Fighting the Slave Trade

West African Strategies

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The Struggle against the Transatlantic Slave Trade

The Role of the State

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The first recorded shipment of captives from western Africa over the Atlantic by Europeans occurred in 1441 (Blake 1977, 5). These were victims of raids by the Portuguese in the small coastal communities of Senegambia.[1] Subsequently, persistent Portuguese demand for captives stimulated supply, on the basis of which trade in captives developed and the Portuguese gave up forceful capture, to be resumed later in west-central Africa after the establishment of their colony of Angola in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Vansina 1992, 558–59). The Portuguese chronicler Azurara records that by 1448 nearly one thousand captives had been shipped to Portugal from western Africa (Blake 1977, 16–17). The colonization of the Americas by European powers in the early sixteenth century and the concomitant phenomenal growth of demand for slave labor there catapulted the trade to heights that completely dwarfed all trade in humans ever recorded in history, especially during the plantation revolution in the Americas, between 1650 and 1850. From the 1440s to the 1860s, millions of people, variously estimated by recent research at between

12 million and 20 million (Inikori and Engerman 1992; Inikori 1998; H. Klein 1999; Eltis 2000), were shipped against their will by Europeans and European colonists.

Why was demand for slave labor in the Americas exclusively focused on Africa? Why did the export of captives from Europe come to an end just as the demand for slave labor was about to explode? What conditions in Africa sustained the supply of so many export captives for so long a period of time? What did the individuals and communities do to protect themselves from capture and sale for export? What did the governments in Africa do to protect their subjects? What role did the shift of European demand from the predominance of African products to the predominance of captives play in the evolution of state institutions and the direction of foreign policy in the states of Africa? What factors explain state involvement in the export trade in captives?

Despite the impressive research of the past three decades these overlapping questions are not adequately addressed in the literature.[2] They help to define the focus of this chapter, which specifically addresses the role of the state in the struggle of communities and individuals in Africa against the Atlantic slave trade.

Conceptual Framework

Trade in humans is essentially a trade in stolen "goods," because individuals do not willingly offer themselves to be sold into chattel slavery nor do parents knowingly sell their children for enslavement. This means that in general the people sold are acquired by one form of force or another: kidnapping, organized raids, wars, and so on. Hence, no commercial transaction takes place between communities which lose their members to enslavement and those who take possession over them in the first instance. For the families and communities whose loved ones are lost forever, the loss is traumatic. It is similar to loss by murder, for which revenge is always sought. In all societies known to historians one of the primary responsibilities of government is to protect the lives and property of citizens. Families that lose members to murderers, kidnappers, raiders, or even in wars hold their governments responsible. Prolonged widespread losses spell political crisis and loss of legitimacy for rulers. It is thus a matter of self-interest rather than morality that rulers go to considerable lengths to protect their subjects against such losses. This is even reflected in the conduct of war between more or less equally matched states. The realization that both states stand to lose large numbers of their subjects, with the attendant political costs at home, acts as a major constraint on the decision by both parties to go to war, in the first place. If war does break out, the same considerations impose on both parties the need to treat war captives well and ultimately exchange them to avoid the wrath of their families.

However, it is totally a different matter where politico-military organizations capable of protecting communities against these losses are nonexistent. Kidnappers and raiders meet little resistance. A relatively strong state can impose its will and take away people for sale into export without fear of retaliation. Economic and political logic thus informs us that the development of a large-scale trade in captives for sale into chattel slavery depends on two critical conditions: the existence of a market for slaves and a developed transportation system capable of transporting them relatively cheaply; and the existence of weakly organized communities whose members can be captured and sold at little cost to the captors. For communities to avoid capture and enslavement, first, they must have governments strong enough to prevent internal breakdown of law and order under the pressure of large-scale export demand for captives. Without effective control of overseas exporters and complete elimination of local kidnapping for export sale, the internal stealing of humans engenders a cycle of intracommunity conflicts that expose members to capture and export. Second, they must have governments strong enough to inflict considerable punishment on external aggressors who may be tempted to capture and sell their subjects to profit from the market demand. It cannot be overemphasized that as long as there is market demand for captives at relative price levels that justify supply efforts, somebody is going to do what it takes to meet the demand. To hold back supply response in the face of market demand for captives, politico-military and economic conditions have to raise the cost of procuring captives for sale above the benefits from meeting the demand. As stated above, these politico-military conditions will also encourage equally matched strong states to exchange war prisoners rather than sell them for export.

Rise and Demise of Captive Exports in Medieval and Early Modern Europe

A brief examination of the rise and demise of captive exports in medieval and early modern Europe may help us understand the circumstances which sustained the transatlantic trade in captives for centuries. For obvious reasons Rome has to be at the center of the story. Imperial Rome developed the first major slave system to involve largely Europeans. While the initial captives enslaved came from the imperial wars of expansion, the empire subsequently developed a major market for captives. People from all the European territories that became part of the empire were enslaved during the process of conquest. But once those territories were incorporated, their people became Roman subjects and were protected by the imperial state against capture and enslavement. As the expansion reached its limits, therefore, the imperial slave market was fed with imports from outside the empire. The imports from Europe were supplied by the politically fragmented Germanic peoples, including the Anglo-Saxons in the Danish peninsula and the coastlands of northern Germany and Holland, who began trading captives with the Romans in the first two hundred years of the Christian era (Pelteret 1981, 100).

For as long as the Roman Empire remained strong, all European communities within it were protected by *pax romana* (Roman peace) against capture and sale. The British Isles and the Balkans were among those so protected. As Daniel Evans (1985, 42) pointed out, "However scant the pastures of the Dinaric highlands, however formidable the problems of communications, so long as Roman power remained firmly established on either side of this region, in the Danubian basin as well as on the Adriatic coast, so long were held in check the banditry, the feuds, all the tendencies toward social disintegration and slave catching that could easily arise in a land with such structrual features."

As the empire weakened and collapsed, effective centralized authority gave way to political fragmentation in Europe. Effective imperial control over Britain ended as the Roman legions were withdrawn in 407 (Pelteret 1981, 100). Roman authority in the Balkans collapsed in the late sixth century (D. Evans 1985, 43). From the fifth to the eighth centuries German leaders broke up western Europe into successor German kingdoms (Phillips 1985, 43). The disappearance of effective centralized authority and the proliferation of small political entities presented a potential environment for social conflict and enslavement. However, this did not happen on any significant scale immediately. The collapse of the Roman Empire was accompanied by the decline of the large urban markets for the products of slave labor in Europe. Without flourishing urban markets, the high cost of supervision involved in chattel slavery was uneconomic. A form of servitude that required little supervision was found in serfdom. Rather than new captives being demanded, the slaves of the Roman period were transformed over time into serfs, as were most previous free peasants (Phillips 1985, 43, 50–52; D. Evans 1985, 42–43). It was only after the establishment of a major slave market in the Mediterranean and the Muslim Middle East, with the rise of the Arab Islamic empire from the seventh century, that political fragmentation in Europe facilitated raids and social conflicts in response to export demand for captives (D. Evans 1985, 43).[3]

Britain was one of the victimized areas. Lacking a relatively strong centralized state to protect its communities, local bandits and external raiders responding to market demand raided Britain and took captives. Anglo-Saxons from the Danish peninsula and the coastlands of northern Germany and Holland were the main external raiders. Internal raids were conducted by the Irish and the Scots. Political conflicts engendered by these raids and other causes led to frequent wars whose prisoners were sold for export (Pelteret 1981, 100–101; D. Evans 1985, 43; Strickland 1996, 313–17). After the Anglo-Saxons successfully invaded and settled in Britain many of the indigenous people, the Celts, were captured and sold for export. Because the Anglo-Saxon invasion did not produce a strong centralized state, the British Isles remained a source of captives as the various immigrant groups preyed on each other, making war endemic (Pelteret 1981, 102).

