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Mapping out the Embarking and Working Conditions of the Slaves: Danhomey and Britain in Slave Trade

Dr Hergie Alexis SEGUEDEME^{1*}, Dr ABODOHUI Olivier Orierien², Baudelaire SEGOH³

¹ Maitre de Conférences des Universités (CAMES) de Littérature Anglaise, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Rep, Benin

² Maitre Assistant Universités (CAMES) de Littérature Anglaise, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Rep, Benin

³ Doctorant en Civilisation Britannique Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Rep, Benin

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***Corresponding author:** Dr Hergie Alexis SEGUEDEME

Maitre de Conférences des Universités (CAMES) de Littérature Anglaise, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Rep, Benin

Abstract

The slave trade is a trade of human beings against objects on a global scale for several decades. It involved many nations of the world and continent in general. Thus the Africans in particular the Dahomeans played some roles in it. It is in this sense that our theme entitled “Danhomey and British slave trade with special reference to embarkation and working condition” highlights the treatment of black during the transatlantic slave trade. Starting from the history of the kingdom of Dahomey, its organizations and contributions to the slave trade, it sheds light on the dark side of the captivity of the neighboring localities, their routing for sale in the port of Ouidah before being embarked on a horrible sea voyage to work in the British colonies in the United States and elsewhere on plantations. The objective of this subject is to show that the slave trade was a mistake especially for Dahomey and Africans in general, because the sale of the slaves did not enrich the kingdom of Dahomey but rather the European continent benefited more from it to rise to the top of the world in all areas and plans. But this would not be possible without the works of black people in the plantations and in various other places.

Keywords: Embarking Slave Trade, Working Conditions.

Introduction

Dahomey also called Abomey, after its capital city, was the state of the Fon people. It was originally a dependency of Allada. But during the 17th century, a ruler called Houegbadja declared himself

king and made Dahomey an independent state. Moreover, like Dahomey, Allada, which, neighbouring to Ouidah had grown rich on the slave trade.

Since slavery was a significant and harmful event for humanity, I have chosen Dahomey and British slave trade with special reference to the embarking and working conditions. Although true slavery could be useful, beneficial for its participants it also had bad repercussions on the whole world and in particular on the kingdom of Dahomey. Now it is time to shed light on certain aspects of slavery.

The aim of this topic is also to show the implication or role of Dahomey in the slave trade, the relation between England and Dahomey, and difficult conditions of some slaves selling once at their arrival. My research work is therefore to trace the route of slaves from Abomey, Allada to the British colonies in order to understand what the slaves endured during slave trade. It is also important to emphasize on the atrocity of the transatlantic slave trade. That's to say the boarding and working conditions.

The specific points of this study are accentuated on the history of Dahomey, its organization and implication in the slave trade as well as well partner colonies.

I have not also forgotten to mention the impacts of trafficking on the two parties involved in my topic.

In terms of research methodology, documentary research and empirical research are the most important research tools I have used.

Furthermore, a lot of humanist researchers and abolitionist like a British narratives Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cuguo in many aspect; expressed "how profoundly shameful the slave trade was.

To succeed our goal, this study is composed of four main parts: Slave Trade in Dahomey, Contributions of Dahomey in the Slave Trade, Embarking conditions of Slaves in Dahomey, the working Conditions of the Slave in British colonies, the Ups and Downs of the trade and its Perspectives

And the last one on the working conditions of the slaves in British colonies, ups and downs and perspectives.

1. Slave Trade in Dahomey and its political organization

1.1 History of Dahomey

At the beginning, the kingdom of Abomey was called Dahomey, this name was known as the modern republic. The kingdom of Dahomey was extended from ketou (Nigeria) to the district around Atakpame (modern Togo), founding about seventeenth century and established by Adja invaders royal family (Tado modern TOGO) a tributary of Oyo empire in sixteen and seventeen century. According to the story, there was a Fon prince named Agassu in the city of Tado (TOGO) who tried to become king but did not succeed because he lost the struggle finally and took over the city of Allada instead. Then in 1600, two or (three for some version) princes in Agass's lineage fought over who would be the ruler of Allada. But it was decided that both of them would leave the kingdom and found new kingdom with Teagbanlin going to the south and founding the city that would become Porto-Novo and Do-Aklin moving to Abomey Plateau to the north. Do-Aklin's son Dakodonu was permitted to settle in the area by the Gedeve chiefs in Abomey. Nevertheless, when Dakodonu requested additional from a prominent chief named Dan, the relationship grew hostile. Thus, the chief responded Dakodonu with sarcasm by saying "should I open up my belly and build you a house on it?" Dakodonu killed Dan on the spot and ordered that his new palace is

