "if they achieved anything at all, it was often to exacerbate the ills of the societies they imagined themselves to be helping" (Ford, 1971, p. 8). Some gatekeepers, like journal and book editors and committee members of scientific forums, cannot extricate themselves from this intimidatory inclination and negative attitudes. Belonging to "one group whose distinctive culture [even presence] is little appreciated" (Ellis, 1978, p. 1), most African psychologists see no sense in subjecting themselves to the intense emotions required to participate in forums which intimidate and dehumanize them.

The African research scene could be improved through scientific societies or associations that are strong enough to uphold standards, enforce discipline, inspire research and foster critical discourse and collegial interaction. Unfortunately, these are conspicuous by their nonexistence in many countries, such as Cameroon. Where they are available, most are plagued or disabled by inadequate funds and bedeviled by ineffective leadership, poor organization, factional conflicts, and personal animosities. Colleagues – even seniors and leaders in the same institution – dissipate energy and time and engage resources more in self-promotion and antagonistic

activities than in progressive scholarship or in creating opportunities to uplift junior colleagues. A Malawian student cogently expressed this negative force in the following terms: “In Africa ... people ... always develop hostility towards those who are better than them” (Carr & MacLachlan, 1994, p. 7). These uncooperative attitudes run counter to the massive literature on collectivism that posits collaboration, sharing and supportiveness as a benchmark of collectivist societies, like those in Africa (Adair, 1995). The ongoing framework of collectivist research bypasses the individuality of the African.

Furthermore, psychology societies, like the Psychological Association of Zambia (PAZ) (Peltzer & Bless, 1989), are unable to coordinate and inspire members into fruitful and productive scientific and professional activities to sustain disciplinary development. Instead, African scholars and institutions manifest a penchant for diminishing returns. They foster more south-to-north relations and collaborative networks than south-to-south or national linkages and exchanges. This implies that many African psychologists are more conversant with the research of Euro-American than of African peers, even within the same institution (Nsamenang, 1993). This intellectual atmosphere is not conducive to collegial interstimulation and collective progress; it stirs and sustains apprehension and introduces hostility into and lack of cooperation in the peer review process. For instance, this writer relies more on a personal self-editing style than on collegial input because colleagues rarely ‘share’ resources nor contribute to an inter-collegial peer review process. The peer-review process in most African countries tends to place more value on foreign than national publications despite a general apprehension for *received* Western norms and knowledge systems.

Other contextual barriers to quality research and scholarly productivity in *Afrique Noire* are the absence of native language literacy, underdeveloped human capacity and inadequate material

resources, such as suitable support personnel and modern information and communication technologies (ICTs). Most scholars on the continent have no access to ICTs. Because of hassles of daily life and social obligations, scholars may have to give priority to family duties than to the prompt revision of a manuscript or grant proposal. The economy of affection in Kenya (Court, 1983) and politics of patronage in Cameroon (Dibussi, 2006) underlie scientific appointments and promotions. As a result, some first-rate psychologists have abandoned academia for more lucrative positions in business and government or moved into the global marketplace.

A worsening poverty index has led to convenient sampling procedures and diminished library capacity to secure state of the art materials. Consequently, updating trends in an African field is best undertaken from outside the continent than from within it. Limited access to the literature, especially current trends and developments in the field, implies a narrower scope to training, theorization, methodology, applications, and outdated citations in most manuscripts by Africans that enter the peer review system.. Research resources are further depleted when research participants are paid to participate in research (Carr & MacLachlan, 1994).

*Constituency of the African voice: Restricted and marginal*

The foregoing paragraph hints at a very low acceptance rate of manuscripts from Africa for publication, and a lesser African voice in the psychological literature. Africa, like every world region, deserves a presence and voice not only in print and at international forums, but one that makes a valuable and respectable contribution in the field. The scientific community in particular and the world at large deserve evidence-based knowledge on how the African ecoculture primes psychosocial differentiation. But an African voice is often absent from such discourses, or, when present, is usually marginal.

The marginality of the African voice is exacerbated by scarcely available publishing houses in *Afrique Noire*, where they are either in a state of disrepair or poorly developed (Nsamenang, 1993). Because such publishing houses experience serious difficulties with the commercial value of production and distribution of their products (Serpell, 1984), African authors are forced to personally distribute their books. This obliges African scholars to rely more on external than internal publication outlets. Illiteracy in African mother tongues also compels African psychologists to write and publish in foreign languages, a practice which further stunts scholarly productivity. Most African idioms, proverbs and practices are not easily translatable into scientific jargon or European languages, except at the risk of impairment to their essence or distortion of their full meaning (Ojiaku, 1974). That is, the bulk of human experience and truth in the African cultural world are “inaccessible to science” (MacGaffey, 1981, p. 229).

