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Introduction

For the most part, in formulating and evaluating 'theories' of race and ethnic relations, Western scholars rely disproportionately on descriptive analyses of relevant situations in Western societies provided by other Western scholars, thereby entrenching the myopia and ethnocentric bias from which scholarly studies of these questions have perennially suffered. In an effort to open a small window on the wider world and to persuade colleagues to devote more time to the systematic study of foreign situations, I present here a comparative analysis of data from twenty-seven contemporary African states in an attempt to determine the relative significance of pluralism, race and ethnicity for social order and political stability in these societies. I do so in the belief that better understanding of the ways in which these three sets of variables affect conditions of social order and political stability in the emergent 'nation-states' of post-colonial Africa may provide a sound base for general theories of race and ethnicity in modern societies. To that end I shall outline the social bases and developments of these twenty-seven countries up to the end of 1982, as that was the latest date for which such information was readily available at the time of writing.

In this paper I use data drawn from the following states: Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde Islands, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Upper Volta. Two-thirds of these states lie in West Africa, four in Central Africa, one each in East and North Africa, and the remainder in the southern part of the continent. Although these states do not form a statistical sample of African, Third World or indeed
any other category of state, they do represent approximately half the states in Africa, and display patterns that cannot be dismissed as entirely unrepresentative of social conditions and developments in contemporary African societies.

The inclusion of Algeria in this set is deliberate, given its long colonial experience, Islamic culture, racial homogeneity, relative prosperity, northerly location, and other conditions which may be casually expected to differentiate its post-colonial political and social development from those of sub-Saharan African societies. The inclusion of Ethiopia and Liberia is also deliberate, since recent developments in these long-independent black African states illustrate conditions and processes that operate in the younger states created by white rivalries and imperialism.

As this paper addresses the implications of race, ethnicity and pluralism in these contemporary states, I shall review certain salient indicators of their internal order and political stability since independence, and, for Liberia and Ethiopia, in the fifty years from 1932 to the end of 1982, since these are the most relevant decades for our enquiry and together illustrate the difference between their traditional and recent experience. It is also appropriate to include Ethiopia and Liberia in this review in order that its conclusion may not be summarily dismissed as relevant only to the recently decolonised countries of Africa or other tropical zones.

Data cited below on these twenty-seven states were taken from various Year Books and other comparative compilations. These differing accounts were collated and supplemented as necessary by data from other sources on particular topics and countries. Though influenced by discussions with Ms Rebecca French of Yale University, and by the texts from which the data were drawn, responsibility for the criteria, categories and concepts that structure the argument of this paper is mine. Particular care has been taken in sorting and tabulating these data to minimise errors and misclassifications. Before proceeding to the data it is best to define and distinguish the variables under study, namely race, ethnicity and pluralism.

**Race and ethnicity**

By 'race and ethnic relations' I understand all relations which are either based on or influenced by racial and/or ethnic factors, interests and considerations, and which take place within and between racial blocs and/or ethnic units in multi-racial and/or poly-ethnic populations. Normally, multi-racial populations are also poly-ethnic; but the reverse does not always hold, since all ethnic units are sub-divisions of some single racial stock, differentiated in the beliefs of those who do and those who do not belong to them by real or putative community of descent and cultural practice. In contrast, races are biological divisions of mankind differentiated by gross phenotypical features which are hereditary, polygenic, highly resistant to environmental influences, distinctive and of doubtful adaptive value. When persons of different race mate, their offspring differ modally in phenotype from either parent in various ways. By their physical appearance such hybrids demonstrate the objective nature and biological differences of the parental races to which they are affiliated.

In my view, race is an essentially biological concept based on those distinctive sets of hereditary phenotypical features that distinguish varieties of mankind. There have never been any 'pure' races since raciation - the process by which races evolve, change and come into being - is an essential aspect of human evolution and proceeds within isolated populations as well as by miscegenation. Most biologists today reject this concept of race for reasons I do not find persuasive or convincing. They generally deny the biological validity of race and race differences on the familiar ground that genetic variation within populations often exceeds that between them, and sometimes assimilate notions of racial phenotype to Platonic ideal types whose earthly manifestations are erratic rather than normal (King 1981; Klass and Hellman 1971).

Neither the argument nor the data adduced to support it convince me that those gross hereditary physical differences that all men remark between Negroes, Asiatic Mongols, Whites (or Caucasians), Australian Aborigines, Amerindians, Pygmies, Bushmen and certain other populations are neither objective nor genetic in their base. Instead, it seems clear that contemporary biologists have committed an elementary non sequitur in deducing the 'non-existence of human races' from the prevalence of genetic clines. For, if 'there are no races, only clines' (Livingstone 1962), can the biologists cite reliable cases in which White (Caucasian) couples have begotten and borne offspring having Negro, Pygmy, Australoid, Amerindian, Mongol or other racial phenotypes, or vice versa? If so, why are not such marvels so frequent that they lose their novelty? If not, can the biologists explain why not, given their much-repeated assertion concerning the variable distribution of genetic factors within and across human populations? As it is patently ridiculous to treat blood groups as racial diacritica, I wonder how and why it happened that the results of research on blood groups and other monogenic characters were misinterpreted thus, and why such a patent misinterpretation has not long since been repudiated.

When couples of the same race, whatever that may be, produce
children who are randomly black, white, Mongol, pygmoid, Australoid, Amerindian, etc. I shall gladly acknowledge my error in disputing current biological ideology on the ‘non-existence of human races’; but not until then. As it is with animals, so should it be with humans in this matter. German Shepherd dogs, Jersey cattle, Siamese cats and Berkshire pigs differ among themselves phenotypically, in colours, marking, stature, etc., and therefore genotypically as well. None the less, mated with others of their own stock, German Shepherds reproduce their like and neither spaniels, dachshunds nor retrievers. Likewise, mated with one another, Jersey cattle do not bring forth Angus or Friesian calves, Siamese cats do not bear Persian or common kittens, and neither do Berkshire pigs bear litters of the native Chinese or Melanesian varieties. Must we none the less deny the objective differences between these differing breeds, varieties or races of animals because each contains some genetic variation? If so, then presumably only a population of perfect clones would satisfy the current biological criteria of race, however ludicrous that is to logic and common sense, since it defines races as separate species that reproduce asexually.

To demonstrate how irrelevant for the differentiation of biological stocks are variations in the distribution of genes that account for blood groups and other monogenic characters, we may note that similar variations in the frequency distributions of blood groups occur among horses, zebras and donkeys. For that reason must we therefore deny that they are distinct species? Yet, if we admit that, on what basis can we consistently deny that mankind, as a single species, also contains several races that exhibit modally different phenotypes which require parallel differences of genotype, for all the pervasively clinal distribution of monogenic characters between and among them?

For these and other reasons, I recognise as races those varieties of mankind characterised by distinctive sets of gross hereditary phenotypical features. I therefore distinguish sharply between ‘race relations’ and ‘ethnic relations’, reserving the first term for relations between peoples of differing racial stock and the second for relations between people of the same racial stock who feel themselves, and are felt by others, to differ ethnically by virtue of their differing descent and culture. The interactions of ethnic populations that differ also in race, as, for example, the Portuguese and BaVenda in Angola, the Afrikaner and Zulu, are thus examples of race relations, and must be distinguished sharply from the interactions of ethnic units of the same racial stock, such as, for example, Boers and Britons in South Africa, Zulu and Xhosa, Portuguese and Spaniards, etc., which are strictly inter-ethnic relations.

Of many reasons why it is essential to maintain this distinction clearly and to separate such cases for study, I can here only mention the following. First, unlike ethnic identity, racial identity and/or difference is immutable, manifest and normally unambiguous in multi-racial societies and contexts. By comparison, as the literature indicates, ethnicity is generally latent and situational in its assertion. The manifest and immutable nature of racial identity and difference, as compared with the optional anonymity of ethnic identity among people of the same racial stock, ensures that racial differences and communities have far greater prominence, visibility and collective appeal than ethnicity in multi-racial societies which are also poly-ethnic, such as the USA, South Africa and Britain. For individuals and in interpersonal relations, differences between racial and ethnic identity are equally pervasive, immutable and salient. Accordingly, to understand relations of either kind, it is essential to distinguish them clearly as subjects of study, and not to conflate them, as is now the dominant fashion among white ‘experts’ on race and ethnic relations, who treat inter-racial and inter-ethnic relations as one and the same for purposes of documentation, analysis and comparison. (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975; Thernstrom et al., 1980; Banton & Harwood, 1975; Banton 1983). Such procedures commit the study of these topics to a crippling confusion at its very foundation (M. G. Smith 1982), and do so on ideological grounds that preclude our understanding of either complex and of both, since that may only be gained by their careful distinction, study, analysis and comparison. Moreover, by treating as one and the same what men in practice distinguish and invest with strong values and sanctions, human biologists and social scientists commit their studies of race and ethnicity to irrelevance in advance, by categorically rejecting as error the daily experience of mankind, in order to preserve as dogma the fallacy cited above, which they hold so dear on ideological grounds.

