

Chapter 26 - Africa and the Atlantic World

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African Politics and Society in Early Modern Times

- By 700s, Africans organized large kingdoms and empires in West Africa, and city-states in East Africa.
- European traders destroyed the system; Portuguese caused fall of East African city-states, and trade competition caused empires to break into regional kingdoms.
- Long-distance trade grew and so did Islam and Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa.

The States of West Africa and East Africa

- Between 700s-1500s, powerful kingdoms and imperial states ruled west Africa.
- For example, Ghana gained financial resources by taxing trans-Saharan trade, and Mali took over later.

The Songhay Empire

- Mali began to weaken by 1400s and was replaced by the state of Songhay as dominant power of western regions.
- Sunni Ali, the Songhay ruler, conquered Mali and used Timbuktu and Jenne to dominate central Niger Valley trade.

Songhay Administration

- Governors oversaw provinces and military was run effectively by hierarchy of command.
- Imperial navy patrolled Niger River, which was the trade highway of the Songhay empire.
- Trans-Saharan trade brought salt, textiles, and metal goods south in exchange for gold and slaves.
- Emperors were all Muslims, and ensured Islam would be important in society (Islamic schools and mosques) - however, they often consulted pagan diviners and magicians.

Fall of Songhay

- Songhay was attacked by musket-using armies from Morocco in 1591.
- Small, regional kingdoms and city-states formed in west Africa; some entered commercial relations with Europeans.
- Atlantic trade worked against favorable conditions of imperial states like Mali and Songhay, since they relied on trans-Saharan trade to rule their empires.

Swahili Decline

- Swahili city-states in East Africa were conquered by Portuguese forces by 1505.
- Portuguese failed to control trade in east Africa despite making administrative bases in Mozambique and Malindi.
- Disrupted trade patterns to the point that Swahili cities could never recover from the ensuing decline.

The Kingdoms of Central Africa and South Africa

The Kingdom of Kongo

- Emerged in 1300s, built a centralized state with officials overseeing military, judicial, and financial affairs.
- Portuguese established political and diplomatic relationship with Kongo.
- Portuguese influenced Kongo to become a Christian state.

Slave Raiding in Kongo

- Portuguese traded textiles, weapons, advisors, and artisans in exchange for copper, ivory, and

especially slaves.

- Caused domestic slave economy in the region, some slaves were enemies of Kongo, others were royal subordinates - Portuguese continued slave trade despite Kongoleses asking them to limit it.
- Ties between Kongo and Portuguese began to deteriorate after Portuguese found opportunities to the south, they went to war in 1665 and caused the kingdom of Kongo to disintegrate.

The Kingdom of Ndongo

- Grew from a small client state of Kongo to a powerful regional kingdom due to wealth from Portuguese merchants via slave trade.
- Portuguese began trying to make it into the colony of Angola.

Queen Nzinga

- Largely resisted Portuguese domination of the colony.
- Rallied central Africans to resist the Portuguese, also allied with Dutch mariners.
- Planned to drive Portuguese out, then expel the Dutch, then finally create a vast central African empire.

The Portuguese Colony of Angola

- Despite strategy, Nzinga was unable to get rid of the Portuguese who used superior weapons and exploited political divides in the region.
- When she died, Portuguese forces were able to extend and tighten control over Angola.
- Established the first European colony in sub-Saharan Africa.

Regional Kingdoms in South Africa

- Regional kingdoms dominated affairs in South Africa.
- Kingdoms emerged as a result of trade with Swahili city-states who wanted gold, ivory, and slaves.
- One such kingdom, Great Zimbabwe, dominated gold-bearing areas between Zambesi and Limpopo R. until late 1400s.

European Arrival in South Africa

- Portuguese and Dutch mariners began to strike alliances with regional kingdoms to advance their interests.
- Dutch established trading post at Cape Town (1652), used firearms to carve out land for themselves and used local Khoikhoi (hunter-gathering) people for labor.
- Dutch conquests in the 1700s laid foundation for Dutch and British colonies there, which would become the most prosperous European possessions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Islam and Christianity in Early-Modern Africa

- Indigenous religions were still influential in the early modern era.
- Devoted their attention either to powerful spirits who intervened in human affairs and were tied to geographic features, or to ancestors who gave rewards to those who were worthy and remembered them, and punished who did not.
- Both Islam and Christianity attracted increasing influence in the area, though.

Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Islam was most popular in commercial centers of West Africa and Swahili city-states of East Africa.
- African Muslims blended Islam with indigenous beliefs and customs, created a syncretic religion which made a home for African beliefs in spirits and magic and permitted men and women to blend more liberally than in north Africa, Arabia, and southwest Asia.
- Struck Muslim merchants from those other lands as impure and offensive.

The Fulani and Islam

- Fulani were strict Muslims who, in 1680, sought to remove the "impure and offensive" brand of

Islam with conquest in attempts to establish Islamic states in west Africa.

- Did not succeed in their religious goal, but did create powerful states, spread Islam in the countryside, and provided Islamic education.

Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Christianity also mixed with traditional beliefs and customs.
- Portuguese brought Catholicism to Kongo and Angola, which blended with African traditions to form syncretic cults.

The Antonian Movement

- Dona Beatriz took the Portuguese cult surrounding patron saint of Portugal, St. Anthony, and put an African twist on it (Jesus was a black African man, Kongo was the true holy land, heaven is for Africans).
- Portuguese missionaries had her arrested and burned at the stake for heresy.
- Her movement still continued, working to strengthen the monarchy, reconstructed Kongo society, and even challenged King Pedro who they saw as an unworthy ruler.

Social Change in Early Modern Africa

- African society followed long-established patterns during early modern era despite political turmoil and state-building activity.
- Kinship groups were still the basis of social organization, with clans handling local affairs.
- Clan leaders consulted with each other in regions without kingdoms to govern large areas; in areas with kingdoms, they implemented state policy.
- African interaction with Europeans changed African society with European metal goods and textiles.

American Food Crops in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Trade brought American food crops like manioc, maize, and peanuts to supplement local bananas, yams, rice, and millet (staple foods of sub-Saharan Africa).
- Manioc (cassava) was the most important because it grew amazingly in the tropical soils that couldn't really grow other crops.

Population Growth

- Bread from manioc flour caused steady population growth.
- Population grew by the tens of millions.
- Important because this was at the same time that millions of Africans were forced to go to the Caribbean and Americas (where they were immensely abused).

The Atlantic Slave Trade

- Most momentous activity that connected Africa to the Atlantic world in this era.
- Exchanged slaves to run European plantations in the Americas for European-manufactured products such as firearms.
- Continued until the 1800s, when most states abolished its practice.

Foundations of the Slave Trade

Slavery in Africa

- Until 1800s, many settled agricultural populations had slaves in their societies.
- African slaves came from war captives, as well as criminals and individuals expelled from their clans.
- Enslaved people had no personal or civil rights; their owners could work them at will, punish them, and sell them.
- African slavery was different from European and Asian slavery since power was determined not by

ownership of land but by ownership of the means to work the land, so slaves were a symbol of power and inheritable property - however, slaves could also be assimilated into kinship groups and within a generation could obtain freedom.

Islamic Slave Trade

- Muslim merchants sought African slaves to distribute to the Mediterranean basin, southwest Asia, India, sometimes southeast Asia and China.
- Traditional sources soon ran dry so merchants raided villages and captured innocent individuals as slaves.
- By the time Europeans entered the slave trade scene in 1450, slave trafficking was part of African society and they used the existing institutions for capturing, selling, and distributing slaves to bring about enormous involuntary migration that shaped development of societies throughout Atlantic Ocean basin.

Human Cargoes

- African slave trade began small, but steadily grew until it reached enormous proportions.
- Early Portuguese traders learned to purchase slaves from Africa to use as miners, porters, or domestic servants (since free peasants and serfs were cultivators) in Portugal.

The Early Slave Trade

- Portuguese was too small to provide large numbers of American colonists so labor had to be sourced elsewhere.
- Sugar planters relied on slave labor, and sugar was a largely desired commodity, so the amount of slave labor in the Americas surged in the 1530s (2000 imported per year).
- Spanish colonists began importing slaves as laborers after failing to enslave indigenous peoples (they kept dying), and English colonists brought them to North America.