Whereas a science voice typically addresses an allegedly universalistic, but Western humanity, a contextually informed voice presents locally appropriate knowledge that is extracted from research or professional service *with* rather than *on* a given people (Danziger, 2006). This is an heuristic notion that could transcend classical Western scholarship in which the human sources and the beneficiaries of scientific research, academic knowledge or professional services have seldom been the same people. This is in stark contrast to indigenous discourse, which does not ignore the voices of the “subjects” of discourse. Tangwa (1996) regarded as scientific myopia philosophical discourse, like psychological scholarship, which excludes other systems of knowledge but posits Western ideas and practices as the only rational and universally valid ones. When psychologists, both expatriates and assimilated native-born Africans, listen to Africa’s social thought or observe African affairs, they “decide a priori what they want to hear or see and how it should be said or seen” (Nsamenang, 1999, p. 160). In addition, African authors are

constrained to address the international marketplace, implying Western Europeans and North Americans, rather than speak to Africans in their own terms and language.

That scientific psychology somehow disregards the humanity of non-Western peoples can be discerned in perceptible efforts that pit mainstream psychology against indigenous psychologies or the psychologies of non-Western peoples (Nsamenang, 2006b). Mignolo (1998) interpreted this distinction as a clarification of the foundation of a field of study that located Europe and its diaspora as locus of enunciation and all other civilizations as the locus of the enunciated. That postmodernism is receptive to the modes of knowing by the non-Western mind is more in rhetoric than in reality because decades of science-based cross-cultural data on African social thought and ways of thinking, for example, have not been reported as integral to psychological knowledge but as failing to measure up to Western psychological norms and social realities. Arthur Koestler's reference to non-Western religions as "a web of solemn absurdities" (Clarke, 1997, p. 3) exemplifies Euro-American penchant to actively ignore and silence competitive minds and discourses. In this light, the knowledge systems and modus operandi of Africa's "*les gens de la bouche*" (Diawara, 1998, p. 41), that is, the psychology of Africa's oral traditions, have been stigmatized as absurd and undeserving of a niche in the discipline's knowledge base. The Eurocentric negation of non-European knowledge systems stems from Hegel's 'prescription' of an outreach mission to civilize backward peoples. Thus, infected with 'the German spirit' as "the absolute Truth that determines or realizes itself through itself without owing anything to anyone" (Dussel, 1998, p. 3), Europe exploited and continues to exploit the rest of the world with its civilizing mission. In so doing, it imposed a Eurocentric psychology on Africa's largely uncharted psychology.

In fact, to varying degrees across regions and countries, imperial nations enlisted academic disciplines in general and psychology in particular to consolidate their stranglehold on other people's psychologies. In the central and southern African regions, European settlement was equally used to sustain an iron grip on other people's minds and lands (Nsamenang, 2006c). In South Africa, for example, 95 percent of the nation's psychologists are Caucasian, coming from 10% of its population (Murray, 2002).

*The discourse constituency: Folk ideas and praxes versus scientific epistemology and methodology*

African theories of the universe and the social thought and psychology that follow from them are structured with ethnotheories and epistemologies that differ from those that drive Western thought and psychology (Nsamenang, 2004; Serpell, 1994). As a result, when scholars apply Western concepts and categories to African systems, they discover that they do not exactly fit (MacGaffey, 1981). Psychologists have rarely asked what African epistemology is and what it portends for the global range of psychological functioning. It is as if Africa has nothing to offer psychology. The implication is that an exclusive use of Western models and methods not only trivializes but excludes African precepts and phenomena, perhaps the most significant ones, from the corpus of the discipline's knowledge base.

Although folk psychology functions within its own worldview and social structure, academic psychology has been and continues to be used as the template against which to determine the adequacy of folk psychology. If indeed culture holds elements that science cannot yet capture (MacGaffey, 1981, Ojiaku, 1974), then, Africa's rich but mainly unexplored cultures and timeless traditions are potential sources of enrichment for scientific psychology (Callaghan,

1998). An African contribution to and lessons from an Africentric perspective to the discipline is difficult to visualize through conventional scientific theories or to extract using current tools. This is because African knowledge and social thought are embedded in such non-Western sources of knowledge as folklores, idioms, spatial use of cues, touch, garden metaphors and participatory processes that most current psychological instruments and techniques do not aptly measure.