Most sociologists nowadays set aside biological race in favour of a looser ‘sociological’ concept. In such usage, ‘races’ are whatever divisions or aggregates the members of a given society or set of societies traditionally distinguish and identify as such. In this view, races are whatever the people say they are. That approach precludes study of the correspondence between folk ideas of race or ethnicity and the manifest biological differences or apparent homogeneity of populations, though the study of such correspondences of folk beliefs and objective conditions is indispensable for any full understanding of collective thought and social process. For example, despite the evidence, Hitler and his Nazi followers chose to distinguish Jews as a race separate from Germans and elaborated a racist ideology to ‘legitimate’ their elimination. We cannot fully understand Nazi racism if we ignore the invalidity of the
racial distinctions and concepts on which this most elaborate ideology and programme were based. Any thorough analyses of ideologies require their confrontation with objective evidence of the conditions to which they refer; and this is especially necessary with regard to folk beliefs about race, which is itself so significant but plastic a basis for human identity and difference that almost all versions of the concept can be made to serve various sectional interests and functions. In treating as real what men believe to be real, sociologists pursue direct knowledge of folk beliefs in specific social contexts; yet since cultural schemes are arbitrary historical by-products whose hidden foundations and significance can never be fully known until the precise nature of their differences from and correspondences with objective phenomena are fully understood, it is surely inadequate to restrict their study to the social contexts and processes in which they occur. The simple fact that a people, or some of them, assert or deny racial differences among themselves or others, and act accordingly, says nothing about relations within and between objectively different racial stocks if, as often happens, such folk distinctions are misconceived or inappropriately applied, as, for example, by de Gobineau in opposing ‘Franks’ and ‘Gauls’.

As used below, the term ‘race’ refers to aggregates whose members are objectively distinguished from others by certain gross hereditary phenotypical features. Altogether, in the African states discussed here, there are five racial categories, namely, Blacks, Whites, Indians, Pygmies, and a rather variable residual category of hybrids. For example, in Mauritania and Senegal that category includes the ‘Black Moors’ who, though dark, are rarely black and have non-negroid features that distinguish them from the true harratin, or negroid slaves, settled along the southern border with Senegal; in Chad and Niger, the ‘Tubu’ are hybrids of similar complexion and features; but in São Tomé and Príncipe, the Cape Verde Islands and Guinea-Bissau, the mesticios are mulatto hybrids descended from white and black ancestors, as are the Amhara who dominate Ethiopia. Objectively, in each of these cases, the hybrid population is readily distinguished from and by others in its society by certain characteristic phenotypical features.

As mentioned above, in my view an ethnic unit is a population whose members believe that in some sense they share common descent and a common cultural heritage or tradition, and who are so regarded by others. The notion accordingly requires concordance between the views of outsiders and those of members of such collectivities concerning their distinctive ethnic status and identity. It is not necessary that ethnic beliefs should correspond closely to historical or other facts, though to some extent they do. For the identification of ethnic groups, what matters is the belief, held by their members and by others, in a shared distinctive culture or tradition and community of descent.

In Western societies ethnic dispersal often reflects historical migrations that link citizens of differing ethnic stocks to other nation-states, thus adding to differences of ethnic status and identity the problems of dual or alternative national allegiance. During periodic Western conflicts in this century and the last, such ethnic linkages among warring states have confronted them with difficult questions of foreign relations as well as internal security.

In contemporary Africa, partly as a function of the arbitrary boundaries inherited from colonial rule, partly as a function of the more recent movements of people from overseas as well as within the continent, members of some ethnic units now reside in two or more nation-states, while all or almost all members of many others live in one only. Such differences in the political implications of ethnic identity are always important and sometimes critical for those concerned, as, for example, in Gabon’s expulsion of Cameroon immigrants, or in the deposition of President Luis Cabral by natives of Guinea-Bissau, who thus sought to free themselves from rule by the hybrid Cape Verde elite on whom Cabral and the Partido Africano de Independencia da Guiné e Cabo Verde had relied from the period of anti-colonial struggle.

Likewise, citizens of non-African states resident in these African countries differ in ethnic identity, as well as in nationality, from those around them. The differing national affiliations of ethnic units may also vary in their political and social significance. Thus, in Africa, while residents from many overseas countries lack political significance, the nationals of others retain it, as, for example, the French in former French colonies such as Senegal, Ivory Coast and Gabon; the Cubans and Russians in Ethiopia, São Tomé and Príncipe; and the Libyans in Chad. Given such differences, it is necessary to distinguish those ethnic entities in any society that have nationality ties to other states, and to ask if such ties are or are not exclusive. For example, in West Africa such peoples as the Mandinka, Fulani, Kanuri, Tuarag and Hausa have spread widely from pre-colonial days and are currently found in two or more contemporary nation-states. It is therefore necessary to recognize the wide but variable transnational affiliations of such dispersed ethnic units, and to record their links with at least one other ‘nation-state’ insofar as those links are, or are likely to be, politically relevant to either country.

Intra-ethnic relations differ from inter-ethnic relations primarily because their principals share a common set of understandings, values and attitudes that reflect their common culture and community. Fellow
ethnics laugh at the same jokes, enjoy the same food and drink, treasure
the same collective memories, myths, heroes, dances and songs, dress,
patterns of bodily decoration, house style, and so much more that
identifies their common distinctive culture, including folk beliefs, fears,
assumptions, and those axioms that provide the common foundations of
collective thought and morals. With such common background, they
usually marry one another and so reproduce the ethnic community by
perpetuating its shared, distinctive culture within a relatively closed
reproductive group.

Language, religion, homeland and mode of subsistence figure promi-
nently in the creation and perpetuation of these ethnic cultures and
collectivities. In Africa indigenous peoples characterised by differences
of language, religion, social organisation, subsistence practices and
location have high rates of endogamy, and are generally referred to as
tribes or ethnic groups. Of course, many of these are not groups, since
they lack the inclusive or representative organisation that is essential for
the common collective action by which groups pursue and regulate their
distinctive common affairs. Thus such peoples as the Nuer, Tallensi, Tiv,
Gusii and many others are ethnic units of another kind. Moreover, many
African peoples lacked the features generally used to differentiate
‘tribes’. Such peoples as the Djola, Fulani, Yoruba and Kru were widely
scattered by migrations across West Africa in pre-colonial days. In short,
not all indigenous ethnic units in West Africa conform to the simple tribal
model cited above. It is essential none the less to include within the
ethnic inventory of any African country all those collectivities, indige-
nous and other, that are locally recognised as ethnically distinct.

Pluralism

There is an obvious and profound difference between societies whose
members all share a common culture and language, common forms of
social and political organisation, modes of subsistence, ways of life, and
generally a common religion, and those that contain two or more
aggregates that differ in these respects, and perpetuate their differences
without substantial attrition by the familiar processes of social reproduc-
tion. Societies of the latter type are culturally plural, and display their
cultural pluralism in their social composition. All twenty-seven African
countries discussed below are of this kind. However, while many
populations within them differ in every institutional dimension of
culture, as, for example, do the Kadara and Hausa of Nigeria, in other
cases their cultural differences are limited to certain institutional spheres
of activity, such as kinship and marriage, cult, social control and

subsistence modes, or, perhaps, to certain forms of social organisation.
Though language generally differs among peoples of differing cultures,
this is not always the case; and in many areas lingua francas facilitate
intercourse across cultural frontiers. For example, in the USA and other
modern societies, ethnic aggregates participate freely in the common
public domain and use identical institutions, including the national
language, currency, law and patterns of economic and political organi-
sation, while cherishing and developing their distinct traditions, includ-
ing language, cult, cuisine, family patterns and the like, among them-

selves. Such ethnic patterns flourish in the private domains reserved by
law for individual and collective activities of equal indifference to the
rights and status of their participants as citizens in the common public
domain in which the collective affairs of the inclusive population are
conducted. By comparison with the differences among tribal peoples in
societies of colonial and contemporary Africa, various kinds of hyphen-
ated Americans – Greek-, Swedish-, Italian-, Irish-, Jewish-, etc. –
neatly illustrate how variable institutional and other cultural differences
between collectivities in a common society may be, in their nature and
extent.