Triangular Trade

- European ships took a three-legged voyage to trade in the Atlantic.
 - First leg: Carried horses and European manufactured goods like cloth and metalwares like firearms to exchange in Africa for slaves.
 - Second leg: Carried enslaved Africans to Caribbean and American destinations to be traded for two to three times what they had cost on the African coast.
 - Third leg: Took sugar/molasses or cash (both from slave trading) and other American products before going back to Europe.
- The entire voyage was one of pain for Africans; slave capture was always violent and they were never treated humanely again.

Middle Passage

- After capture in Africa, slaves were held in holding pens until they could be transported to the western hemisphere.
- Traders would keep slaves in awful conditions (barely enough space to stand or even sit up) so they would try to starve themselves; traders would force feed them and chuck sick ones into the ocean to avoid infecting others and waste food.
- Over the course of the Atlantic slave trade, an average of 25% of human cargo did not survive the middle passage (which took 4-6 weeks).

Impact of Slave Trade in Africa

Volume of Slave Trade

- Before 1600, slave trade operated on a modest scale with about 2000 slaves per year leaving Africa.
- Slave exports rose to 20,000 per year when Europeans settled in the western hemisphere, and peaked at nearly 100,000.
- Over the course of the trade, 12,000,000 Africans were involuntarily uprooted to the Americas.

Limited Benefits from Slave Trade

- Some kingdoms such as Rwanda and Bugunda avoided the slave trade entirely due to both resistance and distance from major slave ports.
- Other societies benefited a lot from the trade, with slaving industries set up to trade with Europeans for firearms in order to build powerful states.
- Some African merchants even complained about losing their livelihood after the slave trade was abolished and even attempted to undermine the British navy's attempts at stopping illegal slave ships.

Social Effects of the Slave Trade

- Africa suffered serious losses overall from the slave trade.
- Population loss was a factor, because although the overall population was increasing due to better food supply, some societies were shrinking.
- Distorted African sex ratios, since most exported slaves were males, there were many more women than men in areas impacted by the trade, forcing people to adopt polygamy.

Political Effects of the Slave Trade

- Slave trade brought turmoil to African societies.
- Encouraged African societies to participate in more violence and war.
- Made violence more deadly due to European firearms.
- Trade turned Africans against each other as they mounted slave raids to supply the increasing European demand.

The African Diaspora

- *African diaspora* - dispersal of African peoples and their descendants.
- Slaves, though deprived of freedom, resisted their bondage and built hybrid cultural traditions from African, European, and American elements.

Plantation Societies

- Most African slaves went to plantations in tropical/subtropical regions of the western hemisphere.
- First established by Spanish on the island of Hispaniola in 1516, extended them to Mexico too.
- By early 1600s, English, Dutch, French, and Portuguese plantations appeared in the Caribbean and Americas.

Cash Crops

- Many of the plantations produced sugar, the most lucrative cash crop of early modern times; as well as tobacco, indigo, cotton, and coffee.
- Each plantation had elements in common: specialized in some agricultural crop in high demand, maintained garden to produce food for local community, purpose was to profit from production and export of commercial crops, ran almost exclusively on slave labor, with sharp racial division in labor.
- Small amounts of European or Euro-American supervisors governed plantation affairs.

Regional Differences

- Plantation societies had a lot of similarities (mentioned above) but also differences from region to region.
- Caribbean and South America - slave populations were unable to sustain population by natural means due to tropical diseases and brutal working conditions, so they imported continuing streams of slaves from Africa.
- North American slaves died less due to less foreign diseases, their lives were less harsh, and more females were imported to form families and bare children.

Resistance to Slavery

- Slaves did not just accept servile status but resisted it in numerous ways.
- Slaves often worked slowly for masters but efficiently in their own gardens, and sabotaged plantation equipment or work routines.
- Runaways known as *maroons* gathered and built self-governing communities, raiding nearby plantations for arms, tools, provisions, and even slaves to reproduce or provide labor.
- Maroons sometimes had military experience in Africa and organized escaped slaves into effective military forces, and survived sometimes for centuries such as Suriname.