On the continent, Frankish merchants were the early major slave traders following the disappearance of Pax Romana. In the eighth century the imperial wars of expansion by the Frankish kingdom provided them with numerous captives, many of whom were Saxons (Phillips 1985, 61). In the late Middle Ages and the early modern era Venetian merchants expanded the slave trade from the Balkans. In this politically fragmented region export demand for captives helped to fuel intergroup feuds.

Because the trade in European captives depended on two essential conditions —the prevalence of political fragmentation and the growth of markets for slaves—the emergence of relatively strong centralized states all over Europe brought it to an end. Between 786 and 814, the Frankish state expanded its control over much of western Europe, excluding only Scandinavia, the British Isles, the Iberian Peninsula, and southern Italy (Phillips 1985, 43, 52). Once the Saxons and others were conquered and incorporated into the empire, the Frankish state protected all its subjects against capture and sale (D. Evans, 1985, 43; Phillips 1985, 61). The successor states to the Frankish Empire in the late Middle Ages continued the protection with their sophisticated military organizations (W. Evans 1980, 28). Communities in parts of Europe incorporated into Dar al-Islam (the lands under the peace of Islam) were similarly protected (D. Evans 1985, 43).

In what is now the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, the emergence of a relatively strong centralized state began with the Norman conquest of England in 1066. Subsequently, the rest of Britain and Ireland were brought under Norman control in the twelfth century, after the Normans gained control of the seas along the coast of England and extended their hegemony over the Scots, Welsh, and Irish. As the imposition of the centralized authority of the Norman state ended political fragmentation, so also did it end the export slave trade from Britain and Ireland, which was outlawed at the Westminster Council of 1102.

Henceforth, trade in European captives was limited virtually to the Balkans, where political fragmentation was prolonged for centuries more. However, from 1389 the Ottomans began their conquest of the region. From 1463 to the end of the fifteenth century, the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans was slowly extended to its geographical limit, the "last ridge that separates the coastal region from the hinterland," beyond which Venice and its allies were in control (D. Evans 1985, 51). This prolonged period of conquest increased the supply of white slaves to the western Mediterranean, where demand expanded in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as sugar plantations developed in Cyprus, Crete, and Sicily. Italian merchants supplied the planters white slaves from the Black Sea region (W. Evans 1980, 34, 37–38; D. Evans 1985, 51–52, n54, 58). However, once the process of conquest was completed and the conquered Balkan territories were incorporated into the empire, the flood of captives generated by the Ottomans stopped.

At the same time, the export slave trade from Russia, "the largest single source of white slaves in the mid-fifteenth century," was also halted by the rise of the Russian Empire. With the accession of Ivan the Great as the grand duke of Moscow in 1462, a long period of political fragmentation came to an end and a relatively strong centralized state was established in the decades that followed. Like its neighboring Ottoman Empire, the Russian state was strong enough to protect its subjects from capture and export. Thus, as the Portuguese were completing their exploration of the coast of western Africa, the last sources of export captives in Europe were closed off (W. Evans 1980, 37–39).

The foregoing narrative of the rise and demise of the export trade in European captives shows a clear pattern that is pertinent to the subject of this chapter. The principal cause of slave raids and the sale of war prisoners was the existence of export demand to feed slave markets in the Mediterranean and the Muslim Middle East. Political fragmentation was only a permissive factor, not a cause. Given export demand for captives, the prevalence of politically fragmented communities, whose members could be captured and exported at little cost to the captors, facilitated self-reinforcing sociopolitical processes that placed captives on the market. The European evidence shows that the formation of strong centralized states was the most effective device used by weakly organized communities struggling to avoid capture and export. Ironically, the communities had to be conquered and forced into centralized states in order to be saved from capture and export. It is important to note that it was the rulers of territorial states who stopped the slave trade in their individual states in Europe: The trade in European slaves ended because the rulers of each European state were strong enough to protect their subjects. It was not the collective action of Europeans that stopped the trade. By the sixteenth century, the spread over all Europe of relatively strong centralized states with sophisticated military organizations restrained European powers from capturing and selling each other's subjects, which caused domestic sociopolitical problems for all. This development encouraged states to exchange war prisoners instead of selling them for export. It was this political expediency, rather than the ideological unwillingness of Europeans to enslave other Europeans (Eltis 1993, 2000), that prevented the export of European captives for enslavement in the Americas. There was no common European identity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries strong enough to psychologically restrain all Europeans from enslaving other Europeans if the politicoeconomic cost-benefit equations were right.

SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN ATLANTIC AFRICA BEFORE THE LARGE-SCALE EUROPEAN DEMAND FOR CAPTIVES

The societies that the Portuguese encountered on the African Atlantic coast in the fifteenth century—referred to here as Atlantic Africa—together with their immediate hinterlands, were organized sociopolitically in a manner very different from those in the African interior, in particular the savanna societies of the western and central Sudan. It was these Atlantic African societies and their hinterlands that were directly impacted by European trade, in its changing forms, for decades before others farther in the interior were drawn in. To properly understand how European export demand for captives affected the historical process in Africa, these two broad regions of western Africa must be distinguished.[4] The tendency in the recent literature on the Atlantic slave trade to refer to Africa in general (Thornton 1992; H. Klein 1999) creates confusion in the analysis of causes and effects.

Before examining the differing sociopolitical organizations of Atlantic Africa and the savanna interior, a brief exposition of the military and commercial power elements, which defined the character of relations between European traders and African communities from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, is pertinent. These power elements derived from the relative levels of commercial and political development in western Europe and western Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As shown earlier, by that time Europe was characterized by the prevalence of relatively strong centralized states with sophisticated military organizations. This phenomenon was, in the main, a product of two interrelated factors—population expansion and the growth of trade. The two regions experienced radically different population densities and participated in world trade to widely differing degrees: western Europe was by far more intensively involved in world trade centered in the Mediterranean from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, thanks in part to the desiccation of the Sahara region, which limited the participation of Africa south of the Sahara (Abu-Lughod 1989, 36, 55–77, 120–25).[5] These two factors (interacting with some lesser ones) combined to bring about over time differing levels of commercial and political development in western Europe and western Africa.[6] Thus, at the time seaborne trade began to develop between western Europe and western Africa, the former had a significant politico-military and commercial advantage. For this reason the European traders were clearly in control and the communities in Atlantic Africa responded to the changing needs of the economies of western Europe.

