

Race, Nation, Class

Ambiguous Identities



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Social Conflict in Post-Independence Black Africa: The Concepts of Race and Status-Group Reconsidered

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The Theoretical Confusion

Everyone 'knows' that something called 'racial tensions' exists in South Africa, in the United States, in Great Britain. Some people think it exists in parts of Latin America, in the Caribbean, in various countries of south and southeast Asia. But is there such a thing as 'racial tension' to be found in the independent states of Black Africa? Conversely, everyone 'knows' that 'tribalism' exists in Black Africa. Is 'tribalism' a phenomenon only of Africa or is it also known in industrialized, capitalist states?

The problem arises from some conceptual difficulties. The categories of social strata or social groupings in everyday scientific use are many, overlapping and unclear. One can find such terms as class, caste, nationality, citizenship, ethnic group, tribe, religion, party, generation, estate and race. There are no standard definitions – quite the contrary. Few authors even try to put the terms into relation with each other.

One famous attempt was that of Max Weber who distinguished three basic categories: class, status-group [*Stand*], and party (see Weber, 1968, pp. 302–7, 385–98, 926–40). One trouble with Weber's categorization is that it is not logically rigorous, but is in many ways constructed out of examples. And he draws these examples largely from nineteenth-century Europe, the European Middle Ages and Classical Antiquity. Fair enough for Weber, but for those who deal with the empirical reality of the twentieth-century non-European world, it may be difficult to find an appropriate reflection in Weber's distinctions. Weber defines class

more or less in the Marxist tradition, as a group of persons who relate in similar ways to the economic system. He defines party as a group who are associated together within a corporate group to affect the allocation and exercise of power. Status group, however, is in many ways a residual category. There seem to be positive criteria, to be sure. Status groups are primordial¹ groups into which persons are born, fictitious families presumably tied together by loyalties which are not based on calculated goal-orientated associations, groups encrusted with traditional privileges or lack of them, groups which share honour, prestige rank and, above all, style of life (often including a common occupation) but which do not necessarily share a common income level or class membership.²

Does not the nation, the nation towards which we have 'nationalist' sentiments, fit this definition very closely? It would seem so. Yet it is not national affiliation which is usually first thought of when use is made of the concept of status group. Weber's concept was inspired primarily by medieval estates, a category of rather limited applicability to contemporary Africa. Much of the literature of modern Africa, rather, talks of a 'tribe' and/or 'ethnic group'. Most writers would take 'ethnic group' as the most meaningful empirical referent of status group, and there is no doubt it fits the spirit of Weber's concept. The term *race* is often used, though its relation, in the spirit of most authors, to status group is left implicit. *Race* is used in studies of Africa primarily with reference to conflicts between White persons of European descent and Black persons indigenous to the continent (a third category in some areas being persons coming from or descended from immigrants from the Indian subcontinent). But the term is seldom used to distinguish varieties among the indigenous Black population.

Are *race* and *ethnic group* then two different phenomena, or two variations of the same theme? Given the terminological confusion,³ it might be best to describe first the empirical reality and see what might follow theoretically rather than to lay out in advance a theoretical framework within which to explain the empirical reality.

The Empirical Data: How Many Kinds of Status-Groups?

Pre-colonial Africa included many societies that were complex and hierarchical. No one has ever estimated what percentage of Africa's land area or population was in such groups, as opposed to segmentary societies, but surely at least two-thirds of it was. Some of these states had 'estates' – that is, categories of people with hereditary status: nobles, commoners, artisans, slaves, etc. Some of these states had 'ethnic groups' – categories of people with separate designations indicating

presumed separate ancestry. These were usually the outcome of conquest situations.⁴ Many states had, in addition, a recognized category of 'non-citizens' or 'strangers' (see Skinner, 1963). Finally, even the non-hierarchical societies usually had a division of persons according to some specified principle of classification which created a fictitious descent group, often called a 'clan' by anthropologists, or according to generation, that is, an 'age set'.⁵

The establishment of colonial rule changed none of these categorizations immediately. It did, however, impose at least one new one – that of colonial nationality, which was double or even triple (for example, Nigerian, British West African, British imperial).