To indicate the nature of pluralism and illustrate its main varieties and
structural conditions, the USA is a most rewarding subject of study. Its
constitution provides that all hyphenated white Americans of the same
sex enjoy the same formal rights at law, in the state, and in all activities
and structures directly related to it, such as public education, the armed
forces, the market, transport, communications, etc. This situation illus-
brates the universalistic incorporation of white persons as citizens in the
American polity under its constitution. That mode of incorporation
simultaneously confers equal citizenship and identical legal rights and
obligations on individuals. In these circumstances differing ethnic cul-
tures do not entail any difference of formal status in the public domain of
political, legal, economic and ancillary activities between ethnic units.
Thus ethnic differences cannot involve formal differences of political and
legal status if everyone is directly incorporated on uniform conditions in
the state and the public domain.

However, until recently American blacks have not enjoyed the same
status and rights as American whites, hyphenated or other, in govern-
ment and law, even where, as in certain states, the laws did not formally
differentiate them from whites. In other words, besides the de jure
conditions of incorporation of citizens, following Max Weber’s advice
(1947: 37) we need to look closely at the prevailing de facto conditions, at
the actual conditions in which men live. For American blacks until the
late 1960s, the political reality consisted in their differential incorpor-
ation and virtual exclusion from free and equal participation in the fundamental institutions of American society. Though flagrantly inconsistent with the proclaimed ideals and rules of the American constitution and polity, this differential incorporation of black Americans was none the less asserted and upheld by powerful segments of the white population, primarily on grounds of race. Yet in different spheres black and white Americans had more in common than did either, for example, with resident Chinese, Japanese and Mexican Americans, or with the earliest immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. None the less, on racial grounds blacks were denied equal status with whites in the USA, and therefore could neither enjoy the same life chances and situations as whites nor participate freely in white society. This was equally true for the Amerindians, for the vast majority of Orientals until 1946, for Chicanos, and for certain other immigrant populations such as Polynesians and West Indians.

Behind the prevailing social barriers, these differentially incorporated aggregates practised, adapted and developed further their distinctive ethnic culture, life styles, and forms of organisation as best they could to protect and advance their interests in their respective situations. In consequence, American society throughout this period had two radically different bases on which peoples of differing race – whites and non-whites – were incorporated within it and within the state, namely the universalistic or uniform mode of incorporation reserved for whites, and the differential mode of incorporation of blacks and other non-whites. As an effect of such differential incorporation, US society was structurally plural, its white and non-white sections being distinguished by two sets of radically different rights, obligations and relations with the common public domain. Along with this structural pluralism also went the segmental incorporation of Amerindian, Oriental and certain other subordinate non-white populations under differing juridical provisions and agencies which ascribed individuals on grounds of descent to some natal collectivity as the decisive condition of their membership and status in the state. Ideally such segmental incorporations assume equivalence of the incorporated segments that thus mediate individual citizenship in the inclusive unit; but, as with the structural disjunctions laid down by differential incorporation, such segmental incorporation defines social units which inevitably develop distinctive traditions, cultures and social forms as adjustments to their peculiar situations, even if formerly alike, although of course in the USA and generally elsewhere cultural differences antedate the segmental incorporation of discrete collectivities.

In consequence, despite its universalistic constitution, the USA is a highly complex plural society in which all three modes of incorporation – the universalistic, the equivalent or segmental and the differential – have their place, each being associated with a particular type and level of pluralism (Smith 1969: 436–46; 1984). Thus, as we have seen, the legal equivalence of culturally different ethnics in white American society indicates its cultural pluralism and simultaneous exclusion of social and structural pluralism from the public domain of white America. Conversely, the critical differences that have historically distinguished whites and non-whites and led to their differential incorporation entailed the structural pluralism that positively fosters cultural differences between the unequal sections, whatever their original condition. Finally, the de jure and de facto segmental incorporation that still regulates certain non-white populations in the country preserves and intensifies their cultural and social difference, from other groups. Ethnic differences among whites, while formally excluded from the public domain as irrelevant, figure prominently in the private domain as bases for the formal and informal organisations of ethnic communities that may then act to protect and foster their distinct collective interests within limits allowed by government and law. Thus white America likewise illustrates de facto segmental organisation on ethnic lines within the private domain.

It is evident from this discussion that pluralism is a variable in several senses simultaneously. First, there are variations in the number and nature of cultural and other differences that are institutionalised as bases for collective disjunction whether de jure or de facto, and whether in the public or only in the private domain. Second, there are significant differences between the cultural pluralism that prevails, as among white Americans, without corresponding social and political disparities between culturally distinct collectivities and their members, and differences of the same kind accompanied by the social exclusions that institute social pluralism through the consociational incorporation of social segments as, for example, in the cantons of Switzerland. Finally, there are the cultural differences that accompany or emerge from the structural pluralism instituted by differential incorporation of collectivities that normally differed culturally in the first place, whatever the historical grounds for their structural disjunctions. It is thus appropriate to describe societies based on differential incorporation as hierarchic pluralities, those based on equivalent or segmental incorporation as segmental pluralities, and those that combine both these modes of incorporation as complex pluralities.

When culturally distinct peoples are incorporated together segmentally and differentially, two distinct and highly significant kinds of social
exclusion constitute and pervade the societal order. The segmental and differential modes of incorporation generate quite distinct social and cultural tensions, problems and developments, none of which are associated with cultural pluralism incorporated under a universalistic liberal regime. For example, during the 1960s the USA experienced prolonged national upheavals, as blacks campaigned, at first peacefully and then by violent means, for abrogation of the *de facto* differential incorporation that had hitherto regulated their lives and flagrantly violated the most fundamental and dearly held principles of American democracy and society. The stresses intrinsic to consociational structures differ in their nature and source from those intrinsic to differential incorporation, *de jure* as in South Africa, or *de facto* as still prevalent in the USA.

**The argument**

It is the argument of this paper that, like certain other social conditions, such as differences of language, religion and provenience, race and ethnicity both depend for their significance in each society on their relations to the prevailing structures of incorporation, *de jure* as well as *de facto*, and on the composition and alignments of the collectivities that such structures constitute and regulate. This generalisation is implicit in the preceding discussion, and virtually explicit in the sketch of American society given above; but its validity for other societies needs to be demonstrated, given its implications not only for academic studies of race and ethnicity but also for projects and policies to diagnose and deal with the problems they often present.

There is in recent American discussions of the subject an unfortunate tendency to regard 'ethnicity' as some kind of substance like one of Clifford Geertz's 'primordial givens' (1963a: 109). Whether ethnicity, gender, age or any other aspect of the human condition is better conceived as a quality, relation, or substance for literary and philosophical discussion is not in question; but whatever its 'real nature', the phenomenon of ethnicity depends for its social significance on its place in and under the prevailing structures of incorporation, directly or otherwise. It is easy to cite examples of structures that have fostered or created ethnic divisions where these were formerly absent, and ignored or eliminated them where formerly important. Though familiar, the implications of such data are commonly ignored by writers determined to present ethnicity as some kind of irreducible socio-cultural substance that, although universal, has only recently appeared in the USA (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975).

With the reservations expressed above, sociological studies of race have fared somewhat better by focusing on 'race relations' rather than race itself as the significant phenomena, and as a nexus of social problems that require social action. However, much confusion obtains among sociologists concerning those contexts and kinds of relations that are most important for sociological studies of race, and the reasons therefor. One set of scholars advocates the psychological or socio-psychological study of situations and relations that have racial relevance. Commonly such studies rely heavily on concepts of prejudice and discrimination, and focus on attitudes and opinions that the groups involved may have about one another and/or some others and their activities. Such work evidently presumes that whatever their nature, race relations reflect and are governed by the mental states of individuals, and gives variable attention to other social conditions and prevailing arrangements. Other writers interpret race and ethnic relations as effects of the economic order and dominant economic motivations in any society. For such scholars race relations are primarily relations of inequality and exploitation that emerge with the rise of capitalism and European expansion overseas (UNESCO 1980). On this line of argument, the Soviet Union should be a racial and ethnic paradise, free of the hostilities and abuses that inherently accompany capitalism and other monetised non-Marxist economies. Unfortunately for that thesis, neither the USSR nor any of its satellite states fulfills this dream. Nor does China under Mao and his successors, despite its much-vaunted programme for the liberation and incorporation of its national minorities, which total about fifty million people in 'autonomous republics' or districts under local control. Events in Tibet in 1983 as in 1950 and subsequent years demonstrate otherwise. Finally there are those who try to subsume the diverse historical patterns of race relations in any country and the differing patterns in diverse countries under some universal principle or determinant, such as the 'inclusive fitness' of sociobiology (van den Berghe 1981), rational choice theory (Banton 1980; Hechter et al., 1982), or some grand evolutionary scheme such as Park's 'race relations cycle' (Park, 1957). However, on closer study these paradigms rarely satisfy the claims made for them (as, for example, Smith 1983).