This latter point is reflected in the changes in what Atlantic Africa produced and sold to the European traders. Initially the latter demanded mainly gold, the central driving force behind the exploration of the African coast. Other products in demand included ivory, pepper, hides, and wood. As yet, the economies of western Europe had little need for slave labor, apart from the limited numbers employed in Portugal, Spain, Madeira, Cape Verde, and Saint Thomas. In response to this demand, Atlantic Africa produced and sold these products. The colonization of the Americas in the sixteenth century led to radical changes and by the mid-seventeenth century slave labor for the exploitation of the vast natural resources of the Americas began to take center stage. Again, Atlantic Africa responded to the changes in European demand. Then, the needs of western European economies changed once again, back to African products, the so-called legitimate commerce of the late nineteenth century. Atlantic Africa and the hinterlands responded as previously, and raw cotton, palm produce, cocoa, woods, gold, diamonds, and other products were produced and sold to European traders in rapidly expanding quantities. The pace of growth was such that in the early twentieth century one writer thought there was an "economic revolution in British West Africa" (McPhee 1926).

To say that the European traders were in control and that Atlantic Africa and the hinterlands responded to the changing needs of western European economies, as the preceding evidence makes clear, does not imply that the individuals and communities that responded were not trying to serve their own self-interests. All it means is that those self-interests could be served in several ways, but the realistic choices that could be made at the time were dictated by the conditions created by changing European demand: a common phenomenon in trade relations between societies at significantly different levels of politico-military and commercial development. As the British historian K. G. Davies pointed out several decades ago:

> The Europeans were opposed in the seventeenth century . . . But in the Caribbean and North America resistance was ineffectual, and in West Africa, where the Europeans had limited objectives, it was not of the strongest. Nothing stopped the establishment of white communities on the western shores of the Atlantic and nothing stopped the growth of a slave trade out of Africa. The tide of European manufactures washed away most of the opposition. European daring and European acquisitiveness did the rest. Like it or not, the Atlantic Ocean, north of the equator, was transformed in the course of the seventeenth century into a European lake. (1974, xi)

Returning to socioeconomic and political organization in Atlantic Africa and the savannah interior, it should be noted that in the centuries preceding the arrival of the Europeans the savanna interior was the center of socioeconomic and political development in western Africa. The open savanna lowlands encouraged regular interaction among its diverse populations. It was at the center of commercial and cultural relations between sub-Saharan Africa and the Mediterranean and Arab worlds. Following from all this, the most complex and sophisticated socioeconomic and political organizations in precontact western Africa were located in the savanna interior: Ghana (capital, Koumbi Saleh), Mali (capital, Niani), Songhay (capital, Gao). Other major centers of commerce and learning (Timbuktu, Jenné, Kano, etc.) were all located there. Logically these economies were penetrated by market activities to a much greater extent, and the societies experienced much greater class differentiation. What is particularly important to note is the numerically small annual export of captives from western Africa to the Mediterranean and Arab worlds, together with the limited socioeconomic impact, was virtually limited to the savanna interior. When scholars make the general point that African societies were involved in the sale of humans before the arrival of Europeans, the point is valid only for the societies of the savanna interior and not the predominantly kin-based societies of Atlantic Africa and their immediate hinterlands. Similarly, the existence in this early period of servile populations, closer to serfs than to chattel slaves, was also a phenomenon of the savanna interior and not Atlantic Africa.

When they came into contact with the Portuguese in the middle decades of the fifteenth century, the people of Atlantic Africa from Senegambia to the Kalahari Desert lived in small political units organized around lineage groups. As Wondji points out,

> By comparison with the big ethnic masses of the Sudan, where state-type societies predominate, the area [from the Casamance River to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, inclusive] is characterized by many small socio-cultural units organized on the basis of lineages, clans, and villages. From the River Casamance to the River Tanoe, between the northern savannah and southern coastline and the mountain ranges of Futa Jallon and the Guinea Spine and the western and southeastern coastline, there are more than a hundred ethnic groups and sub-groups. (1992, 368)

In Senegambia (comprising the basins of the Senegal and Gambia Rivers) these small political units were loosely connected as provinces to the states of the savanna interior (Barry 1992; Wondji 1992). With the disintegration of the Songhay Empire following the Moroccan invasion of 1591, the western Sudan became also politically fragmented just as European demand for captives began to intensify. From the upper Niger to the upper Voltas (including the Niger Bend or the inland delta of the Niger) centralized political authority disappeared and power became localized. All this development occurred, as Izard and Ki-Zerbo observe, "against a back-cloth of numerous ethnic groups with non-centralized authority" (1992, 327).

From the Gold Coast (now Ghana) to west-central Africa, political fragmentation was also the norm, even though the kingdoms of Benin (in southwestern Nigeria) and Kongo were in their process of territorial expansion and the consolidation of centralized political power in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. On the Gold Coast the Akan in the forest, according to Kwame Daaku, "lived in a group of small chiefdoms, which were organized on kinship lines" (1970, 4). Even as late as the seventeenth century, a map of the Gold Coast drawn by the Dutch in December 1629 shows forty-three independent political units (Daaku 1970, 144–45, 199).[7] From the river Volta to the Niger delta, in Nigeria, the largest political units in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the kingdoms of Ife and Benin. In the area later covered by the Kingdom of Dahomey, the first state structure was that of Allada, founded in about 1575 (Akinjogbin 1967, 11). Before the Dahomean conquest in the early eighteenth century, this small area had five autonomous kingdoms: Allada, Whydah, Popo, Jakin, and Dahomey (ibid.). In neighboring Yorubaland, before the rise of Oyo in the seventeenth century, there were over a dozen autonomous kingdoms (Smith 1988).

As long as European demand was largely for gold and other products, political fragmentation did not constitute a serious security problem for the people and communities of Atlantic Africa. The limited numbers of captives shipped by the Europeans did expose some of the coastal villages to raids, sometimes directly by the Europeans. But affected places were limited; part of the shipment came from a diversion to Arguin of some portion of the preexisting trans-Saharan exports, and some others were prisoners from the ongoing process of territorial expansion by the Benin kingdom, made available to the Portuguese who pressed to have them on specially negotiated terms, including the military needs of the Benin state (Ryder 1969).[8] To properly comprehend what happened in the centralized states that emerged in Atlantic Africa between the mid-seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, it is important to examine in some detail the economic and political significance of the early European trade in products.