In addition, in many instances, religious categories took on a new salience under colonial rule. Christians emerged as a significant subgroup, both within the 'tribe'⁶ and within the 'territory'.⁷ Although Islam predates European colonial rule almost everywhere, it is probable that Moslems became in many areas a more self-conscious category in counterpoise to Christians. The sudden spread of Islam in some areas seems to indicate this (see Hodgkin, 1962; also Froelich, 1962, ch. 3). And everywhere, new 'ethnic groups' came into existence.⁸ Finally, *race* was a primary category of the colonial world, accounting for political rights, occupational allocation and income.⁹

The rise of the nationalist movements and the coming of independence created still more categories. Territorial identification – that is, nationalism – became widespread and important. Along with such territorial identification came a new devotion to ethnic identification, often called tribalism. As Elizabeth Colson (1967, p. 205) said:

Probably many youths found their explicit allegiance to particular ethnic traditions at the same time that they made their commitment to African independence ... in Africa it has been the school man, the intellectual, who has been most eager to advance his own language and culture and who has seen himself as vulnerable to any advantages given to the language and culture of any other groups within the country.

The economic dilemmas of the educated classes in the post-Independence era exacerbated this tendency to 'tribalism' (see Wallerstein, 1971). Finally, nationalism also involved Pan-Africanism. That is, there came to be a category of 'Africans' corresponding to its opposite, the 'Europeans'. At first, this dichotomy seemed to correlate with skin colour. In 1958, however, Africa as a concept began to include, for many, northern (Arab) Africa (but still did not include White settlers in North, East or southern Africa).¹⁰

Independence also intruded one other significant variable: a rather



Several factors in addition to tribal insularity reinforce the division of Africa's indigenous population into subgroups. A continuous imaginary line drawn through Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Sudan indicates for the Sudanic belt a general dividing point. Peoples to the north of the line are lighter skinned, Arabized, and Moslem; peoples to the south are generally darker skinned and Christian/animist. A similar line, running from the West Coast into Central Africa through the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Dahomey, Nigeria, Cameroon and the Central African Republic, indicates the same sort of division: peoples to the north and south of the line tend toward the opposite in mode of life, culture-family, religion and education.

rigid juridical definition of first-class membership in the larger moral community, that of citizenship. The lines drawn by this concept were different not only from those of pre-colonial Africa but also from those of the colonial era. During the colonial era, for example, a Nigerian could vote in a Gold Coast election, if he had transferred residence, since both territories were part of British West Africa, and the individual was a British subject. After Independence, however, although colonial era federal administrative units often survived as units of national aspiration, membership in them no longer conferred rights of equal participation in each territorial subunit, now a sovereign nation-state, as many a politician and civil servant came to learn in the early post-Independence years.

It is clear from even the briefest glance at the literature that there is no independent country in Africa in which the indigenous population is not divided into subgroups which emerge as significant elements in the political divisions of the country. That is to say, 'tribal' or ethnic affiliations are linked to political groupings or factions or positions, are often linked to occupational categories, and are surely linked to job allocation. When foreign journalists comment on this, African politicians often deny the truth of such analysis. Such denials, however, as well as the contradictory assertions by outside observers, serve ideological rather than analytic ends. Thus, there are a long list of well-known ethno-political rivalries in African states (for example, Kikuyu versus Luo in Kenya; Bemba versus Lozi in Zambia; Sab versus Samaale in Somalia). In each of these cases, often despite presumed efforts of the government or a nationalist political movement to prevent it, individuals have been aligned and/or mobilized on 'tribal' lines for political ends (cf. Rothschild, 1969; Rotberg, 1967; Lewis, 1958).

In some countries, these so-called tribal divisions have been reinforced by some additional factors. In Ethiopia, for example, the divisions between the Amhara or Amhara-Tigre and the Eritreans coincides more or less with a religious division between Christians and Moslems, of which the participants are fully conscious, all the more since such a conflict has a long historical tradition behind it (see Jesman, 1963).

Along the West African coast and into central Africa, there are seven contiguous states (the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Dahomey, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Central African Republic) through which a continuous horizontal line could be drawn. The peoples to the north and south of this line tend to be opposite in a series of features: savannah versus forest in soil conditions and corresponding large culture-family; Moslem/animist versus Christian/animist in religion; less modern education versus more modern education (largely the result of more

Christian missionaries in the southern halves during the colonial era (see Milcent, 1967; also Schwartz, 1968). A similar line might be drawn in Uganda between the non-Bantu, less educated north and the Bantu, more educated (and more Christianized) south (see Hopkins, 1967; also Edel, 1965).

