

AFS 2002 /SSA 4930: The African Experience

2020

Tuesdays, periods 6-7 (11:45pm - 2:45pm) and
Thursdays, period 6 (12:50pm - 1:40pm).

Classes start January 11th, 2021

Classes end April 21st, 2021

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**No test days/ break days Feb 25th &
March 24th**

Final Exam: 4/26/2021 @ 7:30 AM -

Dates for written Assignments

March 11th & April 1st

Course Description

This course presents an opportunity to discover the richness and diversity of a continent once called the Dark Continent. We will explore the places, politics, economies and cultures. The course approach will be highly interdisciplinary. We will discuss issues about the past, present and make projections into the future in such a way as to allow us understand better the socio-economic situation of the continent. An important theme of the course will be the diversity of Africa: with 55 recognized independent Nation-states, with close to about 2000 distinct languages (about 1/3 of all the languages spoken by humans today), and a wide variety of belief systems and religions, there will be a lot to learn. It will thus become obvious that generalization about Africa is tenuous. Yet at the same time, there are important commonalities in “the African experience” (the title of this course). These are rooted in some shared cultural norms, a largely shared history of European colonization, and similar positions in the global political and economic order since independence in the 1960s. This course will examine both the commonalities of the African experience, and its variations. What can we learn from the various challenges Africa as a continent faces.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should have:

☉Acquired an increased knowledge of the African realities,

- ☉ Become aware of the diversity of the African experiences,
- ☉ Acquired some basic knowledge of African geography, history, politics, religions, business and cultural practices,
- ☉ Grasped some of the complexity of African contemporary challenges (socio-economic development, uneven patterns of trade and globalization,).

By the end of the course	Academic skills
<p>Thematic content</p> <p>By the end of the course, it is expected that you would have increased your knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diversity and history of African societies • The role of myths and stereotypes in shaping perceptions of Africa • The role Africans have played in global historical processes • African history from an African perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate, organize and analyze a range of source material from diverse perspectives • Develop original ideas about ‘solving’ (or articulating) one of the challenges Africa is facing presently using evidence gathered from articles or guest presenters. • Debate and discuss contemporary issues with your peers • Write effectively

Course Requirements

Your final evaluation is based on the following components (with correspondent points):

- ☉ Presence and participation.....(100points)
- ☉ Assignments.....(200points)
- ☉ Unannounced Quizzes(100 points)

- ⊗ Reaction Paper from readings-[20 points each] (300 points)
- ⊗ Country Reports *(based on countries of your choice)* (100 points)
- ⊗ Final Test..... (200 points)

Total points will be calculated, and the final grade will be assigned according to the table:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Total	93-	90-	87-	83-	80-	77-	73-	70-	67-	63-	60-	<60
Pts	100	92	89	86	82	79	76	72	69	66	62	

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

⊗ PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION: Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the start of each class—it is therefore important you arrive in class on time. I will take points off for each class absence, unless appropriate written justification is provided, or the absence is due to one of the “acceptable reasons” as per UF policies (see link below). Participation in class discussions is crucial, and you are expected to actively contribute to debates if you want to obtain full score in this component. Un-respectful class demeanor is not tolerated. (e.g. during the presence of Guest presenters, please accord them utmost respect).

You can visit this link for concerns about privacy during exams

<https://honorlock.com/studentprivacy/> Please, ensure that you have the Honorlock extension added to your Chrome browser prior to taking your exam(s). An error will likely come up if you use a non-supported browser (Firefox, Internet Explorer, etc.).

“HyFlex/in-person students are required to abide by UF guidelines posted at <https://coronavirus.ufl.edu/forward-faculty-staff/forward-faculty-staff-health/> . When in class, students are required to wear a facemask and to practice social distancing at all times. They are also required to follow the indicated classroom seating arrangements. At the end of each class, in-person students are required to sanitize classroom objects they come into physical contact with. In-person students are expected to bring a laptop computer (or comparable device) to class so that they can join the zoom class session for discussion and group work. Food and drink are not permitted. Use of electronics must be limited to class-related activities.”