It should be stressed at this juncture that commerce was a major factor in the formation of the centralized states in the savanna interior up to the end of the sixteenth century. The locations and directions of expansion of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay all indicate strongly the importance of trade, especially the gold trade, in the political economy of these states. Parts of Atlantic Africa producing kola nuts, gold, and other products demanded by the sophisticated societies of the savanna interior had been linked to the trading network of that region, which led ultimately to markets in North Africa and the Middle East. The coming of the Europeans and the development of seaborne trade both expanded the volume and relocated the centers of trade in western Africa. The export of products, which dominated the trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, produced major socioeconomic changes in several parts of Atlantic Africa. The case of the Gold Coast, which has been well studied and documented (Wilks 1977; Kea 1982), may be used to illustrate.

The central region of modern Ghana, where the savanna ends and the forest begins, had been connected to the trading centers of the middle and upper Niger valley in the fourteenth century. This led to the rise of Bighu (Begho) as a major commercial center, through which the gold, kola nuts, and other products of the Akan forest area were exchanged for products of the savanna interior, as well as imports from North Africa and the Middle East (Kea 1982, 53–55). The Akan gold trade expanded phenomenally following the arrival of the Portuguese. By the sixteenth century the general growth of trade centered on gold had given rise to the emergence of men of considerable wealth looking for opportunities for productive investment outside commerce. The positive externalities generated by export production and trade opened up many such opportunities. There is clear evidence that from the fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries population grew and urban centers multiplied and increased in size. The division of labor between town and country developed as manufacturing concentrated in the towns. The

growth of trade between town and country offered profitable opportunities for investment in land and agriculture which were seized by the men who had accumulated huge wealth from the trade in gold and other products. Beginning in the sixteenth century these wealthy trading families moved from the Adanse-Amanse area northward to places such as the Kwaman, Kwabre, Atwema, and Sekyere districts, where they invested their wealth in large-scale forest clearance and the creation of farmlands (Kea 1982, 85–91). These developments stimulated the emergence of a land market. "The site on which the town of Kumase was later built," Ray A. Kea tells us, "was purchased for the sum of 25,920 dambas in gold, and that on which the town of Nsuta was built cost 24,830 dambas. Only persons of wealth could have afforded to buy land" (1982, 90).[9]

Thus, the early trade in products, before and with the Europeans, produced considerable private wealth for African traders on the Gold Coast and its hinterlands. Its multiplier effects generated positive institutional change in the direction of long-term socioeconomic development. The evidence showing this has been summarized (Kea 1982, 11): "Various orally transmitted histories refer to the importance of towns, or urban centers, in many parts of the region prior to 1700. Indeed, they indicate explicitly that certain districts were more urbanized and populous than they were in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. Both archaeological evidence and contemporary written accounts support this view."

The study of Senegambia by Boubacar Barry (1992, 265, 289) suggests similar developments. Here, the most important products demanded by the early European traders were gold and hides, in that order. The leather trade peaked in the mid-seventeenth century, with an export of about 150,000 hides per year (265). This gave rise to a large-scale trade in cattle, which by the seventeenth century had made the Fulani cattle owners the richest and most powerful social group in Futa Jallon (289). The pepper and cotton cloth trade in Benin (Daaku 1970, 24; Fynn 1971, 11–12; Ryder 1969) and the copper trade in Kongo (Hilton 1985) may have produced somewhat similar effects.

The European Demand for Captives and the Exposure of Politically Fragmented Communities to Capture and Export

As the imperial powers of western Europe intensified their exploitation of the natural resources of the Americas, at the same time that the indigenous populations were almost totally wiped out by European diseases and ruthless exploitation, European demand in western Africa shifted increasingly from products to captives over the seventeenth century. Even though the problem of incomplete import data makes it impossible to state anything close to the true number of Africans imported into the Americas, the available information shows that at least 58,000 had already been landed by 1580. Between 1580 and 1640 the imports increased almost ten times, and between 1640 and 1700 they grew again by over 42 percent (Eltis 2000, 9). This mounting demand for captives seriously exposed the politically fragmented communities of Atlantic Africa and the hinterlands to capture and export. As the evidence presented above shows, in the seventeenth century Atlantic Africa and the hinterlands did not possess centralized states strong enough to prevent the internal breakdown of law and order in the face of expansive European demand for captives nor protect communities against outside raiders. The earlier European demand for products, with the multiplier effects, had created socioeconomic conditions favoring individuals with entrepreneurial aptitudes for the peaceful production and distribution of goods and services. In contrast, the growing demand for captives, with its destructive multiplier effects, created socioeconomic conditions that favored individuals with violent dispositions. As demand for products declined and that for captives accelerated, with devastating impact on production for the domestic markets, the population of bandits, operating in groups or individually, grew. This made the maintenance of internal social order in the communities with weak politico-military organizations a very tough task. What is more, the operation of these bandits across political boundaries created diplomatic complications that regularly drew the multitude of autonomous chiefdoms into wars whose prisoners were readily purchased by the Europeans. And there is clear evidence that the latter, acting alone or in conjunction with the bandits, intervened in the affairs of these chiefdoms to provoke conflicts that generated export captives.

In west-central Africa, where the Kongo kingdom was in the process of territorial expansion and consolidation of centralized authority at the time of contact, politico-military organizations were relatively too weak to withstand the onslaught unleashed by Portuguese demand for captives. The evidence is clear enough that no slave trading or chattel slavery existed in west-central Africa before the arrival of the Portuguese (Vansina 1989, 352, 353 map 3; 1990, 278; Hilton 1985, 57, 58, 78, 233 n86). Early Portuguese trade in the region had centered on copper. When the Portuguese shifted their demand to captives, the Kongo government insisted that only people from outside Kongo must be traded. But as the demand grew the Kongo state, with no standing army in the early decades of contact, was unable to prevent internal breakdown of law and order, and rampant local kidnapping of Kongo citizens for sale to

the Portuguese arose. As Anne Hilton narrates, "In 1526 Afonso [the king of Kongo] complained that 'thieves and men without conscience' seized *'filhos da terra'* (people of the subject *kanda* [clan]) and *'filhos de nossos fidalgos e vassalos'* (people of the Mwissikongo [metropolitan provinces] and of the tribute submitting kanda and extra-kanda chiefs) to sell to the merchants" (1985, 58). The Kongo government appointed three judges to examine the people sold to the Portuguese to ensure that they were captives from outside the Kongo kingdom and not kidnapped Kongo citizens. With Portuguese traders spread all over the provinces, state efforts remained ineffective. The king tried to tackle the problem at its roots: "He informed the King of Portugal that he wanted Portuguese teachers and priests but he no longer wanted traders and merchants, 'for it is our will that in our kingdom there should no longer be a trade or export of slaves'" (Hilton 1985, 58). This did not work either, as the government could not keep out the Portuguese traders from all the provinces of the kingdom, including the tribute-paying provinces (ibid.).