Further to the north, in the so-called Sudanic belt, an analogous line might be drawn through Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Sudan. In the north of Mauritania, Chad and Sudan, the people are lighter skinned, Arabized and Moslem. To the south, they are darker skinned and Christian/animist. In Mali and Niger, however, those to the south are Moslem, as well. In all these states except the Sudan, those to the north are more likely to be nomadic and less educated. In Mauritania and the Sudan, those to the north are in the majority and in power. In Mali, Niger and Chad, the reverse is true (see Watson, 1963; Paques, 1967; Shepherd, 1966). Because these cultural distinctions in the Sudanic belt countries correlate with skin-colour differences, these divisions are sometimes spoken of as 'racial'.

There is a further group of countries interesting to note. These are states which existed as political entities in pre-colonial times and have survived as such through the colonial and post-Independence era, and in which there were clear pre-colonial 'tribal' stratifications. These are Zanzibar (Arabs and Afro-Shirazis), Rwanda (Tutsi and Hutu), Burundi (Tutsi and Hutu), Madagascar (Merina and others). In all these cases (except Burundi) the pre-colonial majoritarian lower stratum has now achieved political top status (see Lofchie, 1963; Kuper, 1970; Ziegler, 1967; Kent, 1962). Where similar pre-colonial stratification systems existed within larger colonial and post-colonial units, the political outcome has been far more ambiguous (Fulani sultanates in Nigeria and Cameroon, Hima kingdoms in Uganda and Tanganyika).

Since self-rule and Independence, there have been a large number of 'repatriations' of Africans to their 'home' countries. Empires are notoriously liberal in the movement of peoples. It serves the purpose of optimal utilization of personnel. Nation-states, on the other hand, are trying precisely to demonstrate that privileges accrue to the status of citizen.

The first group to feel this pressure were politicians. As independence approached, the category of French West African or British East African tended to disappear. Malians who had made their political career in Upper Volta, or Ugandans who had made theirs in Kenya, found it prudent to go back to their home base. In addition to these discrete recognitions of a new political reality, there were the public and semi-public expulsions of large categories of persons: Dahomeans (and Togolese) from the Ivory Coast, Niger and elsewhere; Nigerians and

Togolese from Ghana; Malians from Zaïre. In each of these cases, those expelled had occupied positions in the money economy at a time of growing unemployment. The groups in question found themselves suddenly defined as non-nationals rather than as Africans. This was *a fortiori* true of categories of non-Africans, even where they had in some cases taken out formal citizenship: Arabs in Zanzibar, Asians in Kenya, sporadic expulsions of Lebanese in Ghana. Thus far, no major wholesale expulsion of Europeans has taken place in Black Africa, although there was an exodus of Belgians from Zaïre at one point.

This rapid sketch of the African scene is meant to underline one point: there is no useful distinction among the presumed varieties of status groups, such as ethnic groups, religious groups, races, castes. They are all variations of a single theme: grouping people by an affinity that mythically predates the current economic and political scene and which is a claim to a solidarity overriding those defined in class or ideological terms. As such, they appear, as Akiwowo (1964, p. 162) says of tribalism, as 'a set of patterned responses, adaptive adjustments if you will, to the unanticipated consequences of the processes of nation-building'. Or, in the more blunt words of Skinner (1967, p. 173), their central function is 'to permit people to organize into social, cultural or political entities able to compete with others for whatever goods and service [are] viewed as valuable in their environment'.

In so far as this function is inherent in the concept, then by definition status groups cannot exist prior to some larger society of which they are a part, even when groups claim to be organized or to exist in more than one societal system.¹¹ What Fried (1967, p. 15) states cautiously of 'tribes' is true of all status-groups:

Most tribes seem to be secondary phenomena in a very specific sense: they may well be the product of processes stimulated by the appearance of relatively highly organized societies amidst other societies which are organized much more simply. If this can be demonstrated, tribalism can be viewed as a reaction to the creation of complex political structure rather than as a necessary preliminary stage in its evolution.

In the modern world situation, a status-group is a collective claim to power and allocation of goods and services within a nation-state on grounds that are formally illegitimate.

