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Biko Agozino

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EDITORIAL: RE-MAPPING AFRICA

*By Biko Agozino
Editor-in-Chief*

The National Geographic reported on November 20, 2002, that 11% of a sample of Americans aged 18-24 (that is, high school graduates, undergraduates, graduates, or working adults) could not find their own country on a map of the world. Is that embarrassment of 'geographic illiteracy' behind the recent rash of *Mapping* reports from the National Intelligence Council of the US, in which largely unnamed 'experts' avoid locating any country on the map but proceed without shame to offer what they admitted are 'fictional' scenarios of the future? The only difference is that the authors pretended that what they wrote about Africa had no fictional scenarios but was completely factual. What do you make of a document that was issued by the National Intelligence Council with a disclaimer on every page 'Discussion paper – does not represent the views of the US Government' (a disclaimer that was not present in the *Mapping Global Futures* report)? Perhaps, the authors were just kidding around but after some African leaders took the report seriously and rushed to the national legislative assembly with a request for a national response to the document we cannot but weigh in on the 'discussion' of the paper.

'*Mapping Sub-Saharan Africa's Future*', the report of a January 2005 one-day conference of US experts on Africa, sponsored by the National Intelligence Council to discuss likely trends in Sub-Saharan Africa over the next 15 years, was prepared under the 'auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for Africa' and was

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published on March 02, 2005. Since then, some scholars and some journalists have responded to the paper but I am yet to read a criminological response especially from among African criminologists regarding the paper. I think that African criminologists should join this discussion and bring their expertise to bear on the mapping of the future of Africa. The title of the paper refers to mapping and not to a map, it suggests that the paper is part of the efforts to structure the future of Africa and we cannot afford to be silent in this process of social structuration –an on-going process in which social structures are always far from finished but continue to be formed, transformed and reformed through human agency (Giddens, 1984).

What the title of the document suggests is not just map-reading but the more authoritarian cartographic task of map-making, more authoritarian because this appears to be the reserve of conquerors or colonizers although the Americans may deny any suggestion that they were trying to impose their preferred future on Africa. Theirs is only an attempt to predict the future as intelligence experts are supposed to do but with the modesty to declare that these are only ‘likely trends’ and not the destiny of Africa. The paper talks about ‘structural obstacles’ without identifying them but with enough indication that the experts subscribe to structural functionalism as a tool for analyzing the process of modernization, meaning westernization or what the document calls globalization.

One radical Nigerian journalist and mathematician, Dr. Edwin Madunagu of *The Guardian*, saw the document as a wishful thinking that dreams of an Africa that is completely depopulated, leaving only oil, gold, diamonds and other minerals for the international community, which he consistently identifies as

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imperialism, to exploit at ease. He admitted that the doomsday scenario painted in the paper for many African countries is not news given that many Africans have also warned of the collapse of many of the post-colonial regimes in Africa but with the exception that patriotic Africans have always remained optimistic that the people will find a solution to the many problems facing us. *Mapping Sub-Saharan Africa's Future* is full of doom and gloom for the majority of Africans while singing the praise of a few settler colonial locations. Other journalists writing in the same Nigerian newspaper saw the document as a timely warning to the countries that were identified as failing states to put their houses in order or face imminent collapse in 15 years. None of the responses tried to do a different mapping of Africa's future from the perspective of Africans as a united whole.

If such a report had been issued about China or about India or about Russia, you would have seen a different kind of response. They would most likely show the mirror back to the American experts and warn them that all is not well in their own country; that the US is the greatest debtor nation, relying on foreign investment to boost its post-industrial economy without a guarantee that if the foreigners suddenly cash out their bonds, the great Uncle Sam would have a leg to stand on. Some would point out that America imprisons more of its citizens than any other country in the world and that is hardly a good indication of a healthy future by any standard. Others will finger the lingering legacies of racism in America as a sign that the country is doomed to collapse in the near future. Americans know their own problems of poverty in the midst of wealth, racism in the midst of democracy, weakness in the midst of strength and stupidity in the midst of intelligence. Trying to tell America that its dominance will not last forever in the world

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is not a good scholarly way to respond to the prediction that Africa will be full of collapsed states within 15 years.

The unnamed Africanist experts were asked to review the National Intelligence Council report, *Mapping the Global Future*, which was authored by such vested interests as a high ranking official of Shell International Corporation among the few named experts, and see how the projections in that report would be reflected on Africa by 2015. Why was it necessary to have a one day conference (only a single day) on Africa after releasing a global report for which a conference was held on Africa in the US and another in South Africa as part of a series of conferences over many months but without any reference to Africa in the final mapping of the global future? Is it because the initial global mapping project ignored Africa with the excuse that its aim was not 'to describe every trend' but to identify what the experts considered to be the important drivers of development which policymakers must take into consideration? The answer comes in the first sentence of mapping Africa: Under the heading; Marginalization, Differentiation, the oracular experts prophesy that: 'Over the next 15 years, Sub-Saharan Africa will become less important to the international economy'.