Worse still, the Kongo state was not strong enough to protect its subjects from external bandits. Tio- or Kikongo-speaking bandits invaded the kingdom in 1568—the so-called Jaga invasion. The king, Alvaro I, confronted them, was defeated, and fled to an island in the Zaire River. He had to appeal for help to the king of Portugal, who sent the Portuguese captain of São Tomé with six hundred soldiers and the bandits were expelled from the kingdom (Hilton 1985, 69–70). When finally the threat came from the slave-raiding and slave-trading Portuguese colony of Angola in the seventeenth century, Kongo was helpless. Efforts made by King Garcia II of Kongo to develop an alternative to the slave trade with the help of the Dutch failed, as the latter were more interested in the slave trade (148–49). As the colony of Angola grew stronger and more troublesome, the king of Kongo, Antonio, in desperation mobilized the entire resources of the state and confronted the Portuguese in a battle in 1665. He summoned his people "to defend their 'lands, possessions, women and children, their lives and their liberties'" (178). The Kongo government lost everything as the Portuguese unleashed a crushing defeat.[10] Thereafter, centralized authority in Kongo dissolved, totally exposing the people to capture and export. Vansina recounts: "With the Kongo, the organization of a vast area disappeared. The structural framework of this area [west-central Africa], like that of Angola, was henceforth to be economic, with a framework of trade routes articulated by places of trans-shipment" (1992, 566).

With the demise of the Kongo kingdom, the Brazilians reorganized the slave trade from west-central Africa, operating in concert with the Afro-Portuguese, who led caravans into the interior to procure slaves. Lacking adequate capital, "the traders pressed for war as a source of captives for merchants" (Vansina 1992, 569). War was a low-cost mechanism for acquiring export captives only because there were no strong centralized states spread across west-central Africa to raise the cost of taking captives by war and raids.

On the Gold Coast, where early European trade in products was most intensive and lasted much longer, the shift of European demand to captives in the seventeenth century brought a dramatic turn of events to the orderly process of socioeconomic development that had been going on since the mid-fifteenth century. With trade in products the political institutions of the multitude of chiefdoms were adequate to keep social order and maintain peaceful relations with neighbors. This period of relative sociopolitical stability lasted up to the mid-seventeenth century. To be sure, there were some conflicts or even limited wars:

> It must be pointed out that in the first half of the seventeenth century, a period of relative political stability, there were wars on the Gold Coast. From the 1630s the Europeans reported inland wars in which they lent a few muskets to their allies. But those wars appear to have been more trade wars disputing rights of way, such as those between Abrem and Fetu, or civil wars over succession disputes. Their political effects were inconsequential, their duration short. (Daaku 1970, 149)

As the demand for captives mounted, the small chiefdoms lacked the politico-military organizations that could prevent the internal breakdown of law and order, let alone keep peaceful relations with neighbors. Daaku (1970, 149–52) believed that widespread sociopolitical instability on the Gold Coast was caused by the large-scale import of firearms by the European traders after the mid-seventeenth century. The accounts of the Dutch Company officers resident on the Gold Coast appear to imply the same. In 1679 they wrote,

> The Accanists, who are real traders, used to trade in all these areas, and they alone controlled all trade, travelling with large numbers of slaves to carry their goods through all those places. But as a result of the wars which the blacks so often start for trifling reasons, this trade is suddenly stopped . . . the passages are closed . . . and especially since musket and gunpowder have been introduced, things have become much worse, the natives having become much more war-like. . . . Consequently the whole Coast has come into a kind of state of war. This started in the year 1658, and gradually this has gone so far, that none of the passages could anymore be used, and none of the traders could come through. (Dantzig 1978, 17)[11]

The general breakdown of law and order continued in the first half of the eighteenth century, as the Dutch director-general reported in 1712: "Never in our memory, and as far as old manuscripts concerning events here show, has the condition on this Coast been such as it is now, when one cannot find a single little village of which it could be said that it has stayed outside the war" (Dantzig 1978, 168).[12]

If the facts observed by the Dutch company officers are separated from their interpretation of those facts, what emerges is clear. From the mid-seventeenth to the eighteenth century, European demand for captives on the Gold Coast expanded and export prices for captives increased accordingly. As a result, the Gold Coast became engulfed in widespread and persistent wars. The import of firearms increased over time. The trade in products, especially the gold trade, was virtually eliminated. In fact, the officers reported that by this time Brazilian gold was being imported into the Gold Coast and "His Majesty of Portugal had sent a proclamation to Brazil in which H. M. forbids all his subjects there, on penalty of death, to send any Brazilian minerals to this part of the world" (Dantzig 1978, 148–49).

However, the causal sequence implied by Daaku and the Dutch, with reference in particular to firearms, is not altogether accurate. A more accurate causal sequence emerges when the Dutch accounts are combined with other sources. A long-term analysis of the commodity composition of imports into the Bights of Benin and Biafra (the region covering modern Republic of Benin, Yorubaland, and southeastern Nigeria) reveals a pertinent pattern. Because these two regions were drawn into the European trade much later than other parts of western Africa (Law 1991; Latham 1973), the late seventeenth century represented the early years of intensive slave trading in both regions. The invoice records of the British companies show consistently that throughout the late seventeenth century imports into the two regions were overwhelmingly dominated by commodity currencies—cowries for the Dahomean area, and copper bars (weighing about one pound each) and iron bars for the Bight of Biafra. Firearms were rarely included. Textiles were also imported in very limited quantities.[13] In the course of the eighteenth century the composition changed radically. Textiles and firearms became the dominant products, with commodity currencies constituting a small percentage.

Combining this evidence with that of the Gold Coast, what emerges is that the seventeenth-century imports into the Bights of Benin and Biafra served the needs of a growing internal trade similar to developments on the Gold Coast in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Over time, however, the growth of the trade in captives led to internal breakdown of law and order in the politically fragmented communities and to frequent conflicts and wars among them. Enclave economies developed on the coast as trade links with the interior weakened, because export captives, unlike products, were "stolen," not produced. The attendant violence shifted demand from goods employed in production and distribution to firearms and goods ready for immediate consumption. While the uncontrolled distribution of firearms in communities without strong centralized states contributed significantly to the escalation and persistence of conflicts and wars, firearms were not the initial cause. Internal breakdown of law and order and widespread conflicts among the multitude of loosely organized chiefdoms were caused in the first instance by the shift of European demand from products to captives. Contrary to Daaku's explanation (1970, 149–50) that limited importation of firearms into the Gold Coast before the mid-seventeenth century was due to legal restriction imposed by the European powers, the evidence indicates that lack of demand was the real factor. This is why firearms flooded the Gold Coast in the late seventeenth century, while they were rare in the invoices for the two bights during the same period, even though the restrictions had been formally lifted in the mid-seventeenth century.

The shift of European demand from products to captives affected the politically fragmented communities in Senegambia in ways similar to the preceding discussion. Here the internal breakdown of law and order, and the persistent conflicts and wars among the multitude of chiefdoms and petty kingdoms led to the emergence of warlords employing armies of captive recruits (the so-called *ceddo* armies; see Adama Guèye, this volume). The demand for firearms grew and their widespread distribution fueled more violence, which exposed communities and their members to capture and export. The Islamic revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the region were inspired by the desire to protect communities without strong centralized states against the violence of the Atlantic slave trade (Barry 1992, 1998; M. Klein 1998; Wondji 1992).