built on the site and derived the kingdom's name from the incident: Dan=chief, xo=Belly, me=inside of. At the arrival of Europeans, the kingdom of Dahomey is extended from the coastal ports of Ouidah and Cotonou, excluding Save and Savalou. "Savalou formed small allied kingdom" (Jacques Lombard 2018)¹. "The kingdom of Dahomey was concentrated in the order of the king and his ancestors" (Jacques, Lombard 1967)². In Dahomey the king is also the one who supervised the cults. People were homogeneous and lived in social cohesion and feeling of unity. That unity of Dahomey helped them to be victorious on their ancient enemy, the Yoruba (NIGERIA) who exercised some hegemony over the tribes and the area in the east of the Abomey plateau before. The kingdom of Dahomey was a predatory state. It conquered several small states and took control of them. In its wars of expansion, Dahomey succeeded in conquering people on the eastern and northern borders, the Yoruba and the Mahi respectively. To the south, there were two prominent kingdoms, Ardra also called Allada and the Ouidah (Ouidah), which had power along the Atlantic coast both under control of the Dahomey kingdom. The coastal area had come in contact with the Portuguese in the 15th century, but without significant trade until 1533 when the Portuguese and the city of Grand-Popo signed a trade agreement.

1.2 Political organization

"Trans-atlantic commerce presented New opportunity for political centralization" Jean, C. Moroe (2016). On the top we have the king, who has all the power to appoint, demote or promote his officials and was assisted by some minister in charge of specific duties. These ministers include:

Prime minister (Mingi) who collected revenue

Minister in charge of overseas (yevogan)

Minister of agriculture (topke)

For security issues, they have traditional espionage called Naye. Abomey the capital was considered as the nucleous and small-town of Dahomey that constituted of other outlying domain with one governor for each district who assured the security and settled minor cases.

Intelligent institution called agbadjigbeto was responsible of expionning and spread propaganda about intelligence founding. For justice questions, we have the court of appeal presided by Mingi where severe punishment were given. At the palace with King, we have Migan the right and Mehu the left.

To constitute the army, the soldier was recruited at 7 or 8 and serve for many years before being allowed to join the army as regular soldier. The army constituted of 15000 personal which was divided into right, left, center and reserve.

¹ Jacques, L .(2018) West African kingdom in nineteenth century pp 70-92

² Jacques. (1967) The kingdom of Dahomey In :Forde C. D. (ed.), kaberry P. M.(ed.) West African kingdoms in the nineteenth century Oxford University; Londres :International African Institute, pp 70-92

2. Contributions of Dahomey to the Slave Trade

In the days of slavery in Africa, “from the 1690s through the 1720s, Ouidah continued to be the principal port” Patrick (p122)³. “Another African kingdom that took advantage of transatlantic slave trade was Dahomey” Tom, M. (2008p14)⁴. It means that the kingdom of Dahomey participated a lot in the slave trade and gained much. In fact, like said TOM (2008), “in the eighteenth century, the kingdom of Dahomey organized raids into neighboring lands largely to capture prisoners to sell on to European traders”. So the kings at that time would have organized raiding parties to attack rival tribes and catch strong men and women to sell them to Europeans. Slavery was already a thing in Africa before the arrival of colonists but it is with their arrival that it was turned into an industry. The kingdom of Dahomey was the most powerful kingdom in the land that would become later Benin and using its supremacy in war to build its fortune selling slaves. “Between the end of seventeenth century and the end of nineteenth some seven million Africans were transported from the west coast of Africa to the American continent, many of them from the Dahomean port of Ouidah” Dov Ronen (1971)⁵. This point of view was supported by Patrick, M. by saying that some of “the Europeans were invited to make the 90-mile journey by hammock from Ouidah to Abomey, where they witnessed the Annual Custom of the kingdom of Dahomey. There were treated to several days of parades and spectacles involving considerable human sacrifice”. It is the kingdom of Dahomey that also owned Ouidah, the most important slave port around, and would allow other kings to come and sell slaves to European merchants as long as they paid taxes. Hundreds of thousands of human beings were sold into slavery here in Ouidah. The sale and auction of slaves was happening on a main square in Ouidah called THE CHACHA SQUARE.