This state calls for an innovation that transcends the current state of the field. It compels not only the contextualization of theory, but, more importantly, the culturalization of methods and assessment techniques. One strategy is to encourage “interactions between cultures” to highlight differences, reveal needs, uncover problems, throw up concerns and offer alternatives to signal “the need for changes in attitudes, approaches, methodologies and service provision” (Smale, 1998, p. 3). This requires “a new understanding of theory in close proximity to actual psychological phenomena” (Valsiner, 1997, p. viii). It equally requires the adoption of a learning posture of attentiveness to Agar’s (1986) disclosure that research in the so-called exotic cultures should oblige “an intensive personal involvement, an abandonment of traditional scientific control, an improvisational style to meet situations not of the researcher’s making, and an ability to learn from a long series of mistakes” (p. 12). In this regard, Saraswathi (1994) recommended flexibility and innovativeness by advocating “an approach based on common sense rather than the mystical scientific rigour in human development assessment” (p. 1). The most valuable element in this process is careful thought and systematic procedure, wherein methods and procedures are explained in sufficient detail to ensure replicability.

## **AFRICENTRIC PSYCHOLOGY: INDIGENIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY**

Deterrents to discipline development in Africa south of the Sahara coexist with facilitators, a state of the field which accounts for the sluggish but steady growth of indigenous psychological science in the sub-continent. Azuma's (1984) five stages in the development of indigenous psychologies in non-Western contexts, namely, pioneer, translation and modeling, indigenization, and integration, are apparent in varying degrees across Africa. This section explores some elements indicative of ongoing indigenization and integration processes and a slow evolution of an Africentric perspective to psychological science.

### *Some facilitating factors*

Even in their inhospitable environments, some African researchers have produced quality research with little or no technological support (Nsamenang, 1993). This feat compares with the paradox of outstanding achievement with minimal resources (Adair, 1995). This also constitutes evidence of often forgotten resilience in Africa's chaotic situation. A similar paradox operates when African youth from poor home backgrounds enter first-rate American and European universities, confront the most modern technological gadgets for the first time, and still excel in academic achievement and sports (Nsamenang, 1992). Can their success cast a liberatory light on "different sets of standards" other than the Euro-American for assessing Africans? In this regard, LeVine (2004) has reported that experienced sub-Saharan African mothers understand infant care and development in ways that contrast "sharply with expert knowledge in the child development field" (p. 149) to provide "alternative patterns of care based on different moral and practical considerations ... that had not been imagined in developmental theories" (p. 163).

Ngaujah (2003) considers such paradoxical accomplishments as the impetus to look at Africa's realities in psychology, health, and education, from a different frame of reference.

The imported psychology cannot successfully be indigenized and flourish to serve Africa's multiple needs without anchor in the local reality and context. As increasing numbers of African psychologists capture and bring indigenous phenomena and processes to the field, they are slowly injecting emic African precepts and praxes into the literature. This is an essential first step if an Africentric contribution to scientific psychology would reach a critical mass. A key constraint in these efforts however is incapacity to capture authentic indigenous phenomena and tacit knowledge by native-language illiteracy. Indeed, a strand of African expertise was broken when African "educators abandoned their variegated mother tongues to unwittingly adopt 'neutral' imperial languages for school instruction, therein permanently stunting indigenous language development and their speakers' proficiency to articulate and expose indigenous perspectives" (Nsamenang, 2005a, p. 284).

*Indigenization: Platform for an Africentric perspective on psychological science*

The Western scientific psychology that was transplanted into Africa now lives together in the same communities and individuals with the centuries-old folk psychologies of African peoples. African psychologists are trained not in the theories, methods and languages of their indigenous psychologies but in the perspectives of nations exporting scientific psychology to them, which are essentially Anglo-America and touted as universal. African psychologists are thus largely ignorant of the principles and procedures that drive their own mindsets and psychological functioning. Unfortunately, most African psychologists have acquiesced to contemporary Western psychology as a universal psychology. Some are only recently awakening to the

disparity in the scientific knowledge traditions evolved in Western cultural contexts that have been moved unadapted to their African cultural communities.