Relatively Strong Centralized States and the Atlantic Slave Trade

The evidence presented so far makes it clear enough that, faced with large-scale European demand for captives, political fragmentation was a major factor limiting the ability of people in Atlantic Africa and the hinterlands to protect themselves against capture and export. The evidence suggests that the Kingdom of

Benin was the only state in Atlantic Africa that successfully protected its subjects from the very beginning of the Atlantic slave trade (Ryder 1969). Between the late seventeenth century and the mid-eighteenth the Oyo Empire, the Kingdom of Dahomey, and the Asante state emerged with politico-military organizations strong enough to qualify them as relatively strong centralized states. Dahomey and Asante developed under similar conditions and achieved somewhat similar outcomes. Oyo, much farther in the interior, had a significantly different history.

Oyo developed to become the most powerful state in Yorubaland in the eighteenth century. But its early history had little to do with Atlantic Africa. Although Yorubaland was politically fragmented before the emergence of Oyo, the Yoruba people were not exposed to capture and export as were the people on the Gold Coast and the Dahomean coast. This is because no ports in the area were used by the European slave traders as major export centers at the time (Inikori 1992, 28–29). Consistent with the location of the metropolitan center of the empire, its early history was linked to the Sudanese states of the savanna interior. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the nascent state was subjected to frequent raids by its northern neighbor, Nupe, leading to the destruction of its capital in the early sixteenth century (Law 1977, 37–39). The state was abandoned by the rulers, to be rebuilt a century later. To protect itself against the northern raids, the new kingdom built a powerful military machine based on the use of horses (43). From the seventeenth century to the late eighteenth, Oyo expanded territorially to incorporate much of modern Yorubaland and subordinated large areas of non-Yorubaland in the north and northwest as vassal states.

The two main authorities on the early history of the Kingdom of Dahomey, Akinjogbin (1967) and Law (1986, 1991), offer conflicting accounts. According to the former, the founders of the nascent Kingdom of Dahomey migrated inland from the coast in the mid-seventeenth century to escape the rampant kidnapping in the area. The Dutch and the French had begun slave trading in the region and the weakly organized Aja states of Allada, Whydah, Popo, and Jakin could not prevent internal breakdown of law and order nor maintain peaceful relations with neighbors. Developing in the hinterland, away from regular interference by the Europeans, the Dahomeans departed from the loose state structures on the coast and evolved a centralized state system with an absolute monarchy. With its strong politico-military organization, Dahomey invaded the coastal Aja states in the 1720s to bring all of them under one strong centralized state in order to end the slave trade in the region. This conquest was carried out successfully between 1724 and 1727, and the Aja states were ultimately incorporated into the centralized state of Dahomey.

Robin Law's account is different in some important respects. Law believes that the founders of the Dahomean state were bandits who started off as raiders in the hinterland, selling their captives to coastal middlemen, who in turn sold them to the Europeans. Their motivation for conquering the coastal states, Law explains, was to have direct access to the European traders.

The contending accounts by the two authorities are both supported by European sources. For purposes of the main issues addressed in this chapter, however, the disagreement is not particularly important. More important, both accounts agree that Dahomey was a strong centralized state and its conquest of the coastal states solved the problem of political fragmentation in the area. What is more, Law agrees that the Dahomean leaders, once they established the centralized state, ceased to be bandits and became statesmen.

The fact that over the almost two centuries of European trade on the Gold Coast, from the fifteenth century to the early seventeenth, no serious attempt to develop centralized states was made until the crisis generated by the slave trade would seem to suggest a causal connection. The account by Daaku (1970, 144–81) indicates that state formation was in part a device for self-protection by weakly organized communities. The first noteworthy of these states were Denkyira and Akwamu. None succeeded in incorporating a large enough number of the numerous chiefdoms to solve the problem of political fragmentation. Rampant kidnapping, a major cause of conflict among the petty states—some were havens for bandits—persisted (Inikori 1992, 34). "Towards the end of the seventeenth and in the first few decades of the eighteenth century," wrote Daaku, "slave-raiding became an established occupation of the Akwamu, Akyem, Kwawu, Krepi, and villages bordering on the Akwamu territories sometimes became the hapless victims of Akwamu raiders" (1970, 31).

It was the development of the Asante state from the late seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century that ultimately brought all of the Gold Coast, with the exception of the Fante, under one strong centralized state. This ended the problem of political fragmentation on the Gold Coast. As expressed by A. Adu Boahen, "Between 1670 and 1750 political revolution had taken place in the forest and coastal regions of Lower Guinea. From the thirty-eight states of the 1629 map had emerged the three large empires of Aowin, Denkyira and Akwamu, which, by 1750, had merged into the single empire of Asante" (1992, 422).

Like the relatively strong centralized states of medieval and early modern Europe, Oyo, Dahomey, and Asante restored and maintained internal law and order where previously there was chaos and disorder. They all had laws that specifically prohibited the sale of their subjects for export. In Dahomey the law

applied also to the servile population incorporated into society (Law 1991, 277–78). Contemporary European visitors to Dahomey testified to the prevalence of social order in the kingdom. For example, a 1728 European report stated that the king, Agaja, "cuts off the head of whoever steals only a cowry, one travels in his country with more security than in Europe, those who find something in the roads dare not touch it, it stays there till the one who lost it comes back, travellers are not attacked" (Law 1991, 277). Hugh Clapperton ([1829] 1966) traveling in the Oyo Empire in the early nineteenth century, at a time when the government was already very much weakened, was still able to report similar general social order. The extensive literature on Asante (Fynn 1971; Wilks 1975; Arhin 1967; Yarak 1990) consistently presents the picture of a powerful state maintaining effective control over its territories.

It is thus clear that these states succeeded in eliminating the disorder that preceded them and protected their subjects to a considerable degree from the ravages of the Atlantic slave trade, to which they had previously been exposed for decades. Unfortunately for Yorubaland, at the very moment when the people most needed Oyo's protection—as the European traders moved into Lagos as their slave-trading headquarters—the politico-military organization of the empire deteriorated. Significantly, it was Oyo's efforts to stamp out widespread kidnapping in its territories, following intensive European slave trading in Lagos, that created political complications leading to the first of the series of wars in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century. With the collapse of Oyo no other state emerged to keep the peace in Yorubaland in the face of growing demand for captives by the European traders. The Yoruba became the largest single source of captives for the Atlantic trade in the nineteenth century (Inikori 1992, 26–32; Ajayi and Smith 1971; Mabogunje and Omer-Cooper 1971; Law 1977).

But, while these strong states protected their subjects against capture and export, their traders and state functionaries participated in the sale of captives to the European merchants. For this reason they have been maligned in normative debates. How do we make sense of this?