Without listing other approaches to the formulation of a general 'theory' or set of 'theories' of 'race relations', it is my argument in this paper that race and ethnic relations alike are equally subject to and shaped by the place and sphere assigned to them by the structure of incorporation that prevails in each society. Thus identical ethnic or racial compositions may be regulated by different structures in different societies, while societies with differing compositions may have very similar structures. As usual, what happens in society and matters
critically for sociological study is normally at variance with objective phenomena. To substantiate these observations for the societies listed above, I shall briefly indicate their racial, ethnic and cultural compositions, and then review the recent political experiences that indicate their levels of internal order and political stability. In conclusion I shall try to show how the structures of incorporation rather than the particular racial or ethnic compositions of these states best accounts for their recent experiences of social order as independent states.

The political record

The African countries under review include such mini-states as the Cape Verde Islands, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Equatorial Guinea and such large, important countries as Algeria, Nigeria and Ethiopia. Seven of these states are entirely land-locked, namely Mali, Niger, Upper Volta, Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR), Malawi and Lesotho, the latter being also geographically hostage to South Africa. While some states, such as Nigeria, Guinea and the Gambia have relatively dense populations, several, notably the Saharan countries, have relatively sparse and low populations. Of the twenty-seven countries only Algeria, the Ivory Coast, Gabon and Nigeria do not fall clearly into the category of Lesser Developed Countries (LDCs) with very low national and per capita average incomes. Nigeria, once rich, is now engulfed in wasteful debts it wants to reschedule. While poverty is the norm throughout these territories, their national elites as a rule have expensive tastes and lifestyles. Of the twenty-seven countries, Senegal and the Gambia established a confederation in 1982; following a violent attempt to seize power in the Gambia prevented only by Senegalese troops with considerable bloodshed. The uneven regional distribution and West African bias of this set of states have already been noted.

As of December 1982 four of these states, namely Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde Islands and Guinea-Bissau, all former Portuguese colonies, had been independent for less than ten years; another four, namely Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, the Gambia and Malawi, for less than twenty; Algeria for twenty, Sierra Leone for twenty-one years, Guinea for twenty-four and Ghana, the first West African state to achieve independence in 1957, for twenty-five. Two countries, Liberia and Ethiopia, have long been independent, though from 1936 till 1941 Ethiopia was colonised by Mussolini’s Italy. Accordingly, to put recent developments in Liberia and Ethiopia into proper perspective, I shall take account of their political experience from 1932 to 1982. Of these twenty-seven states thirteen – Niger, Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal, Benin, Cameroon, Upper Volta, the Central African Republic (CAR), Mauritania, Togo, Chad, Gabon and Nigeria – became independent in 1960, twelve of these being former French possessions, while Nigeria, the thirteenth, had then known sixty years of British rule. Excluding Liberia and Ethiopia, in December 1982, the other twenty-five states averaged 18.8 years of independence each. With Liberia and Ethiopia given a nominal fifty years each as the period of greatest relevance for this enquiry, the twenty-seven averaged 21.1 years each as independent states.

Though variable, the short independent lives of most of these states, set beside their generally hectic recent experiences, direct attention to the levels of instability and disorder within them, and to their sources. A few indices will give an idea of their social and political fragility. For example, all twenty-seven countries have experienced changes of regime or institutional structure since independence; four, each once only; four, twice apiece; four, three times each; two, four times and five, five times each; four, six times each; and four, seven or more times.

If governments are ruling groups under particular leaders, then some governments perdure through or by means of changes of their regimes, as for example, those of Sekou Touré, Senghor and Ahmadou Ahidjo in Guinea, Senegal and Cameroon. As of December 1982, three governments in these twenty-seven states had held power for twenty years or more, namely those of Guinea, Ivory Coast and Cameroon; five others, of Togo, Gabon, Lesotho, Malawi and the Gambia, had held power for between fifteen and twenty years, the last thanks largely to its restoration by Senegalese troops after an armed revolt in July 1981; and two, of Sierra Leone and Mali, for ten to fifteen years. On the other hand, of these twenty-seven countries one, Chad, had no effective government in 1981 or 1982, while of five – Upper Volta, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic and Senegal – whose governments were less than two years old, only the last-named had come to power by peaceful succession to its predecessor. As of December 1982, five governments had held power for two to five years, and six for six to ten. During the brief months of this paper’s gestation, one of the few ‘democratically elected’ governments in the set, Nigeria’s, was swept aside by military coup. On my information, since independence, and for Liberia and Ethiopia, during the past fifty – or, really, the last ten – years, there have been eighty-four attempted coups in twenty-four of these states and forty-two successful ones in all twenty-seven. On average, half of the attempted coups achieved their aim; and only two or three successful coups, as in Lesotho and the Central African Republic, were not
such evidence of the political instability of these African states, it is appropriate to seek its source in the composition of the societies for whose co-ordination and regulation they were first established. Of these twenty-seven countries, only one, Algeria, consists essentially of people of the same racial stock, whites or Caucasians. Thirteen contain only blacks and whites, such whites as Tuareg or Arab being indigenous, while others were alien. Eleven include, besides black and white, people of another race, whether Pygmies as in Gabon and the Central African Republic or various hybrid stocks such as Moors in Guinea-Bissau and Senegal, Tubu or Toubou in Niger and Chad, Mestizos in Guinea-Bissau and Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe and the Cape Verde Islands, or Amhara and Tigre in Ethiopia, all in different ways being clearly distinct from Negros and Whites, though of diverse origin and appearance. Of these twenty-seven societies two, namely São Tomé and Príncipe and Ethiopia, have elements of four distinct racial stocks, the former having a sizeable Mongol population of Chinese and North Koreans as well as whites, blacks and Mestizos, while Ethiopia had Indian immigrants as well as Amhara, blacks and whites. Of the twenty-seven countries, eight have ten or fewer ethnically distinct collectivities; six have between eleven and twenty; nine between twenty-one and fifty; three between fifty-one and 100; and one, Nigeria, has well over 100 such units, indeed more than 300.

This paper seeks to determine how significant such differences of racial or ethnic composition may be for the internal order and political stability of these twenty-seven countries; but before proceeding to those questions, I should present other data on the group as a whole. For example, of these twenty-seven countries ten—Algeria, Guinea, Mali, the Gambia, Chad, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria, Mauritania and Ethiopia—have Muslim majorities within their populations; five—Lesotho, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and the Cape Verde Islands—have Christian majorities; and in the rest most people remain animists, although devotees of as many different cults as the state has tribes, with the result that their fragmentation precludes power and weakens their resistance to Islam and Christianity.

Of these twenty-seven societies, eight contain people speaking ten or fewer distinct first languages, while ten have between eleven and twenty-five distinct language groups; six have from twenty-six to fifty different first languages, and two, Ethiopia and the CAR, have between fifty-one and 100 first languages, while Nigeria has over 100—indeed, over 300 first languages are spoken among its people. Given the central
role of language in human society and social reproduction, such extreme
degrees of linguistic fragmentation imply and presume equivalent
degrees of social and cultural fragmentation in the populations of these
African states. Of course, not all locally spoken first languages are
indigenous, although even in the most fragmented units the majority are
of that kind. Such resident aliens as Frenchmen, Britons, Cubans,
Portuguese and the like must be included, since their first languages are
also distinct; yet it is obvious that in overwhelming majority the differing
languages to be found in any African state are of local origin.

Of the twenty-seven countries, six contain between two and four
ethnic units having other national identities and/or ties; three have five
such units, four have six, seven have seven, and seven have nine or more,
two of these each having thirteen groups with such foreign nationality,
one fourteen and one sixteen. None of these African states lacks people
doing differing nationality; and of course such extra-state national ties are
not all of equal significance. For example, in former French colonies, the
political, economic and cultural significance of French nationality
exceeds in importance all identities except those inflated by such irresist­
bile ideological currents as Islam or Marxism.

Race

In all but one of these twenty-seven countries (Algeria), blacks are the
great majority of the population, including Ethiopia, where Amhara and
Tigre together approximate one-third of the total. Algerians are a nation
of Arabs and Berbers, most of whom have been substantially Arabised,
and all of whom are now Muslim, if one classes as Muslim the heretical
Kharadjites of the Mzab. Nearly half of the twenty-five sub-Saharan
states contain two races, while the remainder have three or more, if
resident aliens are included. If differences of racial composition possess
intrinsic importance, then presumably societies with one, two three or
more races in this set should differ significantly in their levels of stability,
internal violence, and the like. However, as just mentioned, in almost all
cases the overwhelming majority of the population in these societies
belongs to a single race – whites in Algeria, hybrids in Mauritania, and
blacks everywhere else. In São Tomé and Ethiopia, as in the Guinea-
Bissau of Luis Cabral until 1980, a racial minority dominates and rules
the majority. In Algeria the Arabs, estimated at forty-five per cent of the
population, dominate the state with the support of Arabised Berbers and
with resistance from others.