The so-called experts assumed that African countries will not match the growth rate projected for the global economy in the NIC 2020 document and that they will fall far below the rates forecast for the fast-growing East Asian economies. The arrogance in this statement is obvious from the certainty signified by the word, 'will' as if signifying the will of the authors, in preference to the more conventional word, 'would' which signifies a higher probability of a different outcome or even a different scenario: the

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document asserts that African leaders ‘will’ be confronting different problems compared to the problems that ‘even other developing world leaders will confront.’ This sounds very much like racial profiling - the assumption that Africans will perform less in economic development, that the structures of the state in Africa will continue to be weak and that governance will continue to be poor in Africa. Is this what will be or what the authors would like to be the case in Africa? If it turns out to be contrary to the predictions of the experts, I have a feeling that they will be ashamed of themselves and so I think that they are praying that their predictions will come to pass. When a police officer stops a driver just because his skin is black, he prays that he will find some incriminating evidence and when this turns out not to be the case, rather than feel relieved that there is no crime to fight, the tendency is for the officer to be rude and to seek any reason to book the driver.

I hope that the authors of *Mapping Africa* will also be praying that their self-fulfilling prophecy is proved wrong at least in this case. What if Africa turns out by 2015 to have a vibrant economy, to have strong democratic state structures and to deliver rich governance, whatever that is, I do not think that the authors of the document should be kicking themselves and asking how they got it wrong. In other words, it could be argued that the whole point of the report is to warn against disasters and try to do something to prevent them but the way the document is presented as a prophecy indicates that a lot of egos are invested in its fulfillment. The reason for this is because the document is couched in structural functionalism which assumes that human societies are like organism with the social institutions acting as the organs. Thus if all the institutions are functioning well as in the organs of a healthy

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body, then the society would survive intact as it is but if the institutions are like diseased organs, then the society is doomed to die like an organism. Of course, this is only an analogy but the functionalists forget this when they present their falsifiable truths as religious dogma about what will happen on the judgment day. There is no cemetery where dead societies are buried simply because there is no such thing as a dead society since societies are far from being organisms. Simply put, Africa will continue to survive and flourish in this world whether or not the International Community likes it, and the world will be better for it. Structural functionalism tends to dogmatically privilege the status quo and tends to be prejudiced against progressive social change.

The structural functionalist framework of the report is underscored again in the section sub-titled, 'Increasing Differentiation'. This is one of the terms used by Durkheim to identify organic solidarity types of society with increased division of labor in contrast with mechanical solidarity types of society with less differentiation and less division of labor. The difference here is that the experts only saw differentiation among the parts of Africa without seeing Africa as a whole. To the experts, some countries will be differentiated from others in terms of high growths while some others are poorer than they were at independence more than 40 years previously. Some countries have relatively well established democracies while lawlessness and anarchy will increasingly be found in other parts. While some states have developed a strong national identity, others are still fighting divisive civil wars. In Africa, according to the experts, 'all bad things go together', whereas the good things do not always go together as some countries achieved economic growth without democratic dividends and vice-versa. The experts proclaim that globalization will increase differentiation, just as

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Durkheim would have it, by making the global market available to those countries performing well and allowing them to scale through some developmental problems while those performing poorly will face what the document identified as ‘the other side of globalization: illegal drug trades, arms traffickers, and a large global grey market...’ by which they meant the black market in timber and diamonds. The experts may have chosen the term ‘grey markets’ as a politically correct alternative to the more widely known ‘black market’ but the social control implications are the same.

A quick response to this neo-Durkheimianism is to remind readers of how dead wrong Durkheim’s historiography was in so far as he was presuming that pre-industrial society was more mechanical than industrial society and that industrial society is more organic, that crime and punishment tend to be more violent in mechanical types of solidarity while punishment tends to be more restorative in organic types of solidarity, and that industrial societies are paradoxically more integrated than pre-industrial societies, whereas many of these terms could be easily reversed. What the intelligence experts are assuming is that countries that are rated favorably in Africa will be rewarded by the inflow of foreign investment while countries that are rated low will be increasingly marginalized as punishment (old-school divide and conquer). This is the familiar socio-cybernetics of Talcott Parsons, suggesting that human society is like an information system and that you can predict the outcome if you input certain kinds of information. For instance, if you make it clear that people who break rules will be punished and those who follow the rules will be rewarded, most people will follow the rules especially when they see the deviants punished as a deterrent to others. But the question remains, what is

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the crime of Africa for which our people are being 'punished' (or victimized) by the international community?