The Relationship of Class and Status-Group

How then do such claims stand in relation to the claims of class solidarity? Marx, in using the concept of class, distinguished between classes

an sich and *für sich*. Weber (1968, p. 930) repeated this distinction when he said: 'Thus every class may be the carrier of any one of the innumerable possible forms of class action, but this is not necessarily so. In any case, a class does not in itself constitute a group (*Gemeinschaft*).'

Why is it that classes are not always *für sich*? Indeed, why is it they are so seldom *für sich*? Or to put the question another way: how do we explain that status-group consciousness is so pervasive and powerful a political force in Africa and throughout the world, today and throughout history? To answer that it is false consciousness is simply to push the question one step logically back, for then we should have to ask how it is that most people most of the time exhibit false consciousness.

Weber (1968, p. 938) has a theory to account for this. He states:

As to the general economic conditions making for the predominance of stratification by status, only the following can be said. When the bases of the acquisition and distribution of goods are relatively stable, stratification by status is favored. Every technological repercussion and economic transformation threatens stratification by status and pushes the class situation into the foreground. Epochs and countries in which the naked class situation is of predominant significance are regularly the periods of technical and economic transformations. And every slowing down of the change in economic stratification leads, in due course, to the growth of status structure and makes for a resuscitation of the important role of social honor.

Weber's explanation seems very simple and makes class consciousness the correlate of progress and social change, stratification by status the expression of retrograde forces – a sort of vulgar Marxism. While one may agree with the moral thrust of the theorem, it is not very predictive of the smaller shifts in historical reality nor does it explain why one can find modern economic thrusts in status-group garb (see Favret, 1967), as well as mechanisms of the preservation of traditional privilege in class consciousness (see Geertz, 1967).

Favret (1967, p. 73) gives us a clue in her discussion of a Berber rebellion in Algeria:

[In Algeria] primordial groups do not exist substantively, unaware of their archaism, but reactively. The anthropologist tempted by collecting traditional political phenomena is in danger therefore of a colossal misunderstanding in interpreting them naively, for their context is today inverted. The choice for the descendants of the segmentary tribes of the nineteenth century is no longer among ends – to co-operate with the central government or to institutionalize dissidence – for only the former choice is henceforth possible. The choice – or the fate – of the peasants of the underdeveloped agricultural sector is in the means of attaining this end; among which, paradoxically, is dissidence.

Favret pushes us to look at claims based on status-group affiliation not in the intellectual terms of the actors in the situation, but in terms of the actual functions such claims perform in the social system. Moerman makes a similar appeal in an analysis of the Lue, a tribe in Thailand, about whom he asks three trenchant questions: What are the Lue? Why are the Lue? When are the Lue? He concludes (1967, p. 167):

Ethnic identification devices – with their important potential of making each ethnic set of living persons a joint enterprise with countless generations of unexamined history – seem to be universal. Social scientists should therefore describe and analyse the ways in which they are used, and not merely – as natives do – use them as explanations... It is quite possible that ethnic categories are rarely appropriate subjects for the interesting human predicates.

Perhaps then we could reconceive the Weberian trinity of class, status-group and party not as three different and cross-cutting groups but as three different existential forms of the same essential reality. In which case, the question shifts from Weber's one of the conditions under which stratification by status takes precedence over class consciousness to the conditions under which a stratum embodies itself as a class, as a status-group or as a party. For such a conceptualization, it would not be necessary to argue that the boundary lines of the group in its successive embodiments would be identical – quite the contrary, or there would be no function to having different outer clothing – but rather that there exist a limited set of groups in any social structure at any given time in relation to, in conflict with, each other.

One approach, suggested by Rodolfo Stavenhagen, is to see status-groups as 'fossils' of social classes. He argues (1962, pp. 99–101) that:

Stratifications [i.e., status-groups] represent, in the majority of cases, what we call social *fixations*, frequently by juridical means, certainly subjectively, of specific social relations of production, represented by class relations. Into these social *fixations* intrude other secondary, accessory factors (for example, religious, ethnic) which reinforce the stratification and which have, at the same time, the function of 'liberating' it of its links with its economic base; in other words, of maintaining its strength even if its economic base changes. Consequently, stratifications can be thought of as justifications or rationalizations of the established economic system, that is to say, as ideologies. Like all phenomena of the social superstructure, stratification has a quality of inertia which maintains it even when the conditions which gave it birth have changed. As the relations between classes are modified ... stratifications turn themselves into *fossils* of the class relations on which they were originally based... [Furthermore], it seems that the two types of groupings (dominant class and higher stratum) can coexist for some time and be encrusted in the social structure, according to the particular historical circumstances. But sooner or

later a new stratification system arises which corresponds more exactly to the current class system.