Setting aside Algeria as the only racially homogeneous state in the set,
there does not appear to be any significant difference of internal order
and political stability between states with two or more racial stocks. Minority races have exercised, directly or otherwise, disproportionate influence in the development of several countries in the last twenty-five years. In several of these countries the French still exercise undue influence, while in others such as São Tomé, Mozambique or Ethiopia, Soviet Russians, Cubans, Angolans, East Germans, Chinese or Koreans do so. Chad at the time of writing is torn apart by civil war in which French and Libyan forces participate. Countries with two and three resident racial stocks are the only category in this set having sufficient representatives to permit careful comparison, and they will therefore receive most attention here, but there is evidently no simple correspondence between the numbers of racial stocks and ethnic units of these two categories as shown in Table 9.1, despite their different distributions.

The higher average incidence of nationalities in states with two as against three races cannot be attributed to differences in their numbers of racial stocks; and this is equally true for differences in the average...
incidence of attempted and successful coups in countries with these differing compositions. Of the thirteen biracial states, four have Muslim and nine have animist majorities; of the eleven triracial states, four have Muslim and three have animist majorities, the remainder being predominantly Christian; but it is obvious that these differing racial compositions neither account for nor follow from such differences in the dominant religious persuasion of these societies. Likewise, while states with two racial stocks, including Liberia, average c. twenty-three years of independence each, and without Liberia, 20.5, those with three races average 17.7 years’ independence each. Again, it would be difficult to argue that such differences in the length of independent rule can be attributed to the number of racial stocks in states of either category, or vice versa. This holds true also for variations in the average duration of the governments and/or regimes of these states, as well as for the average number of regime changes in either category. It would be difficult to establish causal connections between the differing incidence of such events and the differing number of racial stocks in these societies. And so too for those differences in the kinds of government, ruling units and party political organisations of these two sets of states, as well as the demographic positions of the dominant and largest ethnic units within them, set out in Table 9.1.

Of greater relevance and interest is the relation between differences in racial heterogeneity and the incidence of internal violence in these two categories of state. As regards internal order and violence, the distinctions I shall make are between those states with no internal collective violence, those with little, those with significant outbreaks of violence at intervals, and those that have had internal wars such, for example, as that now underway in Chad. By internal war I mean organised collective violence that proceeds continuously over a sufficient period and area to indicate the operation of two or more centrally co-ordinated armies.

Of the thirteen states with two racial stocks in this set, till December 1982 two have had no internal violence since independence, two have had little, five have known such violence without war, and four have had internal wars, one of which, in Chad, has proceeded intermittently for nearly ten years. Excluding Nigeria, most of whose people had some part in the civil war against Biafran independence, in the triracial states, on average 1.9 ethnic units had been involved in collective violence since independence, as against 2.7 of those with two racial stocks. On such evidence one can scarcely argue that simple difference in the number of racial stocks has had any direct bearing on the levels of internal stability and social order in these states since they became independent or, in the case of Liberia and Ethiopia, during the past fifty years. As ethnic units are the most significant divisions of racial stocks, it is thus perhaps to those that we should turn in search of clues to the social and political dynamics of these African states.

Ethnicity

As noted above, eight of these countries contain ten or fewer ethnic units, six have eleven to twenty, nine have twenty-one to fifty, three have between fifty-one and 100, and Nigeria, with the largest and densest population, has well over 100. To compare these levels of ethnic heterogeneity with those of other independent states, I refer to the work of Charles L. Taylor and Michael Hudson (1976). Using global data from the Soviet Atlas Narodov Mira (1964) on the ‘ethnolinguistic’ composition of independent countries, Taylor and Hudson developed a measure of ethnolinguistic fractionalisation in those societies based on the ‘probability that two randomly selected persons from one country will not speak the same language’ (216), partly on the assumption, adopted from the Atlas Narodov Mira, that language differences are decisive indicators of ethnic differences (215), but modified to reflect the differing demographic structure of national societies. Of the 136 countries for which the data needed to calculate the index were secured, North and South Korea were most homogeneous as regards the identities of their people, with ethnolinguistic fractionalisation measures of 0.00, while Tanzania at the opposite pole was the most fragmented, with an index of 0.93 (271–4).

Of the twenty-seven countries in our set, Taylor and Hudson calculate such measures for 23. Of these, sixteen rank among the thirty-one most heavily fragmented national societies in their list as regards ethnicity and language. Altogether the twenty-three countries of our set for which these measures are available average 0.69 – which is also the index for Gabon, Ethiopia and the CAR – as regards ethnolinguistic fractionalisation, compared with 0.68 for Bolivia and the USSR. Since this index of ethnolinguistic fractionalisation refers to the probability that two randomly chosen individuals will be able to speak the same language, it integrates demographic data on the population of each country with the number of these ethnolinguistic groups which it contains. Thus societies like Ethiopia, with relatively large numbers of languages, may have lower fractionalisation rates than certain others if most of their people speak one or other of a few major tongues, such as Amharic, Gallinya or Tigrinya. These demographic factors ensure that the ethnolinguistic fractionalisation index of Taylor and Hudson is not a simple measure of language differences within nation-states. None the less, as an accurate
measure of ethnic diversity, the fractionalisation index suffers from its basic assumption that language indicates ethnicity.

Predictably, despite this bias, units in our selection with relatively few ethnic groups have lower average fractionalisation indices than those with more. Thus states with ten or fewer ethnic units average an index of 0.48 as against 0.68 for those with eleven to twenty such units. States with twenty-one to fifty ethnic units have an average of 0.77 as against 0.76 for those with fifty-one to 100 ethnic divisions, and 0.87 for Nigeria, with over 300. Mainly as a result of demographic factors, the fractionalisation means of countries with twenty-one to fifty ethnic units and of those with between fifty-one and 100 hardly differ.

As regards extra-state national affiliations, the average incidence increases steadily with the number of ethnic units in these states, from 5.25 for states with ten or fewer units to thirteen for Nigeria with over 100. However, as some of these ties relate to resident aliens, their increase may not be due primarily to increases in the number of indigenous ethnic units.

As regards attempted and successful coups, there is no discernible trend associated with increasing ethnic heterogeneity among these states. Similarly, neither as regards the average length of their independent existence, nor the frequency of their changes of regime, nor the average duration of their December 1982 political regimes and governments, is there any indication that the differing numbers of ethnic units in these states were salient or decisive.

However, there is a predictably close correlation between the numbers of ethnic units and first languages in these twenty-seven states. All countries with ten or fewer ethnic units have ten or fewer first languages, and likewise all six countries with eleven to twenty ethnic units have fewer than twenty-five first languages. However, of nine states with twenty-one to fifty ethnic units, four have fewer than twenty-five and five have twenty-six to fifty languages. Likewise, of three states with fifty-one to 100 ethnic units, one has fewer than fifty first languages, two have more. In short, while close and general, these ethnolinguistic correspondences are far from perfect.

As regards their experiences of internal violence since independence, and in Liberia and Ethiopia since 1932, three of the five countries that have had none, and three others that have had little, have ten or fewer ethnic units. On these and other such distributions it seems that internal violence may be less common and severe in states with fewer ethnic groups, but those are also the units with the shortest average independent life. However, while none of the fourteen states with twenty or fewer ethnic groups have had internal wars, one-third of those with

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Table 9.2 Some social and political conditions of twenty-seven African countries (Dec. 1982) classified by number of ethnic divisions in each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of ethnic units per country</th>
<th>-10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>21-50</th>
<th>51-100</th>
<th>100+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of countries</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
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<td>(1) SOME SOCIAL CONDITIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Number of racial stocks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Ethno-linguistic index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>15.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
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<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Other nationalities present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Number of first languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td>26-50</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101+</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Religious majority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>(f) Societal type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex plurality</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segmental plurality</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hierarchical plurality</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>(g) Largest ethnic unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as % of total population</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>84(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% range</td>
<td>30-84</td>
<td>24-80</td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% average</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) Dominant ethnic unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Minority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
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---

(2) SOME POLITICAL CONDITIONS

(a) Years independent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>124</th>
<th>118</th>
<th>212</th>
<th>94</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>570/470</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.1/18.8</td>
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</table>

(b) Changes of regime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>32</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>114</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.22</td>
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</table>
twenty-one to fifty ethnic divisions, two-thirds of those with fifty-one to 100, and the only state in the set with more than 100 ethnic units have all suffered internal wars, two of which were proceeding in Mozambique and Chad when this was written. On these data the probabilities are that internal violence will increase in scale and incidence in these African countries as ethnic heterogeneity increases. Yet obviously the mere increase or decrease of ethnic heterogeneity cannot of themselves account for such phenomena. Nonetheless, as Table 9.2 shows, on average the number of ethnic units involved in incidents of internal violence increases steadily as the numbers of such groups increase, perhaps, because any severe national conflict, such as the Nigerian civil war, will involve people drawn from a correspondingly broad range of ethnic units.