The experts avoid stating the problem in terms of crime and punishment but hide behind assumptions of natural law to pronounce what they called 'A Stable Hierarchy', suggesting that the different levels of development among nations in Africa will unlikely change in the next 15 years. Poor countries will remain poor and those endowed with natural resources will continue to squander them while civil society groups that advocate democracy will continue to be unevenly distributed across the continent. Those countries that have embarked on multi-party democracies will likely continue although economic reform will be slower to bear fruits. The experts now command African countries on what they must do in addition to rolling out multi-party elections: they must strengthen legislatures, the judiciary and human rights. How can they write this under the suggestive heading and still go on to assert that 'apartheid need not be overcome again'. If hierarchy will remain stable, how come they suggest that apartheid need not be overcome again when economic apartheid is yet to be overcome even as the document acknowledges? The reason is because the document is couched on the functionalist assumption that inequality is essential for the survival of society. The problem is that even when unjust inequalities are maintained through exploitative and oppressive genocidal relationships between Africa and imperialism, it is still presented as a natural phenomenon and part of the homeostatic equilibrium that Parsons found to be natural while progressive social change is seen to be exogenous and unnatural, the preoccupation of trouble makers.

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The document goes on to discuss globalization which it defines as a ‘megatrend’ and as ‘a force so ubiquitous that it will substantially shape all other major trends in the world of 2020’. The document recognizes that Africa is the continent least affected positively by globalization while noting that cell phones and the spread of the internet have been aspects of globalization that affected Africa positively as part of the global community (without mentioning how much profits cell phone companies rake out of Africa with little or no infrastructural development). Also the remittances of the African Diaspora are recognized as some of the most important ‘exports’ by some African countries due to inadequate development of other sources of export earnings (but not a word about the fortress policies that seek to keep Africans away from immigrating while having an open door policy to immigrants from many other locations). Problems of stiff competition in the international economy are projected to affect Africa negatively, corruption is seen as a particular challenge to African countries (but of course corruption is rather a global challenge) and it is stated that the ‘migration of industries’ in search of cheap labor would not benefit Africa because China and India appear to have infinite supplies of cheap labor (without a word on how Africa was depopulated through the African holocaust of Trans Atlantic slavery that lasted for 400 years, costing Africa an estimated 100 million lives, and for which no reparations have been made). Some African countries like South Africa are projected to benefit from globalization because of their good governance and large pool of technical workers while countries like Nigeria are reported as lacking in democratic institutions and so are likely to lose out in the process of globalization.

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However, the document projects that most existing African states will remain on the map in 2020 (surprise, surprise) but that regional powers in Africa may (no, will) exercise more influence on their neighbors through military might (meaning that they will be buying more arms from the international community while their citizens starve). Many African states will not be able to increase their security significantly, we are told, because of poor economic development, declining foreign military assistance and because of the scourge of HIV-AIDS on security personnel. When an African state fails, it will have a neighborhood effect on surrounding countries that may also be dragged down with it.

Yet the document predicts that Africa will not be a supplier of international terrorists because, according to the experts, the nature of Islam practiced in Africa is different compared to the fundamentalism that is found in other regions of the world. Mahmood Mamdani would call this the discourse of *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* in which goodness and badness are defined exclusively from the point of view imperialism. There is no attempt to recognize that Africans are very peaceful people, that Gandhi admitted that he learned the philosophy of non-violence during his 14 years sojourn in South Africa, or even that it is not only Muslims who are capable of being terrorists.

The reason why the tone of the document is so negative is because the intelligence experts were focusing on dangers for America in the future. Their focus is on the next challenger for America, on who could beat America economically, socially, politically, diplomatically or militarily? If you read *Mapping Global Futures*, you would notice the triumphalism especially with respect to militarism, no one will come a close shot to American military

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supremacy in the next 20 years, we are told. It is true that the job of intelligence experts is to predict danger before it manifests but it is not always the most intelligent way to protect yourself. If you go about carrying a gun and trying to predict whether every person you meet is about to pull a gun on you, sooner or later you will be in big trouble. On the other hand, if you live your life trying to help the weak because you are strong (as Bob Marley advised), or trying to find love instead of searching for enemies, chances are that when you grow weak, or when you are heart-broken, some of the people you helped up their feet will watch your back and some of those you gave a hug and a kiss would return the love.