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. Both the Counseling Center and Student Mental Health provide confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal or lacking clear career and academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. The Counseling Center is located at 301 Peabody Hall (next to Criser Hall). Student Mental Health is located on the second floor of the Student Health Services in the Infirmary.

University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; www.counsel.ufl.edu
(Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)

Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, www.hsc.ufl.edu
(Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

Students with Disabilities Act

The Dean of Students Office coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes the registration of disabilities, academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faulty-student disability related issues. Dean of Students Office, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-7066, www.dso.ufl.edu.

Do you like courses with African content and you want to know more? Then learn about the many opportunities UF offers to increase your knowledge of Africa:

The Center for African Studies offers many courses with an African content. You can pick up a free booklet with details from 427 Grinter, and ask for more information.

Many stimulating opportunities exist, such as Semester and Summer Study Abroad Programs (including the prestigious Lombardi Program). For more info contact the CAS deputy director Todd Leedy (427 Grinter; email tleedy@africa.ufl.edu).

Do you want to meet your foreign language requirement in a different and exciting way? Learn one of several African languages taught by department of Languages, Literatures, & Cultures. For more information contact Dr C. Bwenge at cbwenge@africa.ufl.edu

Are you taking, or planning to take, other courses in African Studies? If so, you may qualify for a Minor in African Studies. Make sure you declare it: in the past, some students who qualified failed to declare it! Dr Leedy will be happy to help you make the process even easier: he will send the form for you!

ZOOM ETIQUETTE

Do not share your Zoom classroom link or password with others.

When attending a Zoom class or meeting:

- Arrive/Zoom in on time or a few minutes early if possible. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class session, and tardiness will be marked.
- Set up and mount the webcam video at the level of your eyes to show your full face. If you are using a laptop, you may need to place a book or two under it. Test the audio of your webcam. *For any technical difficulties, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk (352-392-4357).*
<https://elearning.ufl.edu/media/elearningufledu/zoom/How-to-Join-a-Meeting.pdf>
- During class session, set yourself on mute unless you want to speak or you are called upon.
- If you want to speak, you can raise your hand (click the “raise hand” button at the center bottom of your screen) and wait to be called upon.
- Your webcam must remain on throughout the class hour.
- When you are assigned to a breakout room, enable your webcam and microphone so that your partners may hear and see who they are working with.
- Dress appropriately for class. Even though you may be alone at home your professor and classmates can see you.
- Find a quiet indoor space with stable internet connection to attend class. The study space does not need to be a separate room; a chair and desk/table set for school work in a quiet corner should be sufficient. The space should be conducive to work, including pair/group work. Make sure you are uninterrupted by other household members, including pets.
- Your professor and classmates can also see what is behind you, so be aware of your surroundings. Make sure the background is not distracting or something you would not want your classmates to see. You may use a virtual background if your device supports this feature. Be sure to avoid using backgrounds that may contain offensive images and language.
- Refrain from eating during the class hour, as you would in a face-to-face course.
- Follow the same rules of respectful interaction as you would in a face-to-face course. This is especially important in a remote situation, where multiple voices attempting to speak at once result in no one being heard.
- Alert your instructor as soon as possible if you experience technical difficulties. A “chat” can be sent at any moment during a Zoom session if, for example, you find that your webcam or microphone are not functioning properly.
- Relax and enjoy class! Remote learning presents some challenges but many rewards as well.

African Experience: More details & weekly breakdown of sessions.

This course will explore the continent from the perspective of time; we will look briefly at the past, present and make projections as to the future of Africa. This will be done according to themes such as geography of the continent, politics, culture (especially the creative industry) and economics. If time permits, we shall explore selected aspects of African spiritualities.

Most of the readings and audiovisual materials can be found online. Where not found, they will be sent to your email address.

Introduction: Discussion: What is Africa to you? Which sources do you rely for information about the African continent? What does Africa mean to others?