Given data already reported on the political organisation and governments of these states, it is appropriate to enquire whether their regimes or may not differ as a function of their differing levels and degrees of ethnic fragmentation. As noted above, if we may rely on these category means, there is no obvious correlation between increasing ethnic heterogeneity and changes of regime; and the same is true for duration of governments, seen as teams of ruling personnel under specific leaders, to go by these ratios as of December 1982. Nor can I discern any linkage between the differing degrees of ethnic heterogeneity and types of government in these twenty-seven states, on the data summarised in Table 9.2. While nine states permitted no political party organisation, fourteen were one-party states, de jure or de facto, and four – Senegal, the Gambia, Nigeria and Lesotho – had two or more parties each. On these data, there is no obvious association between type of party organisation and degree of ethnic heterogeneity in these units. The same

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of countries</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.77</td>
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**Table 9.2 (cont.)**

<table>
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<th>Number of countries</th>
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<th>20</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Selected African countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of countries</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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**Table 9.2 (cont.)**

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point applies as regards their ruling groups. In eleven states the army rules on its own or as the dominant partner in association with civilians, while in five the sole political party under its president and leader was the effective ruling group, without itself being subordinate to any ethnic division. In Chad, as of December 1982, there was no effective ruling unit, the country then being torn apart instead by an inconclusive civil war which had thus far brought profit only to Libya. In three other countries there was no single ‘ruling unit’; and for two we lack sufficient data. In three the rulers represented the largest ethnic group and sometimes ruled through the sole legal political party; but in two countries, São Tomé and Ethiopia, both containing four racial stocks, the ruling units were ethnic minorities, namely Amhara who dominate the Dergue and Ethiopian army, and the criollos or mestíceos who approximate 5 per cent of the population of São Tomé.

It is useful to distinguish between ruling and dominant units, since dominant ethnic units may not always engage directly in ruling, while ruling units, such as the Front de la Libération Nationale in Algeria, may themselves sometimes be simply organs for pursuit of the interests of dominant ethnic groups. Of these twenty-seven states, to my knowledge four had no dominant ethnic units in December 1982, and for another six I lack the necessary information. In the remaining seventeen, the dominant ethnic units were numerical majorities in ten and demographic minorities in seven. Of the ten states effectively under the domination of their ethnic majorities, six had ten or fewer ethnic units, two had eleven to twenty, and another two had twenty-one to fifty. In half of the countries dominated by ethnic minorities, the army had the government firmly under control; but only one of these had ten or fewer ethnic units, as against two each with eleven to twenty, twenty-one to fifty, and fifty-one to 100. On these inconclusive data the chances that the largest ethnic group will be the dominant one seem highest in societies with ten or fewer units of this kind and decrease steadily as ethnic heterogeneity increases, all of which perhaps is no great surprise.

Collective relations

Our problem is to account for the differing levels of internal disorder and political instability as reflected by changes of regime and government, coups and collective violence during the independent lifetimes of these states, and, for Ethiopia and Liberia, during the past 50 years, paying special attention to the relations of their differing racial and ethnic composition to these developments. As we have already seen, while not irrelevant, biological races are rarely mobilised as such in these contexts;

and even when that happens, populations generally identify and group themselves as ethnic rather than racial groups, however forcefully they may state their aims in racial terms. As each of the major racial stocks of mankind contains a large number of ethnic units distinguished by language, culture, homeland, social organisation and history, these ethnic divisions are especially relevant to the order and stability of the societies and states of which they are part; and as ethnic units are both the basic components of national societies and often their chief rivals for the loyalties of citizens, we should perhaps concentrate on inter-ethnic relations and factors in our search for a key to the political instabilities and collective orders of these African societies. However, since evidence reviewed above indicates that their differing degrees of ethnic and/or racial heterogeneity cannot account for the differing social and political experiences of these states, where shall we seek the key?

If simple differences in the numbers of racial stocks and/or ethnic units cannot account for the recent socio-political upheavals and experience of these twenty-seven states, separately or together, clearly neither race nor ethnicity by itself operates as an independent variable to promote or subvert their social order and/or political stability. None the less, since all but two of the states have recently achieved their independence from white foreign rule, sometimes through bloody and protracted wars, the potential significance of racial differences for their political and social orders cannot be denied. The secessionist movements that have shaken Ethiopia following the deposition of Haile Selassie also have prominent racial overtones, since the Cushitic Somali and Oromo (Galla) and the ruling Amhara differentiate and contrast themselves in those terms. In Guinea-Bissau the coup of 1980 that removed Luis Cabral from power simultaneously swept away the ruling mestíceo elite in the Cape Verde Islands, on whom Cabral relied. In Mauritania the horizontal cleavages between ‘white Moors’, ‘black Moors’ and the black slaves (harratin) are also racial at base, as is the division in São Tomé and Príncipe between the filhas de terra or criollos of mixed descent, who are a very small ruling minority, and the black Forros, Angolares and others who are obliged to obey the ruling minority by the large, well-equipped Angolan force at their disposal, backed by Cuban technicians and advisers and strong Soviet support for the ‘Marxist’ regime. Such situations all display the use of racial differences to structure relations between collectivities of differing stocks. When that occurs, race differences provide the sole base or part of the base for the differential incorporation of collectivities in hierarchic or complex plural societies, de facto or de jure.

However, relatively few of the hierarchic and complex pluralities in this set, all of which depend for their structures on differential incorpora-
ation de facto or de jure, make such prominent use of racial criteria for the hierarchic ordering of groups within them. In Guinea under the government of Sekou Touré, the Malinke have dominated the state since 1958, although they are not the largest ethnic unit within it. As Guinea’s population is of one race, racial differences play no part in their de facto conditions of incorporation. Likewise, in the Ivory Coast, where the Baoule under Houphouet-Boigny have controlled the state since 1960, racial differences cannot be invoked to justify or explain Baoule domination. The same point holds for Sierra Leone where Temne, though not the largest ethnic group, have exercised dominion under President Siaka Stevens over the more numerous Mende and others. In Togo and the Central African Republic, where the governments and peoples are controlled by members of the small Kabre and Mbaka minorities respectively, differential incorporation prevails de facto without reference to race; and in other countries, such as Niger, Nigeria, Liberia and Benin, as of December 1982, although there were no single dominant groups, differential incorporation none the less prevailed, de facto if not de jure, as the basis for radical differences of political status and opportunities among the population. In short, as Liberia before Sergeant Doe’s coup illustrates, differential incorporation is frequently instituted and maintained on grounds quite indifferent to race, and among populations of the same racial stock. On the other hand, where present, as in Chad, Senegal or Niger, race differences are often unaccompanied by any structures of differential incorporation that involve race. On this evidence it seems clear that the social significance of racial variables reflects their relationships to the prevailing modes of incorporation that provide the basic framework of societal structure. While freely available as a basis for the differential or segmental incorporation and articulation of collectivities, race, like culture, ethnicity and other variables, depends for its expression and social and political significance on the prevailing de facto and de jure modes of incorporation, and the place in the social order that those structures assign to it.

This conclusion holds also with respect to the social expression and significance of ethnic variables in the public domain or national life of each of these countries. Thus far, since independence, none of these states has experienced internal violence as an expression of conflict between economically distinct and contraposed groups, however strenuously such interpretations are advocated by certain scholars, politicians and news commentators. The reasons for this are, as Sekou Touré long ago indicated, that, including Mauritania, Liberia and Ethiopia in their colonial and independent phases, these African societies all lacked the necessary conditions for class organisation defined as a hierarchy of social strata distinguished by relations to the means of production. Even where such formations have recently begun to develop in the urban sectors of such states as Senegal, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Gabon, their nature and articulations are confused and overlaid by a variety of cross-cutting structures such as ethnicity, cult, regional and national allegiances. Class differences and relations are further obscured by the role of corruption in the monetised sectors of these economies; by the basic differences of status between new and traditional elites and others, whatever their political background; and, finally, by the control of these elites over the productive processes and means as a function of their bureaucratic power in the army, the sole or dominant political party and the civil service. Coupled with the absence of an economic base adequate for the development of class organisations coextensive with their populations, these societal conditions operate to frustrate, restrain and diffuse those forces and tendencies that would perhaps in other conditions generate the kinds of class organisation that many Western scholars have come to expect in contemporary societies. However, while contemporary, these African states incorporate societies that are still sorely underdeveloped, economically and otherwise. It would indeed be extraordinary if these nations none the less exhibited the kinds of class formation that are found in developed industrial societies.