An African desire to develop their own indigenous psychology can be seen as a proactive post-colonial wish and search for empowerment through outgrowing the *received* psychology to generating their own knowledge and expertise. In this sense, the indigenous psychologies movement represents attempts by researchers to develop psychologies that make sense in their own cultures and by which they can gain understanding of their subjectivity, experiences and socio-emotional functioning. Africa's path into contributing to psychological knowledge was truncated when imperialists condemned African versions of knowledge (Mudimbe, 1988). The systematic, long-drawn disempowerment of Africa through rejection of its knowledge systems compels a more forceful call to ecoculturally relevant knowledge generation. The call is more urgent given that psychological research on the continent has largely focused on issues that are more germane to Western realities and interests than to those of Africa's appalling condition (Nsamenang, 1992). Mpofu (2002) and Serpell (1993) are more specific in indicating that psychology training programs on the African continent have generally remained ossified in the past in that they still aim to faithfully reproduce the content and research questions of interest to Western rather than African communities. This implies that, at this point of Africa's history, training in psychology that genuinely mirrors African precepts and accurately reflects a native-born African psychologist's own theory of the universe and cultural knowledge is at best in its nascent stage. Thus, the domestication or indigenization of psychology can be considered part of a liberatory struggle to restore Africa's generative capacity that was shattered by a brazen colonization and now worsened by a raging social engineering.

The current status of indigenous psychology in any African country begins with or can be gauged from the reactive transformation processes to render the *received* scientific psychology more suitable to indigenous psychological functioning and service needs. In this light, the history of developing an Africentric psychology is in large measure specific to each country or region, depending on the felt need and in reaction against the interests and motives of different imperial powers and the psychology perspective they introduced or ‘hijacked’ to serve, say apartheid in South Africa, preventive justice in French-speaking Africa or schooling in English-speaking countries. The flourishing of applied psychology in South Africa during the apartheid era is a telling example of how a scientific discipline was trapped within the service of apartheid to sustain racial oppression of the Black majority (Holdstock, 2000). The differential British and French approaches to the discipline can be detected in the psychologists trained in each of these traditions and now serving in the regions of Cameroon which were colonized by Britain and France.

### **RECENT ADVANCES IN THE SCIENCE AND APPLICATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY**

In *Afrique Noire*, circa 2006 there is lack of clarity across countries and regions regarding the science, practice and public interest domains of psychology. The confusion makes it difficult to visualize the big picture of psychology and where and how it fits into the larger world of Africa’s mindsets, modes of functioning and service needs. However, our review has revealed psychology as an inchoate science and fledgling professional discipline with timid applications and virtually absent public interest, except in South Africa, where it actively served apartheid interests and is now deployed in service of post-apartheid ‘truth’ and reconciliation processes.

*The science of psychology*

Historically, the science of psychology in sub-Saharan Africa has ‘advanced’ from primary focus on the precocity of physical development of the African child (Wober, 1975) through exploring various aspects of Africa’s developmental ecocultures (e.g., Nsamenang, 1992; Ohuche & Otaala, 1981; Weisner, Bradley & Kilbride, 1997) to investigating specific domains of psychosocial development and attempting Africentric measures of cognitive abilities or intelligences (e.g., Chamvu, 2006; Kathuria & Serpell, 1999; Mpofu, 2002; Nsamenang, 2006c; Serpell, 1993; Vei & Everatt, 2005).

Indigenization as a process of deriving theories, concepts, tools, and assessment techniques from a local ecoculture and feeding them back into it has become an acceptable and legitimate ideological and research goal. One version of indigenization and integration involves tailoring global psychological understandings to local conditions, particularly in scholastic domains, interests and attitudes, societal processes, and health practices. In this direction, Sternberg and colleagues (2001) developed a *Test for Tacit Knowledge for Natural Herbs* with Luo children of a rural Kenyan community. The test sampled from common illnesses in the Luo community and standard herbal treatments for those illnesses in that community. Attempts at developing the psychology of human intelligence in sub-Saharan Africa by integrating relevant Western and local constructs to address local, African needs are exemplified by the studies by Serpell (1977), Kathuria and Serpell (1999), Grigorenko et al. (1999), and Sternberg et al. (2001), to cite but few.

A majority of children in rural sub-Saharan Africa are more familiar with clay or other local materials as a medium of expression than they are with pencil and paper and commercially prepared toys. Furthermore, familiarity with ‘intelligent behavior’ in sub-Saharan Africa reveals

that the indigenous people of that geo-cultural region value intelligence as having social and cognitive components, with a greater valuing of practical rather than mentalistic intelligence. Such informed awareness led Kathuria and Serpell (1999) to develop the *Panga Munthu Test* (Make-A-Person Test), which is a language-reduced test suitable for use by children in rural Africa. The test presents children with wet clay and the children are asked to 'make' a person with the clay. The children's figures are then quantitatively scored for accurate representation of human physical characteristics. An interrater reliability of .89 was observed for the *Panga Muntu Test* with rural Zambian children (Mpofu, 2002). Given the significance of schooling and the adoption of European languages for school instruction in much of Africa (Serpell, 1993), similar interests have focused on the interfaces of African mother tongues and foreign language learning in Cameroon (Fai, 1996), Namibia (Veii & Everatt, 2005), and Zambia (Chamvu, 2006; Kaani, 2006), amongst others.