Week 1(Tuesday 12th). Setting the tone: Know your Africa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBJbZBW7Cic>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmBdYnQQV3E>

There is also an alternative site for data: *Afrobarometer* is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Six rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2015, and findings from Round 7 surveys (2016-2018) are currently being released.

Tuesday: <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/africa-political-map.htm>

East Africa

West Africa

North Africa

Central Africa

Day 1: We will look at the map of the countries on the continent with this background in mind “The knowledge that someone reading a map derives from the physical map takes shape in his head as a ‘mental map’. Functionally, the process of encoding and decoding information through a map may be little different from that of encoding and decoding information through a newspaper.”

Week 1 (**Thursday January 14th**). Topic: Understanding the geographical layout of the continent of Africa. Commonalities and differences.

Reading: Myths and Stereotypes Read the article carefully and come with questions Binyavanga Wainana’s- “How to Write About Africa” — www.granta.com/Magazine/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1

Data about Africa from an inter-governmental perspective can be found from the link below.

https://www.afdb.org/en/knowledge/statistics/africa-information-highway-aih?fbclid=IwAR2oXcPGD973GAfdV5gl7I_v13XPkqrlARlb80VBWuFsjsx439q96sY6_DQI

“There’s a great deal of comfort to be had in the idea that success at university is primarily or exclusively the result of a student’s hard work. All that’s needed is for students to do their best and fairness will prevail. Students who don’t apply themselves will fail. End of story.”

Week 2 (Tuesday, January 19th): What are challenges/problems?

Setting the tone: <https://prezi.com/n4bzt2ksofzc/the-historical-context-by-thomas-otoole/>

Topic: What are the challenges facing Africa as a continent and what challenges did Africa face in the past (see the link above)

Reading: Introduction. *Understanding Contemporary Africa*. Edited by A. A. Gordon and D. L. Gordon. London, Lynne Rienner Publishers (pp. 1-7). **What are the main points in this reading?**

Audio visual: (1). Basil Davidson (1984), *Different but Equal*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X75COneJ4w8>

(**Thursday 21st**). Topic: Understanding how an African analyses the continent.

Audiovisual: *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* by Ali Mazurai (1986).

There will be a mini-film festival (Voyages across Borders) from January 22nd to 24th. It will be streamed from an online platform. Check www.franceflorida.clas.ufl.edu (Upcoming events)

Week 3 (February 2nd) : Topic: Exploring colonialism

Optional audiovisual : <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/maasai-living-cultures>

Decolonizing cultural spaces: The case of the Maasai

Introductory audiovisual: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueoDL9JOQNY> (Special edition: How the legacy of European colonialism is shaping Africa's future, 16 minutes)

Questions for discussion: What was Africa like before colonialism? What is colonialism? What is neo-colonialism? Why are students calling for de-colonialism? What is African Traditional religion?

Reading: Kumsa, A. (2013) The conflict between the Ethiopian state and the Oromo people. https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/bitstream/10071/7579/1/Kumsa_Alemayehu_ECAS_2013.pdf

Audio visual: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-FG2oWl-2k> Black before Columbus Came: The African Discovery of America | Odd Salon DISCOVERY 5/7

Thursday, (February 4th). Pre/post Independent Africa-what was the nature of Africa's political independence (especially those who had to wage wars for their freedom.)

Reading: *Review of African Political Economy* Vol. 22, No. 65, ROAPE Review of Books (Sep., 1995), pp. 301-320 (20 pages)

Week 4 (Tuesday February 9). Sharing your findings from Internet research about the various countries of your interest

Topic: The languages spoken on the continent: The language map (2 periods)

Audiovisual: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qJuVWpT6CU> (10 mins)

The Amazing Languages of Africa - sounds, grammar and writing systems of African languages

Audiovisual 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39Wlq_DF-20 (19 minutes).

Reading: Dimmendaal, G. J. (2008). Language Ecology and Linguistic Diversity on the African Continent (the pdf file will be sent to you by email or you can download it yourself)

In-Class assignment: The language game-We will look for names of celebrities and try to find out the language they speak.