As mentioned above, of the twenty-seven states in this set, twenty-two have known internal violence of differing degree, extent and duration since independence or, in the case of Ethiopia and Liberia, during the past fifty years. Of these, six have had little violence, while ten have had considerably more, but without internal war, and six have been torn by internal wars of differing scale and duration. In several cases these incidents have attracted foreign interventions, sometimes directly, as recently in Chad by Libyan and French field forces, in Ethiopia by Cuba, Soviet Russia and Somalia, in the CAR by France, in the Gambia by Senegal and in Mozambique, though covertly, by South Africa.

As shown in Table 9.2, of eight states with ten or fewer ethnic units, three have had little and two considerable violence without internal war, while three have so far had none. Of six countries with eleven to twenty ethnic units, four have experienced internal violence without war, one little violence, and one none at all. Of nine countries with twenty-one to fifty ethnic divisions each, one has had no and two have had little violence since independence, while three have had internal wars and three have had violence without civil war. Of the four countries with more than fifty ethnic units each, three have suffered internal wars, while one has had internal violence without war. On these data, ethnic units have been
involved as aggressors or victims in these episodes in twenty-two states; but as so many units were implicated in the Nigerian civil war, and as that country has such an exceedingly large number of ethnic divisions, it is useful to reckon the incidence of violent ethnic involvements in these countries without Nigeria, in which case the average is 2.8 rather than c. 6.9. Their incidence increases steadily from 1.6 for those with ten or fewer ethnic units to 5.3 for those with fifty to a hundred.

On this evidence it is abundantly clear that within these African states collective violence often has ethnic bases and orientations even when, as periodically in the Ivory Coast and Gabon, it takes the form of indiscriminate xenophobic attacks on immigrant workers of foreign nationality, having previously identified them in ethnic terms. Even so, our data also show that despite their polyethnicity, nearly one-fifth of these states have as yet had no internal violence, and six have had little, as many as have had internal wars. It seems clear, despite the correlated increases in the incidence and levels of internal violence as ethnic fragmentation increases in these states, that of itself ethnicity cannot ‘explain’ these patterns, since several states with identical levels of ethnic fragmentation differ in this respect, while others with differing levels of ethnic fragmentation have very similar records, both as regards the kind and frequency of their internal violence and as regards the number of ethnic units that violence involved. We are thus once more obliged to reject the idea that ethnicity or ethnic divisions, by their presence or number, may in some curious way explain or account for the historical experiences of these African states, and must look elsewhere for light on this question.

Modes of incorporation

It seems self-evident that if some ethnic units are engaged in internal violence as aggressors or targets while others are not, whether or not the other party is a unit of the same kind, by itself ethnic status cannot explain the differing experience of these ethnic units; and the same conclusion holds for race differences as ‘explanations’ of violence between racial stocks. These data on violence and collective involvement provide the clue to a better understanding of the dynamics involved, since violence like conflict, is a social relation between two or more parties; and collective violence characteristically incorporates the aggregates it articulates de facto, if they have not before been so aligned, whether as superior and subordinate, as formally equivalent though in practice otherwise, or as complementary in some symbiosis as allies or rivals. It is by virtue of such differences in their articulations with one another or with the rulers and their regime that ethnic collectivities become or do not become involved as aggressors or targets in episodes of collective violence that differ in scale, duration and intensity, as reported above. Therefore, since such collective articulations must pre-exist, by definition, the conflict situations in which they find violent expression, and since on our data the latter are so very widespread and frequent in these African states, both those recently created and the two older ones, it behoves us to see whether the modes of incorporation that furnish the basic frameworks for these societies and states may not themselves generate the forces and issues that promote internal violence, by selecting ethnic divisions on specific grounds as aggressors or as targets of the government or of one another.

Those xenophobic riots that periodically express the hostilities of citizens to immigrants among them – generally Africans, but recently in Abidjan during the economic recession, against French and other white expatriates – illustrate the ways in which the structure of incorporation that prevails identifies in advance the parties to the conflict by defining their respective statuses. For in all such cases, while the citizens as members of the polity hold rights and duties in it, the immigrants as non-members and excorporated persons depend for the rights and facilities they enjoy on the effective support of the host state and its representatives; but rarely has any African state moved to redress their wrongs, following xenophobic attacks upon them by its nationals, preferring instead to arrest these demonstrations by displays of force and to expel the immigrants as soon as possible.

Setting aside the Senegambian confederation which was established in 1982 without any changes in the internal organisation of either country, none of the twenty-seven states currently prescribes the incorporation of its citizens in primary units of equivalent or complementary status, as is now true of Senegal and the Gambia. From 1960 to 1966 that was de facto the situation in the first Nigerian federation, but under the constitution of 1978 Nigerians were incorporated universalistically on formally identical conditions in the new federal republic, while exercising political rights in the states they lived in. In December 1982, of these twenty-seven states, twenty-one proclaimed in their constitutions the universalistic incorporation of their citizens on identical grounds within the polity, as do most other contemporary states, under the influence of the American constitution. Of the remaining six, I do not know the precise conditions on which citizens were then incorporated in four – namely Liberia, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia – primarily because of the general obscurity in which recent events had shrouded their regimes. In Mali, while the constitution of 1974 proclaimed universalistic incorporation of
all citizens, it excluded from political office all who had held senior offices during the presidency of Modibo Keita (1960–8), whom the present ruler, Moussa Traore, then a lieutenant, overthrew in a coup. The prevailing version of the Mali constitution therefore combines differential incorporation of Modibo Keita’s office-holders with the universalistic incorporation of everyone else, at least formally. Substantive conditions, of course, differ widely. Apart from that anomaly, only in Mauritania was differential incorporation prescribed de jure by the constitution, which, as befits an Islamic republic, restricts citizenship to Muslims; but when that constitution was suspended in 1978 following a military coup, the preceding differential incorporation of Negro slaves (harattin) and Moors, who form the vast majority of the population, prevailed de facto and probably in law as well, despite several ineffectual attempts to abolish slavery by Mauritanian rulers over the past hundred years. Thus, of the twenty-three states for which our information is adequate, twenty-one profess to incorporate their citizens universalistically and on formally identical terms. However, professions and performance often differ, and this is especially true and significant as regards the de jure and de facto conditions on which citizens are incorporated in these African states.

Of the twenty-one states that proclaim the universalistic incorporation of their citizens as equal in law and government, and assure all of those rights and freedoms necessary for their free and full participation as individuals in the state, in December 1982 only four, namely Senegal, Nigeria, Gambia and the Cape Verde Islands, did in fact implement these provisions and maintain such regimes. So, despite its lack of a constitution at that date, did Ghana under the military rule of Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings and his colleagues. All other seventeen countries whose constitutions proclaimed their universalism in fact incorporated their citizens on very different grounds. Thus in Gabon, Niger, Benin, Togo, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Upper Volta citizens were differentially incorporated, the primary differences of status in most of these states being those between the military or ruling party and their civilian dependents on the one hand, and all other citizens en masse. In Algeria, Cameroon and São Tomé, which also proclaimed universalistic incorporation, citizens were incorporated de facto both differentially and segmentally, as, for example, the Forros and Angolares of São Tomé, the Kabyles, Mozabites and other non-Arabised Berbers in Algeria, the Bamileke, Gbaye, Bamenda, Bamun, Fulani and other ethnic divisions of Cameroon. In the Central African Republic, which also proclaimed its universalistic commitment, citizens are in fact incorporated as members of one or other of the ethnic units that furnish the primary components of that society. For Guinea, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi and Lesotho, although the information suggests that differing combinations of differential and segmental incorporation prevail despite the universalistic proclamations of their constitutions, we lack decisive evidence on the actual status of the mass of their citizens. This is also true of Liberia under the government of Commander Doe.

Of the remaining states in this set, Mauritania incorporates its people differentially, as do Mali and Equatorial Guinea. Chad and Ethiopia each combine differential and segmental incorporation for differing sections of their populations. There is no evident association between the differing numbers of ethnic units in these societies and their de jure or de facto structures of incorporation, or between such numbers and any divergence between de jure and de facto structures. For example, of the eight countries having ten or fewer ethnic units, seven proclaimed the universalistic incorporation of their citizens, but only one, the Cape Verde Islands, fulfilled that promise. We lack appropriate data on the de facto status of the citizens of Guinea-Bissau and Lesotho; but the other countries, namely Algeria, Niger, Mauritania, São Tomé and Upper Volta, all maintain regimes of differential incorporation in fact, with or without supplementary segmental incorporation of some citizens.

Similar patterns appear when we examine the constitutionally proclaimed and actual conditions of incorporation in states with differing numbers of ethnic units. Of six countries having between eleven and twenty such components, five claimed to incorporate their citizens equally and freely on universalistic conditions; but of these only the Gambia in fact does so. For Malawi we lack decisive data, but for Togo, Benin and Equatorial Guinea the evidence indicates that de facto differential incorporation prevails.