The significance of these studies is that they represent genuine attempts to recognize and respect indigenous mindsets and intellectual values by using ecologically valid, local materials and media and focusing on indigenous psychosocial processes (Mpofu, 2002). They also demonstrate the appropriate application of psychometric procedures with indigenous materials and for the purpose of supporting local educational activities and practices in other sectors. This is a remarkable departure from the tradition of applying Western tests of intelligence to native Africans for the purpose of making normative comparisons which have characteristically revealed African children as less intelligent than their Western peers. Normative comparisons in cross-cultural research are unjustified in view of the apparent differences in cognitive values and social realities between indigenous African and Western worlds. Although promising beginnings have been made in indigenizing the psychology of human intelligence in sub-Saharan Africa,

much remains to be achieved in terms of programmatic research in this and other areas (Mpofu, 2002).

Although Western psychology first arrived in Africa in the apron strings of service arenas like missionary work, education, industry, health, social work, social communication,, the applications of psychology in Africa today is still quite problematic. Two factors are central to the difficulty. First, indigenization and integration, as explained earlier, largely is still at the level of academia; it has not been translated into best practice modalities. Second, the indigenous psychology project is inchoate, non-programmatic and still in its conceptual stage in the sense that the ideological moorings, conceptual models and procedural modalities for developing an indigenous psychology that is truly tuned to Africa and sensitive and useful to African needs are not yet available. Nevertheless, there are positive indicators to forge the relevance of psychology.

Efforts to contextualize the science and practice of psychology in *Afrique Noire* include: *Health and culture: Beyond the western paradigms* (Airhihenbuwa, 1995), *Cultures of Human Development and Education: Challenge to Growing up African* (Nsamenang, 2004), *Child Development in Cameroon* (Nsamenang & Dasen, 1993), *Psychology in sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and prospects* (Mpofu, 2002), *The Significance of Schooling* (Serpell, 1993), and *Milieu Africain et Developpement Cognitive: Une Etude du Raisonnement Experimental chez L'adolescent Ivoirien* (Tape, 1993). Whereas Dasen (1993) interpreted the work by Tape (1993) on cognitive development with Ivorian adolescents as constituting “a good beginning of the development of a truly African psychology” (p. 156), Serpell (1994) viewed this author’s (Nsamenang, 1992) sociogenic rendition of human ontogenesis within African cultures as offering a different “theoretical focus from the more individualistic account proposed by Freud,

Erikson and Piaget” (p. 18). These two examples of Africentric research resonate with the cultural preoccupations expressed by parents in many an African society.

For Ngaujah (2003), Nsamenang’s theoretical approach to development is worthy of consideration for teachers and educators for it brings to light the affective nature of the environment on the child’s cognitive and social learning. Missionaries can also take from it “a healthy respect for the people of Africa and hopefully begin to think more about the desires, goals and needs as perceived by the target people rather than satisfying Western contrived ambitions, be they that of the sending agencies or of the individual missionary” Ngaujah, 2003, p. 9). Callaghan (1998) holds that “if we could continue to listen to, and learn from, the African worldview, seeing a holistic and integrated way of looking at the family and the universe, we might see things in a new way” (p. 32).

#### *Applications of psychology in the HIV/AIDS arena*

The significant advances that have been made thus far have been limited by lack of a critical mass of research on and evidence-based services for social problems such as poverty, violence, armed conflict and HIV/AIDS which loom large in all regions of sub-Saharan Africa. Africa desperately needs psychologists studying and intervening in its problems. A miniscule number of African psychologists are involved in evolving a psychology appropriate for these problems and other needs. Even fewer psychologists are involved in applied research and service delivery on the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

But while this work is under way, it is lacking because psychology is not nearly as far along in psychosocial relevance as it should be. This limitation partly stems from the fact that some of the most outstanding of Africa’s very few psychologists and social science researchers have

emigrated to Western countries but more so by training in psychology lacking in contextual validity, particularly the relevant psychosocial knowledge and skills to offer the direly needed behavioral science framework appropriate to HIV/AIDS interventions.. It will take a more indigenous focus, more rigorous and programmatic scholarship and greater challenge of uncritical applications of imported paradigms and intervention packages to evolve Africentric psychology to the point where it will genuinely and culturally serve the needs of HIV/AIDS infected and affected Africans (see Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2006a).