The document concluded by admitting that local forces would determine Africa's future and I could not agree more except that even on this, the experts emphasized hostile geography as the most important factor that will determine Africa's future as if we are some kind of vegetables and not humans with agency. Africans will continue mapping our own land and the future must be more promising than the document painted. Our optimism is based on current efforts to unite Africa into one republic. Once this is done, the basis for the gloom of the NIC document will wither away. The conclusion of the document is based on what individual African countries must do but the mapping of the future of America cannot be based on the policies of individual states and the District of Columbia. Rather, the United States of America is always analyzed as a whole and that is the structural problem that the NIC document alluded to but failed to identify.

Once the 54 countries in Africa become one country with 54 states, there will not be such wasteful spending on 54 embassies in every country in the world but a single powerful embassy, no wasteful

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spending on a multiplicity of defense budgets, no more immigration clogs on the wheel of labor migration and trade, no more attempts by individuals or any foreign powers to dominate Africa again and run it like a private farm. To achieve this, we are not going to be following the time-table of the US intelligence community. We can achieve unity overnight or we can do it in 30 years provided it is done right. China and India, Russia and Australia, the US and Canada are all examples of large economies of scale that have made huge leaps in economic and political developments because they are united instead of being divided and consequently weakened. How come the so-called intelligence experts did not see this and recommend it in their report or did they see it but tried to use mind control to divert the attention of Africans from the urgent task of unity?

The answer is that Americans are so 'intelligent' they think that Africans are less intelligent and that we will follow every suggestion they make uncritically. In *Black Women and the Criminal Justice System*, I reported a similar nonsensical racial profiling by the British police which stated that 'intelligence gathered' indicated that black people were potential members of a gang of robbers and that anyone who saw black people in the area should call the police. I noted that the word intelligence is relatively new in this context because before the Second World War, the police used the phrase criminal investigation to refer to what they now call intelligence. The propagandistic suggestion is that whatever 'intelligence gathered' must be factual and incontrovertible whereas the intelligence experts themselves know that 'intelligence' is rarely accurate as the false 'intelligence' that led to the invasion of Iraq demonstrates. The difficulty here is that many policy makers and intelligence officers themselves lack

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adequate knowledge of research methods otherwise they will know that what intelligence gathered in science remains a falsifiable truth and so there is always room for it to be proved wrong otherwise it will be dogma and not a scientific theory.

Therefore, the suggestions in mapping Africa should be regarded simply as hypotheses and it is up to Africans to see to it that the hypotheses would be confirmed or denied. The intelligence experts who proposed these guesses should not feel sore if Africans prove them wrong as we are bound to do and they should not gloat if circumstances prevent Africans from reaching their full potentials. If they are good intelligence officers who are intelligent rather than dumb, they will be working and praying that Africa proves them wrong because if they are right and Africa is full of collapsed states, the rest of the world will also be affected adversely. Du Bois warned a long time ago that Africa would be at the center of major global conflicts due to the color lines of imperialism and he was proved right again because the decision to invade Iraq was based mainly on the false 'intelligence' that Iraq was about to buy uranium from Africa to make weapons of mass destruction.

Thus, the suggestion that Africa will be less important to the global community in the next 20 years is merely white supremacist wishful thinking. Before the second imperialist world war, such sentiments were expressed simply in racist terms that suggested that the white race would always be the master race and that racial equality was impossible to imagine. According to Frank Furedi (1998) it is remarkable how the Nazi holocaust and anti-colonial struggles quickly forced Westerners to admit that the idea of a master race was fraught with danger and lacked any scientific basis. Today, no American intelligence expert would openly assert

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the superiority of whites over black Africans but they can always assert that Africa can never match the economic growth of the rest of the world, which is simply a polite way of saying that Africans are inferior to the rest of the world. On the contrary, Africans strongly believe that the 21st Century will belong to Africa given the leaps that our people are bound to make once we are united. When the People's Republic of Africa is finally constituted, America needs not fear us for any reason even though we will be in a stronger position to demand and receive reparations for the African holocaust. We will be too busy rebuilding our futures to try and attack America or any other country. On the contrary, our unity and our prosperity will benefit everyone in the world because we will be in a position to buy more from and sell more to the rest of the world as is the case in China today. We will still sell our oil, gold and diamonds to those who want them at market prices and so our unity is no threat to democratic globalization. Africans Unite!