To start, it should be stressed that the people they sold were captives from outside their states, and they had no obligation for their protection. The rulers did not see themselves and the exported captives as Africans—there did not exist at the time a pan-African ideology that united all Africans sentimentally with a common African identity. That sentiment developed much later in the twentieth century. As I have argued elsewhere (Inikori 1982), the rulers of these states were not above economic considerations as they dealt in various ways with the socioeconomic and political conditions created by large-scale European demand for captives. But their actions originated from very complex historical circumstances. Again, as argued elsewhere (Inikori 1992, 25–26), simplistic explanations conceal the complexities and hamper our understanding of the historical reality.

In the first place, these states needed resources to maintain state institutions, including large military organizations. The cost of doing this had been multiplied tenfold by the extremely violent conditions, within and between states, created by European demand for captives. The main source of revenue for the states in western Africa—revenue with which to pay for vital resources—had been trade. At the very moment when state budgets were rising exponentially due to the high cost of maintaining law and order and containing external attacks, export demand for commodities was reduced to almost nothing. Gold produced in Brazil with the labor of enslaved Africans was being imported into the Gold Coast to pay for captives in the eighteenth century. The employment of African labor to produce commodities for Atlantic commerce had become such a critical element in the process of socioeconomic development in western Europe and the Americas that the main focus of European demand had become captives and very little else. In the second half of the eighteenth century the value of all products purchased by the European traders was less than 10 percent of their total purchases (including captives, which made up over 90 percent of the total) in western Africa (Inikori 1986). At the same time, the violent process of procuring the "stolen goods" (the captives) had cut off much of the precontact interregional trade in products that linked Atlantic Africa to the savanna interior and ultimately to North Africa and the Middle East.[14]

Thus, the source of revenue for the states to pay for vital imports—including military materials (firearms, horses, etc.) and the patronage luxury goods needed to maintain cohesion among the ruling elites—was reduced virtually to the sale of captives. As happened to Oyo in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, inability to procure military materials and maintain state power, under conditions of expanding export demand for captives, ultimately produced chaos, which exposed both rulers and subjects to capture and export. In an important sense, these states faced what rational-choice political theorists call the prisoners' dilemma. It is significant that the Dahomean rulers, after their conquest of the coastal states, sent to the British government a detailed proposal for the development of plantations in Dahomey to support a trade in products. It is not important to know the motive behind the proposal—whether or not it was a plan specifically designed to abolish the trade in captives (Law 1991, 300–302). All that is important for our present purpose is that the Dahomean state and the ruling elites needed some source of revenue. Were it possible economically and politically for the British and Dahomean governments, working in cooperation, to create export markets and successfully develop this alternative source of revenue for Dahomeans, the state and the ruling elites would have been economically and politically better off.

Constrained by the structure of European demand and the associated limitations of the internal market, the strong states were compelled by economic and political necessity to organize elaborate systems of tribute-paying vassal states, whose duty it was to funnel captives from weakly organized communities to the stronger states for sale to the Europeans. To illustrate, in 1744 the Asante state successfully invaded Dagomba and imposed on the king an annual tribute of two thousand captives. As Izard and Ki-Zerbo narrate, "Dagomba's future was dogged by the aftermath of this treaty, which compelled it to continually find new sources of prisoners. The main role of Dagomba warriors became one of man-hunting among ethnic groups less organized politically and militarily for which purpose mercenaries were recruited. By the end of the eighteenth century, Dagomba was no more than a channel for Asante influence which reached as far as the borders of Mogho" (1992, 339–40).

This process of establishing captive-collecting vassal states, as the foregoing shows, depended on the continued widespread existence of politically fragmented communities. Had strong centralized states like Asante, Dahomey, and eighteenth-century Oyo been spread all over sub-Saharan Africa between 1650 and 1850, the balance of power among the states, like that in Europe from the sixteenth century, would have raised the political and economic cost of procuring captives to a level that would have made their employment in the Americas less economic. As the evidence in Senegambia and other parts of western Africa shows, persistent intervention by the European traders, and the vicious cycle of violence from massive slave trading, which reproduced fragmentation in many places, severely constrained the spread of strong centralized states (Barry 1992, 266–67, 278–85).

The evidence is clear that the Atlantic slave trade was caused by European demand for captives. As shown here, European explorations brought together in the Atlantic basin economies and societies at different levels of commercial and politico-military development. The commercial and politico-military advantage of the western European nations meant that the needs of their states and economies determined what was demanded and produced in the trade relations between western Europe and western Africa. European colonization of the Americas radically transformed those needs, which in turn radically changed what the European traders demanded in western Africa—from trade in products to trade in humans.

At the time European traders first began to ask for captives, Atlantic Africa—as distinguished from the savanna interior, which had traded small numbers of captives across the Sahara to the Middle East for centuries—had no previous experience of organized slave trade. In contrast, the Europeans came from societies that had experienced it. One of the main issues addressed here, therefore, is why the demand for slave labor in the Americas focused on Africa rather than Europe. The explanation presented turned out to be contrary to the impression that has been gaining ground recently. Instead of the existence of centralized states in western Africa being responsible for the supply of captives for export, as argued in recent debates, it was their absence that facilitated the supply of captives in response to growing European demand.[15] In Europe, on the other hand, the widespread existence of relatively strong centralized states, able to maintain law and order at home and offer blow for blow to external aggressors, raised the political and economic cost of captive exports for all rulers and imposed mutual restraint on European states. Earlier in the Middle Ages and early modern times political fragmentation, similar to that in sub-Saharan Africa between the mid-seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, had similarly facilitated the supply of export captives in response to demand in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Thus, what weakened the struggle of communities in western Africa against the Atlantic slave trade was not centralized states but political fragmentation. Hence, the emergence of relatively strong centralized states was a solution to the problem in the communities incorporated into the states. Irrespective of how the states arose, for as long as their politico-military organizations remained strong and centralized authority remained firmly in control, the subjects were protected from capture and export. Fortunately for the European traders, the vast majority of communities in western Africa did not live in these states. In fact, the European traders consciously intervened in the political process in western Africa to prevent the generalized development of relatively strong large states.

I have attempted to make sense of the apparent paradox of the strong states that successfully protected their subjects against capture and export, while at the same time participating in the export of captives from outside their political borders. In the first place, no pan-African ideology existed at the time to sentimentally constrain their action. Second, the radically transformed structure of European demand, together with the disruption of interregional trade within western Africa

caused by the overseas slave trade, left little alternative sources for the procurement of resources vital to the maintenance of state power and the defense of territorial integrity. It must be remembered that trade was the *raison d'être* of many precontact states; that continued to be the case from the beginning of contact through the eighteenth century. Resources vital to the state and the ruling elites were procured through trade. The detailed evidence from the Gold Coast shows clearly that both economic and political entrepreneurs in western Africa benefited enormously from the early European trade in products. Undoubtedly, merchants and political elites would have been better off had the development process associated with the early trade in products continued. So too would the commoners have been. Kea's summary of the socioeconomic changes on the Gold Coast, following the shift of European demand from products to captives, leaves one in no doubt about this: "There occurred, then, a significant change in the 'settlement order' of parts of the region, a movement away from urbanization and town growth and toward relatively widespread deurbanization. This shift constituted a major economic and demographic upheaval, amounting in effect to a fundamental transformation in the territorial organization of the productive forces" (1982, 11).