In a later analysis, using Central American data, Stavenhagen spells out how, in a colonial situation, two caste-like lower status-groups (in that case, *indios* and *ladinos*) could emerge, become encrusted, and survive the various pressures at what he called class clarification. He argues that two forms of dependence (a colonial form, based on ethnic discrimination and political subordination) and a class form (based on work relations) grew up side by side and reflected a parallel ranking system. After Independence, and despite economic development, the dichotomy between *indios* and *ladinos*, 'profoundly ensconced in the values of the members of society', remained as 'an essentially conservative force' in the social structure. 'Reflecting a situation of the past ... [this dichotomy] acts as a constraint on the development of the new class relations' (1963, p. 94). In this version, present stratification is still a fossil of the past, but it is not so simply a fossil of class relations *per se*.

Another approach would be to see class or status affiliation as options open to various members of the society. This is the approach of Peter Carstens. In two recent papers, one by Carstens (1970) and one by Allen (1970), there is agreement that Africans working on the land in the rural areas should be thought of as 'peasants' who are members of the 'working class', that is, who sell their labour-power even when they are technically self-employed cash-crop farmers. But while Allen is concerned with emphasizing the pattern of tied alternation between cash-crop farming and wage-earning,¹² Carstens is more concerned with explaining the status-group apparatus of peasant class organization, or what he calls 'peasant status systems'.

Carstens (1970, p. 9) starts with the argument that 'the retention or revival of tenuous tribal loyalties are resources available to persons to establish prestige or esteem'. He reminds us (1970, p. 10) that 'the same institutions that effected the hidden force that produced a peasant *class*, also created peasant *status* systems. For example ... the surest way to achieve recognition, prestige, and esteem in the eyes of the ruling class as well as from the local peasants is to participate in the externally imposed educational and religious institutions.' It therefore follows that 'it is only by the manipulation of their internal status systems that they are able to gain access to other status systems which are located in the higher class. The strategy of status manipulation is best seen then as a means for crossing class boundaries' (1970, p. 8).

The strength of stratification by status can be seen in this light. Status honour is not only a mechanism for the achievers of yore to maintain their advantages in the contemporary market, the retrograde force

described by Weber; it is also the mechanism whereby the upward strivers obtain their ends within the system (hence the correlation of high ethnic consciousness and education, to which Colson called attention). With support from two such important groups, the ideological primacy of status-group is easy to understand. It takes an unusual organizational situation to break through this combination of elements interested in preserving this veil (or this reality – it makes no difference).

Weber was wrong. Class consciousness does not come to the fore when technological change or social transformation is occurring. All modern history gives this the lie. Class consciousness only comes to the fore in a far rarer circumstance, in a 'revolutionary' situation, of which class consciousness is both the ideological expression and the ideological pillar. In this sense, the basic Marxian conceptual instinct was correct.

The African Data Reanalysed

Let us now return to the empirical reality of contemporary independent Africa in the light of this theoretical excursus. Independent Black Africa is today composed of a series of nation-states, members of the United Nations, almost none of which can be considered a national society, in the sense of having a relatively autonomous and centralized polity, economy and culture. All these states are part of the world-social-system, and most are all well integrated into particular imperial economic networks. Their economic outlines are basically similar. The majority of the population works on the land, producing both crops for a world market and food for their subsistence. Most are workers, either in the sense of receiving wages from the owner of the land or in the sense of being self-employed in a situation in which they are obliged to earn cash (and see farming as an economic alternative to other kinds of wage employment). There are others who work as labourers in urban areas, often as part of a pattern of circulatory migration.

In each country, working for the most part for the government, there is a bureaucratic class which is educated and seeking to transform some of their wealth into property. In every case, there are certain groups (one of several) who are disproportionately represented in the bureaucratic class, as there are other groups disproportionately represented among urban labourers. Almost everywhere there is a group of Whites holding high status and filling technical positions. Their prestige rank has scarcely changed since colonial rule. The local high rank of Whites reflects the position of these countries in the world-economic-system where they are 'proletarian' nations, suffering the effects of 'unequal exchange'.¹³

The degree of political autonomy represented by formal sovereignty enabled the local elites or elite groups to seek their upward mobility in the world-system by a rapid expansion of the educational system of their countries. What is individually functional in terms of the world-system is collectively dysfunctional. The workings of the world-system do not provide sufficient job outlets at the national level. This forces elite groups to find criteria by which to reward parts of themselves and to reject others. The particular lines of division are arbitrary and changeable in details. In some places, the division is along ethnic lines; in others, along religious; in others, along racial lines; in most, in some implicit combination of all these.