Thursday 11th : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NimJsEGGbDk> Top 10 languages spoken on the African continent. Why do some Japanese words sound familiar?

Making up a new language: <http://www.guosa-language-tv.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPJkv9qoIIw&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1Unveo0FakGOl1xjjEJBWVxR9Uwu8FyKhroCewfnoUwcd7sx0tygTDPHw>

Week 5 (February 16th).

Topic: Understanding the cultures of Africa (2 periods). What is culture?

Case study of Yoruba culture.

Marimba Ani (born **Dona Richards**) said "Your culture is your immune system." Once taken from you, you are helpless and vulnerable. This is why Africa's enemies are investing so much in destroying your immune system.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf7s2xuQ_Vw

<https://www.fieldmuseum.org/science/research/area/cultures-africa/cultures-africa-research>

Nussbaum, B. (2003). Ubuntu: Reflections of a South African on Our Common Humanity. Reflections. 4(4):21–26.

Thursday February 18 : Differences in processes & procedures of getting married, burials, naming ceremonies. (Today is Nigeria's 60th Independent Anniversary)

Guest presenter(s): To be announced

(Week 6 **February 23rd**). **Guest Presenter:** History of West Africa

Topic: Pan Africanism: The concept and proponents (page 22-The origin of Africa for Africans, traced to Nyasaland and South Africa)

Reading: Legum, Colin (1965) Pan-Africanism: A short Political Guide; Frederick A. Praeger Publishers

Copies will be provided

The Roots of Pan-Africanism (African personality & Negritude)

Discussion: What does Pan-Africanism mean to the scholars and what does it mean to you?

Thursday, February 25th:

Supplemental reading (17 pages): Okonkwo, Rina Mojola Agbebi : Apostle of The African Personality, Nouvelle série, No. 114 (2e TRIMESTRE 1980), pp. 144-159 (16 pages) Présence Africaine Editions

Class assignment: Mojola Agbebi Day (October 11 of every year). What do you like about this Bishop and how can he fit the world of *Black Lives Matter* of today.

Week 7 (March 2nd) . Learning about Africa through business: Starting Businesses in Africa: SWOT analysis

Reading: Khavul, S; Bruton, G. D.; Wood, E. (2009). Informal Family Business in Africa. Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 33 (6) (2009), pp. 1219-1238.

Exploring the business climate in Africa

Guest presenter: To be announced

Reading: John Luiz & Nceku Nyathi (June 2016). Tired of 'Emerging': It's Time for Africapitalism

<https://globalnetwork.io/perspectives/2016/06/tired-emerging-its-time-africapitalism>

Thursday March 4th : What is African Continental Free Trade Area about?

Week 8 (Tuesday **March 9th**). Reading for the session: Simplice A. Asongu and Odhiambo, N. M. (2019). Doing business on the African continent, Journal of African Business, Vol 20, Nos 1-4 (pp 259-268).

*"As a business model, utu-ubuntu acknowledges that all economic transactions are embedded in social relations. From this perspective, **the main purpose of doing business is to build and sustain the autonomous and self-regulating networks that one belongs to.** For example, traders and artisans in Nairobi share operational costs related to transport, security and space. They also share their knowledge through exchanging stories about their experiences."* (Mary Njeri Kinyanjui, 2019)

Guest presenter: Dr. Mary Njeri Kinyanjui (Video recording)

Thursday, March 11th : Guest presenter: Fiona Ngesa, Development Manager, Kenya Board of Tourism (video recording)

- **First written assignment is due March 11th (100points)**
- **Compare and contrast the video documentaries by Ali Mazuri & Basil Davidson**

Week 9 (Tuesday **March 16th**) . Sharing your findings from Internet research about the various countries of your interest

Topic: African creative expressions: Writers, filmmakers, musicians across the continent

Guest presenter: Professor Akin Adesokan (Video Recording)

Reading: A survey of African literature in institutions: African Literature is a country

https://africasacountry.com/2020/08/african-literature-is-a-country?fbclid=IwAR0iGMwxgpMYAk7v0cJ8KDz6jRboR_GNf6OTSn0prjOi38wfeINltqZ0AUQ

Thursday March 18th : Notable musicians/writers & performers on the continent:

Slide on music & geography

(Week 10 Tuesday, March **23rd**).