Slave Revolts

- Slaves outnumbered non-slaves in most plantation societies so they were able to bring widespread death and destruction when they revolted.
- Did not succeed usually because ruling elites had horses, arms, and military forces to extinguish them.
- Haitian revolution - Slave revolt in French-owned plantation that actually abolished slavery and eventually established a self-governing republic; inspired slaves and terrified owners but no other rebellion matched this one.

Slavery and Economic Development

- Physical labor of African slaves made important contributions to building new societies in the Americas and the early modern world in general.
- Slave labor cultivated crops and minerals that fueled the global trade network of the era.
- Though slaves never benefited from their labor, it would have been impossible for successful new societies to appear in the Americas in this time period.

The Making of African-American Cultural Traditions

- Enslaved Africans could not entirely preserve cultural traditions, because though they kept their languages and religions, they had to adapt to European and American societies.
- Encountered Africans from foreign societies when they were packed in the slave ships.
- From all this foreign exposure, slaves constructed distinctive African-American cultural traditions.

African and Creole Languages

- European languages were dominant in slave societies but slaves put a spin on them.
- Sometimes slaves from the same origin were numerous enough to speak in their own languages.
- Other slaves were able to combine African and European elements to create a creole tongue, such as Gullah or Geechee.

African-American Religions

- Most African slaves, while they did convert to Christianity, did not practice European Christianity but rather formed syncretic faiths from Christianity and traditional religions.
- Due to their restricted conditions, these syncretic religions did not institutionalize or develop church bureaucracy but did attract followers among slaves.
- Drew inspiration from Christianity such (parish churches, personal salvation, holy water, etc.) and African traditions (connected African deities with Christian saints, relied on rituals like drumming, dancing, and sacrificing animals, etc.).
- Also preserved belief in spirits and supernatural powers.

African-American Music

- Slaves relied on African traditions to create musical forms adapted to their plantation environment.
- Slaves had lost their cultural background and belonging, and music helped to buffer the shock of transition and get their minds off their terrible conditions.
- Slave owners saw their music to be heathenism and attempted to ban it, but African-American music embodied the chaos of black life in the Americas.

African-American Cultural Traditions

- Slaves introduced African foods to the Caribbean and American societies, which gave rise to hybrid cuisines.
- Slaves introduced rice cultivation to subtropical regions which added variety to American diets.
- They built houses, clay pots, and wove grass baskets in west African styles.

End of the Slave Trade and the Abolition of Slavery

- The Atlantic slave trade met resistance since its inception.
- American and French revolutions simulated abolitionist cause.

Olaudah Equiano

- Some free slaves, such as Olaudah Equiano, wrote books to expose the institution's brutality.
- (1745-1797) Published autobiography describing life as a slave and a free man.
- Traveled throughout Britain denouncing slavery, and lobbied government officials to strengthen the antislavery movement in England.

The Economic Costs of Slavery

- Aside from moral and political factors, economic forces contributed to the end of slavery.
- Slave labor was not cheap due to the need to invest in security forces to ensure slaves did not rebel, and even if a slave worked inefficiently, owners had to care for them their whole lives.
- Europeans found that wage-based factory labor was cheaper than slave labor on plantations, and these free workers could spend their income on manufactured goods.
- Africa was looked upon as something other than a source of slaves, because they could also harvest raw materials and buy manufactured goods in exchange.

End of the Slave Trade

- Denmark abolished the slave trade in 1803, followed by Great Britain (1807), United States (1808), France (1814), Netherlands (1817), and Spain (1845).
- Ending the trade did not end the institution itself, so illegal trade still occurred (British naval forces did search ships leaving Africa, though).

Abolition of Slavery

- Emancipation of slaves started with British colonies (1833), then French colonies (1848), United States (1865), Cuba (1886), and Brazil (1988).
- Saudi Arabia and Angola kept slavery until the 1960s.
- Today, slavery does not officially exist, but hundreds of millions still live in servitude due to debt bondage, contract labor, sham adoptions, servile marriages, etc.
- Legacy of Atlantic slave trade is still visible throughout the western hemisphere, where African diaspora gave rise to distinctive African-American communities.