Searches of *PsychINFO* database<sup>2</sup> yielded 74 abstracts on HIV/AIDS research and/or service work in *Afrique Noire*. Geo-politically, entry into this database was from Nigeria (68.6%), Cameroon (9.5%), the Democratic Republic of Congo (6.8%), South Africa (4.0%), Uganda (4.0%) and the Central Africa Republic (2.7%). The bulk of the articles were multi-authored; few Africans were senior authors, with even fewer affiliated to psychology institutions. The variety of research themes and/or service areas reported range from a claimed origin of the HIV virus in chimpanzee droppings in southern Cameroon (Keele et al. 2006), and prevention of mother to child HIV transmission (Adejuyigbe, Fasubaa, & Onayade, 2004; Welty et al., 2005) to exploring patterns of sexual behavior and other risk factors as foreknowledge to designing and mounting appropriate interventions (Lydie et al., 2004; Mitsunaga, Powell, Heard, & Larsen, 2005).

The entries also widely reported the pivotal role of social capital and civil society networks in community-based approaches to combating HIV/AIDS and providing familiar psychosocial support (Wyss, Hutton, N'Diekhon, 2004). However, experiences from a UK funded HIV/AIDS intervention in Nigeria caution of the ways in which conflict can develop, emerge and be

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<sup>2</sup> I gratefully acknowledge Prof. John Adair for the search of this database.

sustained, resulting in severe breakdown of social cohesion and reduction or cessation of HIV/AIDS activities (Gruber, & Caffrey, 2005). This experience, requiring greater critical attention, is not unique to Nigeria; it has equally been noticed in Cameroon (Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2006a). Conflicts arise from the different priorities and perceptions of community members and groups vis-a-vis those of development organizations and donor agencies, and by the impact of funds on often desperately poor communities. In an unusual critique of her own work, Shefer (2006) revealed how HIV/AIDS research could inadvertently reproduce dominant and oppressive discourses.

Overall, our overview of applying psychology in Africa's HIV/AIDS arena indicates that nearly all countries are challenged by worker shortage, skill-mix imbalance, misdistribution of resources and few available behavioral science personnel, negative work environment, and weak knowledge base in engaging participatory processes in a rights-based but culturally sensitive manner (Chen et al., 2004). This is a critical dimension which ought to be stressed across Africa, but what are more obvious are blameful strategies that insinuate Africa's belief systems and social capital as disruptive of HIV/AIDS interventions. It was on the basis of having realized this state of the field that this writer and his collaborators (Nsamenang, Fru, Browne, in press) initiated the development of a people-friendly *human services psychology* at the Bamenda University of Science and Technology in collaboration with the Human Development Resource Centre in Bamenda.

In a similar pursuit, Madu, Baguma and Pritz (1996) advanced the psychotherapy project for Africa which partly revealed to the "outsider" that psychotherapy in Africa, like most domains of HIV/AIDS work, is not a "tabula rasa," but a "terra incognita." They outlined treatment processes that included suggestive techniques and systems of family therapy and interpretive proceedings

to provide sensitivity to the cultural context. They also articulated youth performing arts entertainment-education as a popular method of HIV/AIDS prevention and health promotion. Such initiatives can ignite dialogue that could expand the general concept of psychotherapy to include historical and present African practices that heighten the subjectivity and knowledge of the inner psychic and spiritual self. These are salient but unaddressed human experiences which most Western psychotherapeutic regimes ignore, resulting in their limited usefulness for therapy and psychosocial support with Africans.

We can safely conclude that the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues its relentless march out of proportion with the considerable efforts and resources deployed to control it (Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2006b). There exists a significant but subtle stigmatization and discrimination against HIV-infected people that constitutes a major constraint in the management and control of HIV/AIDS. In reality, HIV-infected and affected persons continue to receive only partially suitable psychosocial support and proper respite from stigma and exclusion. This is because the attitudes of many HIV/AIDS workers, including some donors, which engender a blame factor exacerbate stigma (Nsamenang & Tchombe (2006b) but to which few interveners adequately attend (Baguma, 2006; Duncan, 2006; Nsamenang, 2004; Oyelese (2003-2004); Shefer, 2006).

We suspect critical mismatches between field realities, policies and research cum best practices with HIV/AIDS knowledge and interventions. The major challenges pertain to mastery of the human factor (Nsamenang, 2004) and elimination of the huge gulf between theory, research, policy and their best practice applications in ecological and cultural context. In addition, whereas Baguma (2006) reported little understanding of the type and magnitude of psychosocial problems in Uganda, Nsamenang and Tchombe (2006a) referred to interveners in Cameroon purporting to offer psychosocial support but without inkling of what constitutes

stigma. On his part, Duncan (2006) laments the concentration of attention on HIV/AIDS crisis interventions with scant focus on its future outcomes on psycho-emotional development. The evidence is clear: the bulk of ongoing HIV/AIDS policies and work give only tangential consideration to the long-term developmental consequences and alternatives to the traditional family and other institutional settings for the future of the growing generations of AIDS citizens and those who will come into their orbit.