On that note, let me introduce you to the intelligent articles written for this issue of our journal. You will agree with me that the descendants of Africa who wrote most of these wonderful articles cannot be easily written off as irrelevant to the future of the world. You will notice that the brilliance displayed is not in the form of hatred or racial profiling of other groups of people but mainly rugged defense of the humanity of Africans with predictable brighter futures for Africans and everyone else. Dr Michael West kicks off this issue with a most readable and convincing essay on how so-called 'intelligence' officers stupidly destroyed one of the leading intellectuals who could have made the world a better place for the whole of humanity. His account of the hostility of Jamaican 'intelligence' officers against the great Walter Rodney, in collaboration with US diplomatic forces, reads like a movie script.

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As they say, it is stranger than fiction. In the next issue of this journal, we plan to bring you the concluding part of this amazing tale of heroism, peacefulness and pursuit of wisdom in the face of cowardice, war-mongering and plain stupidity.

This is followed by Dr Mbuba's reasoned argument against racial profiling in no other place than Louisiana where hurricane Katrina opened the eyes of even the greatest skeptics to the damaging reality of racism in America. You remember that otherwise investigative reporters of news agencies took pictures of black people and labeled them looters and took pictures of whites in similar situations and labeled them survivors looking in their shopping bags. Mbuba cites a long line of researchers who uncritically assert the stereotype that race is a strong predictor of recidivism and then goes on to review the evidence from Louisiana before concluding that the facts do not fit such racial profiling. The danger here is that criminologists who advance racial profiling would help to encourage police officers to continue policing innocent black individuals aggressively even when there is no proof that black people are more criminal than any other group of people, thus missing the chance to tackle real criminals just because they have white skin.

This is followed by Dr Otu and Dr Horton who examine the theory of Ethnic Differential Opportunity Definition of crime which suggests that crime is relative to culture and ethnicity. They use Supreme Court decisions that reject the use of convictions in foreign jurisdictions as the basis for determining felony status in America. They conclude that certain ethnic groups are more likely to see certain behaviors as criminal compared to other ethnic groups and added that certain ethnic groups have more

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opportunities to engage in certain criminal behaviors than other ethnic groups. Michael Moore would certainly agree because in his book, *Stupid White Men*, he argued that white men like himself should be feared more than black men contrary to racial profiling assumptions since white men have more opportunities to engage in violent crime without even recognizing their aggression as criminal and they have more historical track records of violence to prove it.

Egharevba and Hannikainen add to these critiques of racial profiling, a focus on how the police interact with immigrant minorities in Finland. Relying on an opinion survey of graduating police cadets and serving police veterans in Finland, the authors found that the officers were ignorant of multicultural differences between immigrant communities and the dominant cultures in Finland. The implication of cultural competency for police officers and other officials dealing with ethnic minority populations from positions of authority cannot be over-emphasized given the above commentary on ignorant 'intelligence experts' who proudly announced the disintegration of a whole continent of Africa out of paranoia that a strong Africa would be a threat to Western affluence.

The above examination of cultural competence issues is followed by a report by an American woman who lived in Uganda and was amazed to find that she could get away with things that the citizens could have been jailed for. She suggests that she was able to get away with a traffic offense because she asked to read the law and informed the apparently ignorant police officers that the offense required only a ticket and not a detention. Her experience reminds us of how privileged westerners are in Africa and makes us wonder if it was an African who was arrested in Washington D.C., she

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could have had the privilege of lecturing the police on the law and still get away with it by, for example, showing her Ugandan passport to the officers the way that the American passport seems to open doors for its citizens in Africa. The case of Rodney King in 1992 serves as a reminder that even American citizens who are of the wrong color could have the crap beaten out of them for a suspected traffic offense that required only a ticket, not because he or the officers were ignorant of the law but because of racial profiling and the colonial policing of black populations in America.

The next entry in this issue is a research note by Kansaye who examines the values of detained juveniles in Mali to see how such values impact on the peace of the community around them. The paper analyses interviews with 75 convicted minors compared to a group of law-abiding adolescents. Whereas those who are law-abiding tend to prioritize their healthcare needs as the most valuable, the law-breakers tend to highlight self-realization as the most important value. The article goes through many other value differentiations that could help experts to deal with juvenile delinquents more effectively.

Finally, we present to you a commentary on two chapters from an edited book. The reviewer chose to focus on those two chapters in detail because they are the chapters relevant to Africa in the book. Dr Okerefoezeke's positive commentary is indicative of the high quality of scholarship represented in the whole book.

We wish to thank these authors for giving us the opportunity to review and publish their essays. We also wish to thank our anonymous reviewers for their generous time and kindness and for

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their constructive criticism of the papers. The opinions expressed in these papers and this editorial are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the African Criminology and Justice Associations.

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