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“Why ‘Africa’?”

This essay challenges our “thoughtless” use of “Africa” as the name of the “Motherland” from economic, historical, and psychological/neuroeconomic perspectives. Is this a key “sin” of omission that binds us?¹ Your patience is requested as we explore this topic methodically.

The scholarly works of economists are highly valued, in part, because of the methodologies they employ when exploring topics/issues. It is common for submissions in the economics literature to include summaries of historical literature that delineate developments back to the origin of the topic/issue at hand. Relatedly, a popular American religious figure has reminded us that it is only by going to the “root” of a problem that we can determine its true nature and identify methods for correcting the problem or eliminating the problem altogether.

In the case of White Supremacy and economic inequality, unfortunately, most analyses trace concerns back to the most recent penetration of Europeans into the “African” sphere. There is generally little-to-no mention of engagement between Europeans and “Africans” going back to ancient times. We believe that many current concerns could be eliminated or resolved if Europeans would simply exhibit truthful acknowledgement of the gifts of knowledge that they received from the “African” Continent and of their theft of that not freely given.² Europeans should also come to reject their denial that descendant People of the Continent carry in our “race consciousness” (epidemiologically) that original knowledge and the power to produce it and more today. We (“African” People) too are often guilty of this denial to our great disadvantage.

Note our use of double inverted commas around “Africa.” This is because, even in our youth, the Black Power movement taught that “‘Africa’ was not the ‘true’ name of the Motherland.” Foregoing an effort to chronicle the numerous explanations “out there” concerning the origin of the name “Africa,” what we all know is that “Africa” has **not** always been the name used by African People to identify the continent that includes their homelands. It is commonly believed that “Africa” was assigned by outsiders.

Now pause to consider a few potent adages (without related attributions): “A good names is as good as gold;” “words make people;” and “people often take on the character implicit in their name.”

¹ The only recent scholarly contribution on this topic identified in our search is from Jonathan Chimakonam and Uti Egbai (2021). “Is ‘Africa’ a racial slur and should the continent be renamed?” *African Identities*: December, pp. 293-306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2021.2017262> (Ret. 021925).

² For clarification and elaboration please view: Prof. Na’im Akbar (circa 2000), “Na’im Akbar at McClymonds High School Nomo Lectures;” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVhD92ftFAg> (Ret. 101224).

Also, we all know that conquerors and colonizers have a history of “claiming it” and then “naming it.” We discuss this topic in a recent, short essay: “[Name It and Claim It](#)” that considers the implications of doing so.

Finally, we consider the psychology or neuroeconomics of the intersection between the power of dominators to control the dominated and name assignment. We all know that a key trick employed by dominators is to ensure that the dominated remain oblivious to their domination and to be feverishly occupied with ephemeral feel good experiences, and with no interest in awakening to their reality. Dominators use overt and subliminal methods to achieve this objective. They are intended to keep the dominated in compliant acquiescence—a state of submission.

One of the most important dominator techniques is to cause the dominated to accept assigned names. The entire world knows that Africans comprehended this long ago. *Roots*, the famous television movie series that shook up the world when broadcasted during the 1970s, reminded us of this fact by including elongated scenes concerning Kunta Kinte’s refusal of the name “Toby” that was assigned by the slave master. Unfortunately, for Black Americans (but as expected from those who produced the movie and whose eternal intention is to dominate Black People of the world), because of the unconscionable violence inflicted upon him, Kunta Kinte ultimately conceded and accepted Toby. Such concessions create an entry point to the mind and control of it.

We now arrive at our primary concern. “Africans,” “Black People of the World,” and “Afrodescendants” have all acquiesced to “Africa” as the name of our revered homeland. But to accept “Africa” is to limit our power because the Africa that we know has been parameterized by ones who assigned the name. And even after we explore ancient “African” history and culture and come to comprehend the power of our antecedents “who discovered everything,” we diminish that power because embedded deeply in our consciousness is the wedding of our knowledge about that ancient world and knowledge about today’s nearly powerless “Africa”—a place named and shaped by those with one goal: To dominate us forever.

As already mentioned, knowing that the “true” name for the Continent is not “Africa,” and knowing that many nations on the Continent have recaptured their “true” historical names, we asked one of the Western World’s gods (the all-knowing, all-seeing, and ubiquitous entity Generative AI) the following question: “When did ‘African’ nations agree to accept ‘Africa’ as the name to identify the Continent.” The god’s [response](#) was that nations on the continent have not formally agreed to accept the name. Hence, we ask “African” nations: “Is this not a ‘sin’ of omission?”

Knowing all the foregoing we ask: “Why do the nations and People of the Continent permit their power to be diminished today and in the future by the negative impact of acceptance of ‘Africa’ as the name used to identify their womb, their birthplace, and their homeland?”

It is transparent that global change is occurring. Large and small nations alike are jockeying for power positions. The nations of “Africa” are rarely mentioned, let alone the Continent’s vast Diaspora population. Is it not time to begin releasing the power required to halt the destruction of our Earth home, “African” People, and “African” descendants by a People bent on dominating control, material wealth, and power over our world? Could rejection of the name “Africa” be an important starting point for releasing such power?