Of the nine states in this set that have between twenty-one and fifty ethnic components, six have committed themselves constitutionally to the universalistic incorporation of their citizens, information is lacking on two, and the last, Mali, as noted above, combined universalistic and differential incorporation in its laws. Of the six countries that proclaim their universalistic commitments, only one, Senegal, in fact fulfils them. The de facto situation in two others, Guinea and Mozambique, is not clear enough to permit classification, as also in Liberia, which had no constitution in December 1982. Of other states in this group committed to universalistic incorporation, three, namely Sierra Leone, the Ivory Coast, and Gabon, incorporated their citizens differentially in fact. Of the three states that have fifty-one to a hundred ethnic units, though Cameroon and the CAR proclaimed the universalistic incorporation of their peoples, both display structures of segmental incorporation; and
Cameroon, like Ethiopia, combines that with de facto structures of
differential incorporation. On the other hand, in December 1982,
Nigeria fulfilled its constitutional commitments to the free and equal
incorporation of all its citizens on formally identical terms. This is no
longer the case following the military coup of December 1983 which
swept away both the regime and its constitutional base.

In fact, of the twenty-one states for which our information is adequate,
ten differentially incorporate their citizens de facto and another five do so
with simultaneous segmental incorporation of at least some collectivities.
Five, namely Ghana, Gambia, Senegal, Nigeria and the Cape Verde
Islands, in December 1982 incorporated their citizens universalistically,
and one, the Central African Republic, relied solely on segmental
provisions for the de facto incorporation of its people. In effect, most of
these states in practice incorporate their populations differentially, and
sometimes combine this with their de facto segmental organisation. Such
gaps between the constitutionally proclaimed conditions and rights of
citizens and the realities of their condition and organisation clearly
provide fertile grounds for collective concern and protests within these
states, and simultaneously oblige their civilian rulers to maintain suffi­
cient forces to assure their security and ability to control and suppress
internal protests or outbreaks of violence.

Most of the violent incidents cited above involve action by the
government against opposition, or protests against and challenges to the
government, its regime, policies, personnel or actual conduct of affairs.
This is equally true of attempted and successful coups aimed at replacing
rulers, of internal wars and of most internal violence without war, whether limited or considerable. However, while coups normally involve
the planned action of small groups of military personnel, civilian violence
and protests against government, its programmes and the like either involve the co-ordinated action of political parties or industrial groups
such as trade unions or the spontaneous action of unco-ordinated
collectivities. Only in response to heavy government reaction do such initially unplanned communal movements acquire the organisation,
leadership, techniques and resources necessary to extend the protests in
time and space. For this reason among others, however unrepresentative
they may be, given the support of their armed forces, African govern­ments can generally contain, disperse or suppress those collective
protests that do not have sufficiently large and extensive populations
behind them. In differing situations the alternatives in such major
confrontations either involve internal war between the government and its
opponents, or replacement or control of the government by some other
force, whether internal or external, as sometimes happens in the
former French territories, Chad, Gabon and the CAR.

The striking difference noted above between the de jure and de facto
modes by which the people are incorporated into these states simply
reflects the difference between these states and their constitutions, and
the societies on which they are based. Of eight states in the set with ten or
fewer ethnic units each, two were hierarchic pluralities, one was purely
segmental and five were complex pluralities that combined differential
and segmental pluralism. Of six societies having from eleven to twenty
ethnic units each, five were segmental pluralities and one complex, since
it also incorporated its population differentially. Moreover, of these five
segmental pluralities, three were manifestly anomalous, since one or more of the segments enjoyed superior status, power and opportunities.
Of nine nations that have twenty-one to fifty ethnic units, five were
complex pluralities and four segmental, three of the latter displaying
similar anomalies in the unequal resources and articulations of the
segments. Of the remaining four countries, one was segmental without
anomaly, and the others were complex pluralities that combined segmen­tal and differential incorporation.

Conclusion

Given the poly-ethnic composition of these African states (some of which
– São Tomé, Guinea-Bissau, the Cape Verde Islands, Mauritania, Niger,
Mali, Chad and Ethiopia – are also characterised by racial differences of
considerable significance among their native peoples, and all of which
exhibit ecological, economic and demographic differences between
their ethnic and regional populations), however deep the universalistic
commitment of their rulers to the freedom and equality of their citizens,
those ideals are very difficult to establish and maintain as routine
conditions of life in these societies. The fundamental difficulties derive
from the plural structures of these national societies, which reflect their
historical origins and composition.

Without exception these units include peoples of different language,
culture, religion, social organisation, wealth, power and numbers, most
of whom still live in their ancestral homelands, despite increasing
migratory trends. In consequence, neither are all these collectivities truly
equal in resources, needs, societal position, population, territory, wealth
and power; nor, given membership in a common state, will they readily
accept perceived inequalities of status and treatment, if they have the
resources and leadership necessary to challenge them. For much the
same reason, a people that feels, on economic, demographic, historical
or other grounds, that it represents the core of the nation is likely to
expect and demand differential treatment in recognition of its claims to
superior status. In these African nations such ethnic, religious, linguistic,
regional and racial interests operate within the army, the sole or dominant political party, the ruling elite, government bureaucracy, public and private firms, and other industrial groupings, as well as among the people in the towns and villages. If such differences of language, race and/or ethnicity, culture, religion, social institutions, homeland and collective interests coincide, as they commonly do, then, even within the new educated national elites, intense loyalties to one's natal group normally take precedence over all others except self-interest, and are so powerful and pervasive that almost everyone automatically gives priority to the claims and interests of his group over those of other units and the state. Thus, whether or not some African countries institutionalise conditions to fulfil their constitutional declarations of freedom and equality for all citizens before the law, given the tensions inherent in their plural compositions and in the actual conditions of collective life, unless some centrally co-ordinated unit has such preponderant power as to discourage challenge, they are unlikely to escape the disruptive effects of the contradiction between the structures of their societies and the conditions of universalism intrinsic to the state. It is this fundamental contradiction between the societal and political structures of these African countries that generates the social unrest and internal violence from which they suffer, and the political instability that commonly involves military coups, changes of constitution, government and regime.

The internal disorder and instability of these states reflects the basic contradiction between the plurality of their societies and the political requisite of equality before the law for all citizens, as the necessary condition of social order and stability. This contradiction derives from the fact that the national society incorporates its members in various plural divisions, segmentally or differentially, and sometimes together, by descent and socialisation, language, birthplace, culture and other means. Whether old or new, African states can neither deny, eliminate nor dissolve these societal divisions and structures of de facto incorporation by proclaiming universalism and the equality of their citizens; but neither can these states formally sanction the de facto inequalities and divisions among their peoples without thereby inviting their own disruption, whether through revolt, successionist movements, internal conquest, civil war, foreign interference, or by subordinating themselves to some foreign power willing to guarantee their political order. In effect, the de facto structures and units of societal incorporation that pre-existed and resisted the creation of these states still persist and disrupt their universalistic political orders by permeating the public domain, its organs and processes. In consequence, their proclamations of the freedom and equality of citizens are either suspended, ignored or violated so frequently as to lose credibility. The de facto segmental and/or differential incorporation of individuals in the basic societal divisions thus orders their articulation in the public domain as well as the private. The integrity, autonomy and stability of the government, the regime and the state are increasingly compromised until, intending to 'save the state and protect the people', some set of soldiers seizes power, or public protests initiate the familiar cycle of official repression and further protests, whose outcome depends substantially on the resources, organisation and leadership of the conflicting parties. It is ultimately the failure of these African states to maintain the separation of their public and private domains against these communal ties and interests that destroys their integrity and ruins their regimes.

These conclusions show that the solidarities and estrangements associated with differences of race and ethnicity depend for their form and content, their significance and intensity, on the prevailing structures of incorporation, de facto and de jure, through which individuals and collectivities hold their places as members of the national society and citizens of its state.

NOTES
1 The research summarised here is part of a much broader study of the social and political background of collective violence in contemporary states undertaken in association with Ms Rebecca French at Yale University.
2 To avoid unnecessary repetition I list the works I have found most relevant and helpful for this essay in the bibliography. By author, they were as follows:
   Amnesty International 1983          Kurian 1982
   Banks and Overstreet 1982            Paxton 1981
   Davidson 1983                        Taylor and Hudson 1976
   Decalo 1976                          Taylor and Jodice 1983
   International Bank of Reconstruction and Development 1981
   USA State Department 1983
3 The discussion of 'Democratic Stability and Ethnic Parties' by van Amersfoort and van der Wusten (1981) deals with a different set of issues and conditions.