Figure 1: La place des enchères à Ouidah (The auction place)

Source: www.youngpioneertours.com

³ Patrick, M. Department of economics Colby College Waterville, Maine: The Uncommon market essay in the economic history of the Atlantic Slave Trade. The slave trade in the Bight of Benin, 1640-1890 p122

⁴ Tom, M. (2008) the Slave by Evans Brothers Limited 2A Portman Mansions Chiltern Street

⁵ Dov, R. (1971) ISTOIRE AFRICAINE On the African Role on the transatlantic Slave Trade in Dahomey Purdue University

It is here the kings would meet European merchants from the Netherlands, Denmark, United-Kingdom, France and Portugal to sell their captives to the highest bidder. Each European country dealing in slaves had its fort in Ouidah where the merchants would keep slaves like stock until the arrival of boats. One such merchant, Francisco de Souza grew to be extremely successful and was frequently seen on the square rushing his staff and the slaves as they went about with their trade. The interjection for « quickly, quickly » in Portuguese being “cha!cha!”, the slaver was nicknamed chacha and the square, which he lived right in front of, was named after him.

To these days, the figure of ChaCha is a controversial one in Ouidah with many of his descendants still living there. For some, Fernando de Souza was the driving force behind the modernization of Ouidah albeit to facilitate his slave trade, for others, he was evil and made flesh and blood trading and should be stripped away from history. Many status commemorating the slaver can still be found around town. Among this we have the tree of forgetfulness.



Figure 2: L'arbre de L'oublie à Ouidah (The Tree of forgetfulness)

Source: www.youngpioneertours.com

Along the slave trail of Ouidah, it played a very important role.

The Dahomey kings were known to employ magic to help their trade and as such, along the slave trail were left different elements given supernatural power to help them in the evil business. The first stop along the slave trail of Ouidah contains such an element. Europeans desired those slaves whose memory would be wiped or clean of any remembrance of their culture, family and homeland. And the kings were afraid that, if slaves knew where they came from, they would be able to flee and come back to their lands. So, a magical tree was used to allegedly make them forget all of that. Men were asked to turn around the tree nine times and women seven, after which it was said the magic of the tree would make them forget all their ties to the land they were pushed away from.

The case, or house of Zomai, is the emplacement where a tiny house was.



Figure 3: The Zomai House

Source: Shot in Ouidah

The building in which the slaves were put before their embarking

In this house, without windows or light, hundreds of slaves were squeezed and kept here for two weeks. Slaves were fed once a day and not allowed out, even to relieve themselves. The goal of imprisoning them there for a while was to disorient them as they would spend days without light and would then not know how to escape once they were pushed out. It was forbidden for slaves to speak and those who were caught doing so were promptly gagged. Before their staying in the case of Zomai, it was made sure that prisoners with any link, such as people from the family, friends or even people from the same village or tribe were divided. Many prisoners died of the horrid conditions in which they were kept. Those victims were then thrown in a mass grave nearby.



Figure 4: The mass grave

Source: www.youngpioneertours.com

Over the mass grave can be found a memorial to the victims who passed away there. The monument represents rows of slaves who were progressively stacked tighter and tighter.

The next to the grave is a tree that kings planted to protect themselves. The kings of Dahomey were afraid that slaves who died at sea or in foreign land would turn into spirit and roam the world, seeking vengeance. The Tree, upon which rituals were made, was supposed to act as an anchor for retuning spirit, making sure they would not find the king or his family in their vengeful roaming and find peace in their land.