*Contributions of the international community to discipline development*

“It does not require any great sense of intellectual imagination or a stretched theoretical understanding of social reality to declare that international development as is conventionally practiced has met with disappointment in Africa” (Dei, 1996, p. 2). The euphoria of development assistance and aid rapidly effervesces in Africa’s non-Western-like cultural climate. This point should not be interpreted as is conventional with deficit models of Africa failing to modernize but as a monumental failure by the international community to understand and plan development within Africa’s theory of the universe. Some international efforts are moving away from the defeating paradigm of “pasteing” modernity on Africa to genuine enhancement of Africa’s capacity in its differentness.

An exemplary effort in this direction is that of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development (ISSBD) that has sponsored a workshop series to open and sustain African psychologists into interstimulation and exchange with international psychologists on the African continent. This is a series of training workshops on human development in lifespan perspective that began in 1992 in Yaounde (Cameroon) and has moved to different countries and regions of *Afrique Noire* to its 7<sup>th</sup> edition in Johannesburg (South Africa) in November 2006. The Johannesburg workshop, hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand, focused on a pertinent

theme germane to this article – *Enhancing research capacity in human development* – and like other workshops before it brought together 44 researchers and young scholars from several African nations (10) and only 2 Western countries. The 8<sup>th</sup> workshop is planned for Kenya in 2009 and the Biennial Conference of the ISSBD in South Africa in 2010; that of the International Congress of Psychology has also been scheduled for South Africa in 2012.

African themes are beginning to catch the interest and precious space of international psychology journals. The statutory fief of the *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, which is now listed in the International Bibliography of Social Sciences, is Africa and the Caribbean. Its forthcoming special issue is on community psychology in Africa and it has called for papers for a special issue on HIV/AIDS. Another forthcoming (2007) special issue is that of the *Journal of Health Psychology* on health, illness and healthcare in Africa and the *International Journal of Psychology* has invited articles for a 2008 special section on culture and development in Africa to be guest edited by this writer.

### **PROSPECTS FOR AN AFRICAN CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY**

Not only does an Africentric psychology enhance understanding of African precepts and phenomena, but it can also expand our vision of what forms psychosocial differentiation may take in different ecologies and communities of *Afrique Noire*. Such a contribution may lead to novel theoretical caveats and fresh methodological approaches and analytic techniques.

#### ***Elements of Africentrism that could extend psychological science***

Bruner (1996) coined the concepts ethnopsychology and ethnopedagogy to explain that every culture evolves a worldview within which it organizes children's learning. Holism is intrinsic to

the African theory of the universe. It fuses together apparently disparate facets of the universe into a coherent frame of reference that highlights the fate of the human being (Nsamenang, 1992), not in his or her sovereignty but in personal integration into a community of other humans. It is a worldview that primes meaning of life, individuation and self-understanding primarily from socio-affective premises. The developmental processes of self-definition connect personal identity to sense of community. Accordingly the African child individuates by being interconnected to others and ‘transforms’ en route to adulthood through responsible participation in real family tasks and interstimulation within the peer culture. That is, Africans individuate through connectedness but retain their individuality, which has not been researched. So far, collectivism research has focused mainly on communitarian values therein bypassing the individuality of Africans.

An African theory of the universe acknowledges everyone’s humanity and imputes a divine element and reverence on the spirituality of every human being. Its vision of human ontogenesis transcends that of developmental science which invokes an unarticulated human lifecycle. The African worldview posits three phases of the human lifecycle, namely, social selfhood or the existential self and the metaphysical phases of spiritual selfhood and ancestral selfhood. Even a cursory glimpse at the intentions and significance of funeral rites and the memorabilia people in all cultures hold of “their *loving dead*” (Nsamenang, 2006c, p. 295) decades, even centuries, after their death substantiates the universality of the metaphysical phases of human personhood, which scientific psychology excludes from its focal content.

Within the experiential or social selfhood, the forte of scientific psychology, African social ontogeny charts seven ontogenetic stages. Adding the two metaphysical phases to them gives a total of nine distinctive periods of the human lifecycle (see Nsamenang, 1992, 2005b). The

seminal concept of Africentric developmental thinking is ‘sociogenesis,’ which does not discount biology but incorporates it by tacitly implicating genotype as underwriting social ontogenesis. African ethnotheories represent development in garden metaphors of *seed* and *plant* (Erny, 1968; Nsamenang, 1992) to underscore an innate potential for self-generated learning, which can be enhanced through processes of ‘cultivation’, nurturing, socialization and education.