Topic: The future of Africa: Agenda 2063: What is it?

Reading: Towards a People-Driven African Union: Current Obstacles and New Opportunities (2012) & AU Agenda 2063

Ndizera, V. & Muzee, H. (2018). A critical review of Agenda 2063: Business as usual? *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 12(8):142-154

Thursday, March 25th : Guest Presenter from AU (Video Recording)

Assignment: (Doing business in Africa, what are scholars saying? Write an essay of at least two pages on starting a business of your own in a particular country in Africa.

Assignment number two is due April 1st

Week 11 (March 30th) . **Topic:** Exploring the media in Africa: Print, TV, & Blogs

Guest presenter: Ajong Mbapndah, Managing Editor, Pan African visions

Thursday, April 1st : Reviewing major news portals on the African continent.

Report on African Transformation... <http://africantransformation.org/2014/02/13/2014-african-transformation-index/>

Reading: Admire Mare, Hayes Mawindi Mabweazara & Dumusani Moyo (2019) "Fake News" and Cyber-Propaganda in Sub-Saharan Africa: Recentering the Research Agenda, *African Journalism Studies*, 40:4, 1-12, DOI: 10.1080/23743670.2020.1788295

Week 12 (April 6th). Topic: Women in Africa: Social Position, Policy and Change

Thursday, April, 1st (Sharing your findings from Internet research about the various countries of your interest

Reading for week 12: Boserup, E. (1985). Economic and demographic relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Population and Development Review* 11 (3): 383-97

Reading for week 13: Tomaselli, K. (2016). Research ethics in the Kalahari: issues, contradictions and concerns. *Critical Arts*, 30(6), 804-822.

Week 13 (**April 6th**) Topic: Doing research about Africa: Topics, tensions & triumphs

Introduction: Experiences in doing research on the continent. What are the challenges of doing research in a country you do not understand her language & culture? Why will you want to carry out research on the African continent? What are the differences

between extractive research and participatory action research techniques? Are all research activities apolitical?

Guest presenter: Dr. Irina Turner (Video Recording)

Ploughing the field of "fieldwork" - a critical reflection on research with examples from South Africa

In this class, we will – based on the text by Tomaselli (2016) – have a critical look on what it means to do "fieldwork in Africa". We will unsettle both notions of "fieldwork" and "Africa" and explore how in this newly gained disarrayed stage of self-understanding as a researcher and the research object, we can still continue to study cultural phenomena in meaningful ways that contribute to some extent to knowledge production. Based on my own examples from South Africa, I will take students through challenges and possibilities of research encounters and give a glimpse into practical hurdles such as research clearances.

Thursday, April 8th : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fc4577JsB9M>

Participatory Video model

Topic: Review of doing research on the African continent/ participatory use of video in Kenya

Week 14 (April 13). Presentations

Thursday: April 15th Presentations concluded

Week 15th (April 20th) Last day of Class. General Review of what has changed in your perception of the African continent.

Final Exam: 4/26/2021 @ 7:30 AM - 9:30 AM

Appendix:

Pan-Africanism before and after decolonization

Questions:

- What were the driving concerns and energies of the Pan-Africanist campaign for decolonization?
- In what ways did post-colonial African states reflect the strengths and limits of this thinking?
- Why were colonial boundaries maintained intact as the basis of the independent African state system after decolonization? What alternatives were considered, and why did they come to so little?
- What political objectives did newly independent African states prioritize in their collective diplomacy, and with what effects?

Quotes to consider

(1). Carter G. Woodson said: "If you can control a man's thinking, you don't have to worry about his actions. When you determine what a man should think, you don't have to worry about what he is going to do. If you make a man feel inferior, you don't have to force him to accept an inferior state, because he will look for you himself. If you make a man think he is just an outcast, you don't have to send him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one."