Figure 5: The Door of No-Return

Source: Shot in Ouidah

By the beach, there is a monument called the door of no-return. The door of no-return, built in 1993, is a monument commemorating the last step of the trail of slavery, that is, when slave would reach the beach and be packed in galions, to be sent out and never return alive. In Dahomean culture and civilizations, the women also participated in the political, social and economic life of the Kingdom. "The highest political offices were opened to female who belonged to the anato (free men or owners of the land)" Obichere Boniface (1978 P5). In Dahomey, every office was occupied equally by one man and one woman. It is a case of Gbonugan. There was also the Migan, the Prime Minister and the royal executioner, and the equal in female was the Nae-Miga-non. The same things happened to the Mewu, the Adjaho, the Tokpo and the Kpossou. Women also were able or permitted to sell their own slaves in the Transatlantic Slave Trade period to the middlemen who then marched these slaves to the coast.

3. Embarking conditions of Slaves in Dahomey

3.1 The march of the slave from the other towns of Dahomey to the port of Ouidah

The slaves were captured from many places such as Mahi, Dassa, Aja and other tribes of region. Some were from Oyo due to the war of Abomey territories expansion. Nevertheless, the captives who were from Dassa brought stones and were kept in an area called today Lycée Houffon.



Figure 5: Ayidjosso

Source: Shot in Abomey at Lycée Houffon

Here is about the stones brought by Dassa slaves

In this area they were made to round the stones three times in order to forget their various origins. After this ceremony, they marched to Azahi the house of “Houinato” in chain.



Figure 7: The entrance of the prison in Houinatohoé Abomey



Figure 8: The well in which the slaves drank from in Abomey Houinatohoé

Source: Shot in Abomey at Houinatohoé (Slaves prison)

This place or house was an ancient prison for the slaves and capture of war. The queens were those who lived in this building. So, the slaves were there to serve the queens. They were also exploited by the king according to their talent, and were sent to various activities. The strong and brave ones among them were well-preserved for sale, some of them who were bold enough were initiated in the army force to defend the Kingdom.

At the same time, the slaves of Mahi were imprisoned in Mahislo which means “welcome Mahi” at Djidja in the front of the district of Dowimè Gbantalègba a temple in remembrance of wars. After this, they were brought to the palace to join the other slaves to be presented to the king, all chained and they were made to turn round a hut called “METAGO” which was in the front of the palace (It is the crossroad where to choose or to make the sorting of the slaves around a box). This act was a way of saying good bye to the king. After this, they leaved the palace passing by Zouzonmè gbezagon and took the grand route of Houssougon after stopping at Kinta in Zogbodomè for some days. And they continued by Akiza to get to

Toffo, from Toffo to Hinvi, from Hinvi to Allada where they stayed for some days in order to rest. From Allada to Toribossito, from there to Savi and from Savi to Ouidah and the auction house, the final stage before their embarkment. During this, they sang a song which announced the passage of slaves and also forbade the villagers to come out in order to prevent the slaves from being in contact of villagers. And the stubborn villagers who came were caught and joined the slaves.

Their march was allowed only in the night, in order to forestall them from knowing the road so that they will not escape.



Figure 9: The king throne at palace



Figure 10: Migan at palace

Source: Shot in Abomey at palace



Figure 6: Slaves in chain

Source: picture shot in Abomey at palace

3.2 The embarking of the slaves from the port of Ouidah to the British colonies

Before all, we have to notice that, at that time, Ouidah was a great indigenous African city. Like said Robin Law (1991)⁶, it is the “principal pre-colonial commercial Centre of its region, the second most important town of the Dahomey kingdom” Robin Law (2004)⁷ after the Luanda in Angola. Once in Ouidah, enslaved people were brought in Cha-cha square where the kings would

⁶ Robin, L. (1991), *The slave Coast of West Africa 1550-1750: The impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

⁷ Robin, L. (2004) *Ouidah : The social history of a West African Slavery' Port', 1727-189* Ohio State University Press

meet European merchants to sell their captives. Each merchant had it fort in Ouidah where the slaves would be kept like stock until the arrival of the boat. Those conditions of slave were illustrated by Robin Law (1991) “the slave trading rested ultimately on violence”.