Human development does not occur in a void but in a sociological garden in which members of mixed abilities and demographic cohorts share roles in “tending” children and performing family duties. The functional principle is active participation not instruction. Children’s developmental learning is woven into the fabric of family routines, cultural institutions and practices, language, and social interactions, instead of into instructed or didactic processes. Core learnings are achieved without “the usual sense of classrooms and schools” (Bruner, 1996, p. ix). Of course, participatory learning is liable to abuse. In its indigenous version it is not exploitative child labor but an African mode of social integration and responsibility training that fits into Piaget’s (1952) theory of interactional-extractive learning. It deserves enhancement and incorporation into the school curriculum rather than replacement, such that more competent African children, like the Maya children, can mentor and ‘tutor’ their peers (Maynard, 2002). We feel the urge to juxtapose Africa’s sense of responsibility training to the concern “whether in Britain too little is expected of children, their activities being restricted almost entirely to play” (Ellis, 1978, p. 50)

By virtue of their Eurocentric education, lifestyles and intensifying acculturation, most African children and psychologists are exposed to a multiculturalism, which confers on them broader views on and tolerance of human diversity. In addition, sibling caretaking, paradoxical academic achievement and “cognitive tolerance” (Carr & MacLachlan, 1994) of otherwise

contradictory values and role demands are phenomena which are rarely reported in Western cultures. But Africans are at peace with the principles and values of Christian and indigenous religions as well as the practices of ethnomedicine and biomedicine. These and other phenomena confer multicultural cognitive repertoires on Africans, which could extend the frontiers of the discipline if properly exploited.

Contemporary Africa is heir to a triple inheritance (Mazrui, 1986) of Eastern and Western legacies living together, like strands in a braid, with deep-seated African social thought and battered but undying traditions. This existential hybridism can edify innovative theorizing and creative scholarship, but they instead tend to be vilified as simple and bypassed as absurd and primitive. In fact, Western psychology has devalued indigenous cultures and traditions so much that they are now regarded as being anti-progressive and somewhat outdated (Callaghan, 1998). As such, the overlay of indigenous and imported images in the African psyche has been little contemplated or theorized about. No existing theory fittingly explains it (Nsamenang, 2005a).

### **CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS**

Africa's marginality in psychology is obvious although its potential to enrich and extend the discipline is great. The limited capacity is not only in resources and supportive environment, but more so in a lack of a critical mass of culturally informed and sensitive scholars to adroitly move forward an Africentric psychology project. Kashoki (1982) substantiates that despite a huge and growing number of Africans with impressive academic and research credentials, "indigenous scholarship of a kind to be considered truly original remains sporadic, in relative short supply, and essentially imitative of, or largely patterned after, contributions by Western scholars" (p. 35). The difficulty to evolve an appropriate psychology and contribute to disciplinary development is

exacerbated by a contemporary hybrid cultural character, which does not exactly fit Africa into any antecedent evolutionary template. The complexity betrays the simple-minded models and solutions that are applied to it, hence the misunderstanding and unrequited development in *Afrique Noire*. Faced with a science that is not sufficiently sensitive to their stark realities, dissatisfied but voiceless Africans have had to cope with their exasperation (Murayama, 1997).

Humanity deserves a unified science to which Africa's contribution could be a sociogenic lifecycle theory and the social ethos and cognition repertoire it exudes. The laudable efforts on evolving international psychology (Stevens & Gielen, 2006) can learn from the humanistic psychology which the "political importance and humanity" of an iconic Nelson Mandela inspires (Bartlett & Seakhoa, 2006). Questions lurk whether the endeavors in international psychology are geared towards a psychology that is inclusive of human diversity. To what extent are the efforts transcending proclivities to subordinate non-Western psychologies to Western scientific psychology? Western indigenous psychologies exist but why are they muted? Is there a post-modern project to evolve human psychology, inclusively conceived and taught?

It is but obvious that the ideological moorings, conceptual models and procedural modalities for developing such a psychology are not yet available. The author (Nsamenang, in press) ponders in what image and within which ideological positioning these crucial issues will or should take shape. Will the efforts to evolve an inclusive and dignifying psychology of human diversity engage all voices and alternative discourses? What procedural frameworks will be developed to understand all cultures as they "vary in the salience attached to certain skills, in the combination of basic cognitive processes that are called upon in any given context or in the order in which specific skills are acquired" (Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1999, p. 94)?

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