(2). George Orwell said, "The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and destroy their own understanding of their history,"

(3). The role of foreign media though maybe disguised as informing and amusing the African people, have only one Agenda: to corrupt our understanding of ourselves, our reality and the world, implanting in the minds of our young people ideas and concepts that ultimately lead us to believe in what will happen in the period of political or economic crisis.

Institutions in Africa

(1). Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) in Dakar, Senegal,

(2). Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)

(3). African Union, Addis Ababa

(4) African Development Bank

(5). ACALAN

Notes & References

https://lib.ugent.be/en/catalog?q=Africa+Politics+and+government+1960-&search_field=subject

Books about Africa.

(2). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-FG2oWl-2k>

From rhinoplasty to cataract replacement, the Hindu vedic text Sushruta Samhita documents the discovery of advanced surgical techniques centuries before they found their way into the operating theaters of western Europe.

Dan Von Hoyel ~ Black Before Columbus Came: The African Discovery of America

Odd Salon DISCOVERY: Six stories of rigorous inquiry and accidental revelations, seeking the unfamiliar and encountering the unknown, and uncovering the uncharted.

Recorded Tuesday, April 9th 2019 at Public Works, San Francisco, CA

Curated by Seth Rosenblatt

Edit, Camera, Post-production: John Adams

Sound: Steen

(3). <https://web.archive.org/web/20070819204943/http://dickinsg.intrasun.tcnj.edu/films/basil/videos.html>

About Basil Davison's video

The Africans: A Triple Heritage

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1295/> about Fort Jesus mentioned in the video clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPJkv9qoIIw&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1Unveo0FakGOL1xjjEJBWVxR9Uwu8FyKhroCewfnoUwcd7sx0tygTDPHw>

Guosa Language

October 11, Mojola Agbebi Day

<https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/1902-rev-mojola-agbebi-inaugural-sermon/>

The inaugural sermon that led to the day

Notes on research

Maori anthropologist, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in her seminal work, "Decolonising Methodologies", argues that research is a dirty word. Hyphenating "research" into "research" is very useful, because it reveals what is involved, what it really means and goes beyond the naive view of "research" as an innocent pursuit of knowledge. It underscores the fact that "researching" involves the activity of undressing other people so as to see them naked. It is also a process of reducing some people to the level of microorganism: putting them under a magnifying glass to peep into their private lives, secrets, taboos, thinking and their sacred worlds.

<https://journals.co.za/content/journal/10520/EJC-b1cd74dfa>

Topic: Pan Africanism: The concept and proponents (page 22-The origin of Africa for Africans, traced to Nyasaland and South Africa)

Reading: Legum, Colin (1965) Pan-Africanism: A short Political Guide; Frederick A. Praeger Publishers

The Roots of Pan-Africanism (African personality & Negritude)

Discussion: What does Pan-Africanism mean to the scholars and what does it mean to you?

Thursday: Supplemental reading (17 pages): Okonkwo, Rina Mojola Agbebi : Apostle of The African Personality, Nouvelle série, No. 114 (2e TRIMESTRE 1980), pp. 144-159 (16 pages) Présence Africaine Editions

Class assignment: Mojola Agbebi Day (October 11 of every year). What do you like about this Bishop and how can he fit the world of *Black Lives Matter* of today.

Going to University: The Influence of Higher Education on the Lives of Young South Africans edited by Jennifer M. Case, Delia Marshall, Sioux McKenna and Disaapele Mogashana (2018).

<https://theconversation.com/how-class-and-social-capital-affect-university-students-92602>

ONE OF THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES : ADDRESSING AFRICA'S CURRENCY MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

The formation of the African Continental Free Trade Area is expected to boost trade volumes across the continent. Corporates that leverage local banking knowledge and services will be well placed to take advantage of this opportunity

15 January 2020

4 min

By Emmanuel Ajayi - Managing Director, Head of FX Trading, Africa

With more than 50 countries using more than 40 different currencies, Africa is a highly complex FX market. Indeed, currency management is generally considered one of the key challenges to doing business in that part of the world.