After this, slaves passed by a magical tree. It was used to allegedly, make them forget their family, culture and homeland because the kings were afraid if slaves knew where they came from, they would be able to flee and come back to their land. There was also a house called Zomai, this house was without windows or light. Hundreds of slave were squeezed and kept there for two weeks. They were fed once a day and not allowed out. After all this, the slaves entered a canoe which brought them to the boat placed on the ocean, it is the more difficult step of the slaves voyage; the middle passage.

The conditions for enslaved Africans crossing the Atlantic Ocean in Middle Passage were brutal and deadly. Slaver ships were specifically designed for maximizing the numbers of African men, women and children that slave-trading captains and the ir crews could bring to the Americas. Once on board, enslaved Africans (Dahomeans) were chained and packed closely together in ship holds. Captives then endured up several months of extreme temperatures, harsh weather, filthy living conditions and contagious diseases in these ship holds as they crossed the Atlantic Ocean. The captains chained men for the longest periods to prevent rebellion and enslaved women often suffered sexual assault from ship members. The conditions of the slaves on the ship were so harsh.

Once in Americas, the crew of slave ships prepared the Africans for sale. They washed, shaved and rubbed them with palm oil to disguise sore and wounds caused by conditions on board. The captains usually sold their captives directly to planters or specialized wholesalers by auction. Families who had managed to stay together were now broken up. For Africans, (Dahomeans slaves) weakened by the trauma of voyage, the brutality of this process was overwhelming. Many died or committed suicide. Others resisted and were punished. The conditions that millions of Africans enslaved endured during the Middle Passage into American slavery stands as one of the greatest examples in history of human beings inflicting dehumanizing suffering on fellow human beings. As British abolitionist William Wilberforce (1759-1833) stated by saying “Never can so much misery be found condensed in so small a place as in a slave ship during the Middle Passage “. In the holds of slave ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean, millions of enslaved Africans first experienced what is meant to be defined and treated as chattel property in the context of new world slavery.

4. Working Conditions of the Slave in British colonies Ups and Downs and Perspectives

4.1 Slave life

Slave life varied greatly depending on many factors. Life on the field meant working sunup to sundown six days a week and having food sometimes not suitable for an animal to eat. “The slave could be sold aboard, the ship, soon after it arrived or at a public auction

ashore” Tom (20008p22)⁸. They forced Africans to adopt a new working and living conditions, to learn a new language and adopt new custom (seasoning for two or three years)

Domestic slaves did not often associate themselves with plantation slaves. Slaves were not permitted to keep a gun. If caught carrying a gun, the slave received 39 lashes and forfeited the gun. Blacks were held incompetent as witness in legal cases involving whites. The education of slaves was prohibited. Anyone operating a school or teaching reading and writing to any African-American in Missouri could be punished by a fine of not less than \$500 and up to six months in jail. Slaves could not assemble without a white present. Slaves were sometimes permitted to pay visit or to visit friends and family on a nearby plantation in some regions. Marriages between slaves were not considered as legal bounds. Therefore, owners were free to split up families through sales.

Any rape of a white woman or conspiracy to rebel of black slaves was put to death. However, since the slave woman was chattel, a white man who raped her was guilty only of a trespass on the master’s property. Rape was common on the plantation, and very few cases were ever reported. When black women were brought from Africa to the New World as slave laborers, their value was determined by their ability to work as well as their ability to bear children, who by the law would become the enslaved property of the mother’s master”⁹. Jennifer Lynn Morgan (2004)

4.2 The slaves in plantations and in other places

Life in plantation was very hard. For nearly four hundred years, Europeans used Africans as enslaved labor for a variety of works throughout the Americas. Most including women and children worked in plantations, particularly in the Caribbean. Large numbers also worked in mines, in towns and in the countryside. Many had been skilled crafts workers in Africa and were exploited by their owners; men worked as joiners, watch smith, metalworkers sailors and coopers. From the 18th century, women were brought in from the field and were given domestic duties as servants, nurses, dressmakers and cooks. Africans and their descendants also changed the landscape. They cleared bush and jungle, shaped field, constructed roads and buildings and dug canals. They created the environment and wealth which supported slave owners and their family. The basic needs of the enslaved Africans themselves, rest, cooking, making and mending clothes, tending the sick, the young and the old had to be met in the short hours at the end of the working day or sometimes on Sunday. For those on plantations, time away from the fields depended on the season and the crop.