These status-group tensions are the inefficacious and self-defeating expression of class frustrations. They are the daily stuff of contemporary African politics and social life. The journalists, who are usually closer to popular perceptions than the social scientists, tend to call this phenomenon 'tribalism' when they write of Black Africa. Tribal, or ethnic, conflicts are very real things, as the civil wars in the Sudan and Nigeria attest most eloquently. They are ethnic conflicts in the sense that persons involved in these conflicts are commonly motivated by analyses which use ethnic (or comparable status-group) categories; furthermore, they usually exhibit strong ethnic loyalties. None the less, behind the ethnic 'reality' lies a class conflict, not very far from the surface. By this I mean the following straightforward and empirically testable proposition (not one, however, that has been definitively so tested): were the class differences that correlate (or coincide) with the status-group differences to disappear, as a result of changing social circumstances, the status-group conflicts would eventually disappear (no doubt to be replaced by others). The status-group loyalties are binding and affective, in a way that it seems difficult for class loyalties to be other than in moments of crisis, but they are also more transient from the perspective of the analyst. If the society were to become ethnically 'integrated', class antagonisms would not abate; the opposite is true. One of the functions of the network of status-group affiliations is to conceal the realities of class differentials. To the extent, however, that particular class antagonisms or differentials abate or disappear, status-group antagonisms (if not differentials, but even differentials) also abate and disappear.

The Usefulness of the Concept of Race

In Black Africa, one speaks of 'ethnic' conflict. In the United States or in South Africa, one speaks of 'racial' conflict. Is there any point in having a special word, *race*, to describe status groupings that are the

most salient in some countries but not in others (like Black African states)? If we were to regard each national case as discrete and logically separate, there would not be, since stratification by status serves the same purpose in each.

But the national cases are not discrete and logically separate. They are part of a world-system. Status and prestige in the national system cannot be divorced from status and rank in the world-system, as we have already mentioned in discussing the role of expatriate White Europeans in Black Africa today. There are international status-groups as well as national ones. What we mean by race is essentially such an international status group. There is a basic division between Whites and non-Whites. (Of course, there are varieties of non-Whites, and the categorization differs according to time and place. One grouping is by skin colour but it is not in fact very prevalent. Another more common one is by continent, although the Arabs often lay claim to being counted separately.)

In terms of this international dichotomy, skin colour is irrelevant. 'White' and 'non-White' have very little to do with skin colour. 'What is a Black? And first of all, what colour is he?' asked Jean Genêt. When Africans deny, as most do deny, that the conflict between the lighter-skinned Arabs of northern Sudan and the dark-skinned Nilotes of southern Sudan is a racial conflict, they are not being hypocritical. They are reserving the term *race* for a particular international social tension. It is not that the conflict in the Sudan is not real and is not expressed in status-group terms. It is. But it is a conflict which, though formally similar to, is politically different from, that between Blacks and Whites in the United States, or Africans and Europeans in South Africa. The political difference lies in its meaning in and for the world-system.

Race is, in the contemporary world, the only international status-group category. It has replaced religion, which played that role since at least the eighth century AD. Rank in this system, rather than colour, determines membership in the status group. Thus, in Trinidad, there can be a 'Black Power' movement, directed against an all-Black government, on the grounds that this government functions as an ally of North American imperialism. Thus, Quebec separatists can call themselves the 'White Niggers' of North America. Thus, Pan-Africanism can include white-skinned Arabs of North Africa, but exclude white-skinned Afrikaners of South Africa. Thus, Cyprus and Yugoslavia can be invited to tricontinental conferences (Asia, Africa and Latin America) but Israel and Japan are excluded. As a status-group category, race is a blurred collective representation for an international class category, that of the proletarian nations. Racism, therefore, is simply the act of maintaining the existing international social structure, and is not a neologism for racial discrimination. It is not that they are separate phenomena.