Thus, fundamental market changes in conjunction with the new sociopolitical conditions left the states and the ruling classes little alternative if they were to function effectively. On the surface the elites appear to have benefited from the export trade in captives. But when compared with the wealth accumulated from the early European trade in products and the opportunities for the productive investment of the profits because of the multiplier effects of that trade, it becomes clear that even the political and economic entrepreneurs were ultimate losers. Much of the long-lasting wealth associated with commerce in precolonial Atlantic Africa actually came from the product trade of the nineteenth century, which not only produced profits but also generated positive multiplier effects that offered opportunities for the productive investment of surpluses from commerce. In contrast, the export trade in captives generated negative externalities that left no significant opportunity for the capitalistic investment of profits from commerce. In the end, therefore, both elites and commoners in western Africa were victims in the transatlantic slave trade.

NOTES

1. Blake (1977, 16) describes the early development of Portuguese shipment of captives from Africa, which began with traders from the port of Lagos in Portugal.

Long before the Portuguese explored the coast of western Africa, these traders went with their caravels to the coast of Barbary, where they purchased slaves from the Arabs. As the coast of Senegambia was explored, the Portuguese resorted to raids in the small coastal villages to procure captives for shipment to Portugal in the early years.

2. Based on evidence showing frequent hostility to the European traders by the coastal communities in western Africa, the point has been made that the attitude of ordinary people in the Atlantic ports—people who were not traders, not government functionaries, and could not afford to own slaves—to the large-scale export of captives that they observed daily deserves detailed research. See Inikori 1996.

3. As Daniel Evans notes, "If the eastern Adriatic was not a slave export region in Roman times, there is no evidence that it became one immediately following the collapse of the *Pax Romana* in the fifth century. . . . The limiting factor on the European slave trade during these centuries [fifth and sixth] was the lack of an adequate market, the absence of areas where there was sufficient stability, sufficient surplus, for an elite class to feel secure enough to risk investment in slaves" (1985, 42–43).

4. Patrick Manning (1990) makes a somewhat similar distinction in his three-regional analysis of the slave trade's impact on Africa.

5. Estimates by the authorities, with varying degrees of uncertainty, show that as early as 1200 western Europe already had 61 million people, expanding to 73 million by 1300. Although the general crisis of the fourteenth century significantly reduced the population, growth resumed in the second half of the fifteenth century and by 1550 the figure had risen to 78 million. See North and Thomas 1973, 71. Related to the geographical area of Western Europe (Wrigley 1983, 121), these figures give average population densities of 68 persons per square mile in 1200, 81 in 1300, and 87 in 1550. (Wrigley says the area of England, 50,333 square miles, represents 5.6 percent of the total area of western Europe. The area of western Europe, 898,804 square miles, employed to compute the densities, is derived from these figures). The highest possible average densities for western Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that can reasonably be derived from the contending estimates by the authorities would be about 20 persons per square mile (Niane, 1984a, 156; 1984b, 684; Caldwell 1985, 483; Manning 1988, 123).

6. Population expansion in medieval Europe, by raising the ratio of population to land, induced the development of division of labor within and between regions in Europe, thereby stimulating the growth of local and interregional trade in western Europe (North and Thomas 1973). Intensive involvement in world trade centered in the Mediterranean further intensified the penetration of western European economies by commerce. These commercializing economies generated forces that were an important part of the political process leading to the emergence of the nation states in western Europe.

7. Boahen (1992, 422) says the 1629 map contains thirty-eight states. Possibly some of the forty-three political entities listed were not autonomous chiefdoms.

8. The problem of compliance with the terms led to restrictions on shipments by the Benin authorities. See Ryder 1969.

9. Most of the gold was produced in and around the forested Pra-Ofin basin. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the region supplied more than half the gold exported from the coastal ports and the inland commercial centers like Bighu (Begho). The impact of gold production on the Pra-Ofin basin is summarized by Kea: "Between the mid-fifteenth century and the middle decades of the seventeenth many new towns and villages were founded in and around the basin. Rural and urban settlement formation on this scale was rooted in population growth and the expansion of trade and agricultural, craft and gold production. In short, it can be linked to developments in the division of labor and production cycles governed by the process of expanded reproduction" (1982, 85–86). The wealthy men who cleared the forests and developed farmlands employed dependent workers, as some of the gold producers also did. Initially these workers were purchased from Malian Juula merchants, who brought them from the north. But from the late fifteenth century to the early seventeenth, they were imported by the Portuguese from Benin, the Kongo kingdom, and elsewhere (105). Kea believes that the employment of these purchased people gave rise to chattel slavery. The study of Asante by Ivor Wilks shows something different. Wilks demonstrates that the employment of purchased people by the Asante in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries did not produce a slave class. The wealthy Asante who employed purchased workers took pains to avoid the creation of a slave class. The matriclan institution was invented during the period for this particular purpose: "One of the major thrusts in Asante social 'engineering' was towards prevention of the consolidation of a slave caste: those of unfree origins were assimilated as rapidly as possible into the class of free Asante commoners and their acquired status afforded full protection of the law. . . . But the precise way in which such task forces were incorporated and assimilated into the open-textured matriclans must remain for the present a matter for speculation; all that is sure is that incorporation and assimilation occurred, and that in consequence no slave caste arose within Asante society" (1977, 523–24).

10. The account by Hilton (1985, 179) shows the magnitude of the loss. The king was killed, together with most of the principal title holders, four provincial governors, and important court officials. In all ninety-five title holders died. Kongo losses totaled five thousand, while the Portuguese losses were minimal.

11. Heerman Abramsz to Assembly of Ten (the Dutch Company's governing committee in Holland), 23 November 1679, in Dantzig 1978, 13–20.

12. Engelgraaff Robberts to Assembly of Ten, Elmina, 15 August 1712, in Dantzig 1978, 168–69; see also p. 240 for the correspondence of c. 1730.

13. These invoices are among the Treasury series (T.70) in the Public Record Office, London. They are being studied in detail for work in progress.

14. The changing structure of imports being analyzed in my ongoing research mentioned earlier in the chapter shows this clearly. For a preliminary discussion of the findings, see Inikori, "The Development of Entrepreneurship in Africa: Southeastern Nigeria During the Era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade," in Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola, eds., *Black Business and Economic Power* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002): 41–79.

15. See Gates (2000) for the recent debate provoked by the television series *Wonders of the African World,* which he produced. The series contains statements to the effect that the Atlantic slave trade would not have occurred had African states and their rulers not procured and sold captives. The reaction to the series by Africanists, black and white, has been overwhelmingly negative.

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