The importance of efficient currency management is heightened for corporates seeking to capitalise on commercial opportunities created following the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

[AfCFTA covers a market with a combined GDP of USD2.5 trillion and a population of 1.2 billion](#). By 2050, the African Union predicts the population will more than double to represent [one-quarter of the world's working age population](#). The significance of this development cannot be understated – AfCFTA will be one of the world's largest free-trade areas and is forecasted to boost generic African intra-regional trade by approximately one-third.

Businesses currently face higher tariffs when they export within Africa than when they export outside it. AfCFTA will progressively eliminate tariffs on intra-African trade, making it easier for businesses to trade within the continent.

One of the main challenges within Africa is accessing liquidity – there are many instances where markets freeze due to a lack of liquidity, creating a non-functioning interbank market. However, with countries across the continent making huge efforts to develop economically, and with the implementation of AfCFTA, demand for FX services will inevitably increase.

Currency management strategies

Today, currency management strategies among African central banks fall into four brackets: pegged currencies; managed regimes; basket-linked currencies; and offshore freely-traded currencies.

Pegged currencies include the likes of the West African CFA franc – the currency of eight independent states – and the Central African CFA franc, which is used in six different markets.

Managed regimes are where the central bank manages FX levels and provides liquidity by way of intervention; in these markets, FX transactions need to demonstrate economic value.

In the third category are countries where the currency is linked to a basket of currencies, for example the Botswana pula or the Namibian dollar, the latter of which is strongly correlated to the South African rand.

Finally, examples of offshore- traded currencies include the Ugandan shilling and the South African rand.

African currencies tend to be US dollar-denominated, but as AfCFTA develops, the volume of pan-African trade will increase significantly, and we will see more trading in local currency pairs. Understanding these changes – and potential shifts in regime from the aforementioned strategies – typically requires an on-the-ground presence.

And in a period where isolationist policies are prominent in many parts of the world, Africa will likely look to its domestic market for growth – creating an even greater need for local experience.

Electronic execution efficiencies

Increased efficiency in FX trading will be an important enabler for this anticipated regional expansion. An ongoing global shift towards electronic execution continues to improve the efficiency of African FX markets for both transparency and pricing. A number of banks have gone to great lengths to engage with clients who have historically been more comfortable speaking to a familiar voice on the phone – and for who it is culturally acceptable to try and negotiate a better price.

Small businesses in particular now have a greater understanding of the efficiencies of trading on an electronic platform. The availability of market data allows them to compare rate, which provides assurance that they are getting the best price.

Electronic FX trading has also helped reduce the cost of doing business. Negotiating rates over the phone means a client waiting to get through to someone to discuss market conditions and then speaking to a sales person, who then relays that conversation to a trader, before the client can obtain a price.

This is much less efficient than accessing pricing with a single click from a desktop, where the client can see what the rest of the market was doing when they executed their transaction.

The move to electronic trading has also been welcomed by regulators because they want to have real-time visibility of markets – particularly illiquid markets.

Navigating regulatory requirements

While electronic trading is expected to reduce the FX cost of doing business across multiple jurisdictions, working with a counterparty that understands all the market nuances remains critical.

The FX regulatory landscape in Africa is constantly changing, and central banks strategies are diverse. In Nigeria, for example, it's possible to move revenue out of the country, but a certificate of capital importation is required – so obtaining guidance from an onshore bank is vital.

Given the intricacies and changing nature of the varying markets across the continent, banks operating in Africa do well to partner with regulators when it comes to product development – to ensure they are fit for market. Standard Chartered has worked with many central banks to develop FX products. In Nigeria, for example, Standard Chartered was instrumental in the creation of the futures market in conjunction with FMDQ Securities Exchange.

And in this diverse market, management of risk – and particularly the ability to ‘warehouse’ risk where necessary – is essential for smoothing out currency fluctuations. This is where having both an onshore and offshore presence is crucial. With 15 onshore locations across the continent, Standard Chartered has African clients’ FX needs covered.

<https://www.sc.com/en/feature/addressing-africas-currency-management-challenges/>