In many cases, enslaved women did the same work as men, spending the day from sun up to sun down in the fields picking and bundling cotton. In some cases, especially among the larger plantations, planters tended to use women as house servants more than men, but this was not universal. In both cases, however, enslaved women’s experience was different than their male counterparts, husbands, and neighbors. Many enslaved women had no choice concerning love, sex, and motherhood.

⁸ Tom, M.(008) The slave Trade by Evans Brothers Limited 2A Portman Mansions Chiltern Street

⁹ Jennifer, L.M. (2004) Laboring Women : Reproduction an Gender in New World Slave University of Pennsylvania Press,

“Slavery grown tobacco, sugar and cotton” Robin, B. (1997)¹⁰

4.3 In tobacco Plantation

In contrast to sugar plantations, which required large slaveholdings that often led to a black population majority, tobacco plantations could operate profitably with smaller numbers of slaves.

In tobacco, slaves were given tasks to do and their work finished when the tasks were completed. In the day, they were fed once a day. In addition, their working time is long more than their resting time; they were always in chain while working. All this exposed them to sickness.

4.4 In Sugar cane Plantation

By the Mid-seventeenth century, European settlers in Caribbean and Brazil had established sugar plantation systems that dominated the trans-Atlantic sugar market. Sugarcane agriculture required a large labor force and strenuous physical labor (particularly during harvest time) to cultivate a profitable export. It also required skilled laborers for processing the crop from cane, to juice, and finally to crystallized sugar, molasses, or alcohol.

“Sugar planting, harvesting, and processing is tiring, dangerous work and requires a large number of workers” Jean, M., west (p2)¹¹

In fact, in parts of Brazil and Caribbean, where African slave labor on sugar plantations dominated the economy, most enslaved people were put to work directly or indirectly in the sugar industry. Sugarcane field workers worked long hours. “At the harvest time, slaves on sugar plantations had to work shifts of eighteen to twenty-four hours for five or six months at time, since the sugar cane had to be processed without interruption”. Tom (2008 P288)¹² Factory slaves worded under hot, humid, and dangerous conditions to convert the sugarcane into sugar and rum. African men and women, children were employed, mostly as field-workers. Women as well as children worked in some capacity. Only very young children (under six), the elderly, the sick, and infirm escaped the day-to-day work routine.

Once the harvest began, it was essential to process the cane immediately. Up to dozen boys and men typically worked around the clock to process sugar, working with the stench of rotting cane in intense heat.

During harvest, slaves worked day and night, especially in the mills and sugarhouses.

4.5 In British house

A harsh mistress or sexual aggressive master could make a domestic slave’s life miserable and painful. Female and male slaves faced sexual dangers whenever they worked. Their male and female owners, including immediate family members, relative’s friends (and even the causal stranger) regarded enslaved people as their legal property to use at their leisure.

Their misery of life as an enslaved person cannot be measured simply by the nature of the work they performed for their owners. Moreover, their work was never ending until death.

¹⁰ Robin, B. (1997) The making of New World Slavery fom the Baroque to the Modern 1492-1800 London-New York p-15

¹¹ Jean, M.W A social Studies Education Consultant in Port Orange, Florida.

¹² Tom, M. (2008) The Slave Trade by Evans Brothers 2A Portman Mansions Chiltern Street

At the time of slavery, house slave were often women or man, the one preferred by the white people were those born in America or those with white skin. Their role is to perform essentially the same duties as all domestic workers such as cooking; cleaning serving meals all time to satisfy the need of their owners. They also look after their children. They were exposed to significant abuse, including physical punishments and use as a sexual slave by the owners.