Racism obviously utilizes discrimination as part of its armoury of tactics, a central weapon, to be sure. But there are many possible situations in which there can be racism without discrimination, in any immediate sense. Perhaps there can even be discrimination without racism, though this seems harder. What is important to see is that these concepts refer to actions at different levels of social organization: racism refers to action within the world arena; discrimination refers to actions within relatively small-scale social organizations.

Summary

In summary, my main point is that status-groups (as well as parties) are blurred collective representation of classes. The blurred (and hence incorrect) lines serve the interests of many different elements in most social situations. As social conflict becomes more acute, status-group lines approach class lines asymptotically, at which point we may see the phenomenon of 'class consciousness'. But the asymptote is never reached. Indeed, it is almost as though there were a magnetic field around the asymptote which pushed the approaching curve away. Race, finally, is a particular form of status-group in the contemporary world, the one which indicates rank in the world social system. In this sense, there are no racial tensions today within independent Black African states. One of the expressions of national identity, however, as it will be achieved, will be increasing international status-group consciousness, or racial identification, which would then only be overcome or surpassed as one approached the asymptote of international class consciousness.

Notes

1. To use the term added by Shils (cf. Shils, 1957, pp. 130–45). For Shils, primordial qualities are 'significant relational' ones, more than just a 'function of interaction'. Their significance (p. 142) is 'ineffable' (cf. Geertz, 1963).

2. Weber's (1968, p. 932) definition emphasizes honour:

In contrast to classes, *Stände* (status-groups) are normally groups. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined 'class situation', we wish to designate as *status situation* every typical component of the life of man that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*. . . .

Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status-group, and frequently they do with very tangible consequences. . . .

In content, status honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific *style of life* is expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle.

3. The French-language literature is even more confusing, since the French word *race* is used by many writers where English writers would use 'tribe'.

4. Jean Suret-Canale (1969, p. 112) argues that both phenomena derive from conquest situations, but that for some unexplained reason assimilation proceeds faster in some areas than in others:

As long as class antagonisms remained almost non-existent within a tribe ... no state superstructure emerged. ... Where class antagonisms developed with the extension of slavery and the creation of a tribal aristocracy, various kinds of states ... emerged. ...

When the creation of these states involved the domination and incorporation of other tribal groups, and the creation within the framework of the state of a new cultural and linguistic unity, the vestiges of tribal organization more or less disappeared ... for example, in Zululand. ... It could happen that the division into classes retained the appearance of a tribal conflict: this was the case in the monarchies of the interlacustrine zone of eastern Africa (Rwanda, Burundi, etc.) where the conquerors, the pastoral Tutsi, constituted the aristocracy, dominating the indigenous peasants, the Hutu.

5. See the excellent discussion of the social organization of such non-hierarchical societies in Horton (1971).

6. See Busia (1951). Busia describes in some detail the causes and consequences of a Christian-non-Christian split among the Ashanti.

7. Uganda is a prime case, where politics crystallized to some extent along a religious trichotomy: Protestants, Catholics and Moslems.

8. I have argued this in Wallerstein (1960).

9. This point is argued throughout the works of George Balandier and Frantz Fanon.

10. Why this came to be so, and what were the consequences of this non-skin-colour definition of 'African-ness', I have discussed in Wallerstein (1967).

11. Cf. Weber (1968, p. 939):

We should add one more general observation about classes, status-groups and parties: the fact that they presuppose a larger association, especially the framework of a polity, does not mean that they are confined to it. On the contrary, at all times it has been the order of the day that such association ... reaches beyond the state boundaries. ... But their aim is not necessarily the establishment of a new territorial dominion. In the main they aim to influence the existing polity.

Except, I should add, in so far as one considers loyalty to a nation-state in a world-system as an expression of status-group consciousness.

12. 'Wage-earners experience fluctuations in their living standards and employment whereas the peasant producers experience fluctuations in their living standards and the intensity of work. A depression in the living standards of wage-earners or in increase in unemployment, however, produces a movement of labour back to peasant production or is borne because the resources of peasant production exist as an insurance cover' (Allen, 1970). Cf. a similar argument made by Arrighi (1969). There is an English version under the title 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia' in Giovanni Arrighi and John S. Saul, *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa* (Monthly Review Press, New York 1973), pp. 180-234.

13. For an elaboration of the concept and an explanation of its social consequences, see Emanuel (1969).

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