4.6 Ups and downs

“The Transatlantic Slave Trade had profound impact on Dahomey, especially on politics, economics, economics and society” Obichere Boniface (1978) p8¹³

The possible negative consequences of the trade were not only economic. On the negative side, the slave trade disrupted and weakened the economy of Dahomey. The trade had disproportionate impact on the population, because two-thirds of slaves taken to the New World were male, only one-third female. “During the first quarter of the eighteenth century, European merchants bought more slaves in the Bight of Benin than on any other part of the West Africa” David Ross (2009)¹⁴. It created the decline in agricultural production due to the deportation of most of the able-bodied. It also created the abandonment of economic activities (crafts, livestock) in favor of the slave trade. It created the massive and rapid displacement of Dahomeans (Africans) towards the ports of America and the Caribbean island. It should also be noted that the sale of slaves had not enriched Dahomey either on the contrary the barter linked to the trade was a real theft of Dahomey and African wealth by potential white buyer. This is easily understood when you know that against precious products such as ivory, gold, the European gave products of no great importance such a wine, alcohol, clothes etc. By the eighteenth century, slaves had become Africans (Dahomeans) main export. The Atlantic trade badly affected the political landscape of Dahomey and disturbed its precedents for the future. “At least ten million African captive were transported across the Atlantic between 1500 and the end of the nineteenth century” Tom (2008 P10)¹⁵ big displacement which affected the demographic of Africa

Admittedly, not all the consequences of the slavery for Africa can be attributed specific all to the Atlantic slave trade. Before, during and after the era of the Atlantic trade, African rulers were capturing slaves for their own use and for sale to the Middle East. According to the historian Patrick Manning, between 1500 and 1900, while twelve million captives were sent on the Atlantic slave ships, eight millions were kept as slaves within Africa, and six million were sent as slaves to the Middle East and other “oriental” markets.

But the Atlantic trademarked has a substantial expansion of the African slave system, and should still be seen as responsible for many of its evils.

4.7 Positive impacts

As positive aspect, trafficking has allowed the introduction of some plants from elsewhere, especially from America, such as cassava,

¹³ Obichere Boniface (1978) Women and Slavery in the kingdom of Dahomey. Outre-Mers. Revue d’Histoire/238/ pp.5-19

¹⁴ David, R (2009) The Dahomean middleman system, 1727-C. 1818 The journal of African History 8(3), 357-375, 1987.

¹⁵ Tom, M.(2008) The Slave Trade by Evans Brothers Limited 2A Portman Mansions Chiltern Street p10

peanuts, cocoa, corn, tobacco and others. All its products today serve as a food or culture for many states that can lead to economic growth. The Atlantic slave trade has contributed in the animation of many markets and the redistribution and permits the constitution of large fortunes invested in activities or some forms in different consummation.

As consequences of the slave trade in Europe, it has positively affected it on economic side. The slaves have enabled the European continent to make considerable profits because through this traffic, many ports have sprung up and developed. Those ports were Bordeaux and Nantes in France, and the ports of Amsterdam in Netherlands. The slave also favored the accumulation of enormous capital which favored the industrial revolution of the 19th century. Thus, it must be recognized that Dahomey (Africa) participated, despite itself, in industrial and economic development of the European continent. Politically, the slave trade had an impact on Europe. On the one hand, we had the supporters of abolition made up of men of the church, philanthropist, philosophers. On the other hand, we had the supporters of slavery and the slave trade because they derived substantial income from it.

On the psychological level, racism takes on an increasingly worrying dimension. The Black man appears to many Europeans as an inferior being devoid of intelligence.

As far as the New World is concerned the arrival of Europeans in Americas had brought diseases that devastated local populations, which reduced the potential for securing labor from that source; and often too few Europeans came to the Americas to meet the demand for labor. This was particularly true in Brazil and Caribbean, where people of African origin became by far the largest section of the population; it was also the case in parts of North America, although here white people outnumbered black people.

Black people slaves were especially important as a labor supply for the plantation agriculture that developed in the New World, first in Brazil, and later in the Caribbean and southern part of North America.

The long-term economic exploitation of millions of black slaves was to have a profound effect on the New World history. Most fundamentally, it produced deep social divides between the rich white and poor black communities, the consequences of which still haunt American societies now, many years after emancipation.

The divide was reinforced by the determination to segregate black and white communities and discourage intermarriage, and by the reluctance to liberate black people from slavery from one generation to the next. This contrasts with the experiences of African slaves who were sent to the Middle East, where both intermarriage and slave liberation were more common.

And yet, in spite of the trauma experienced over the course of generations, there was the creativity with which, gradually, the black communities of the Americas developed new identities, drawing on a combination of African tradition, encounters with European culture, and experiences in the New World. This would prove to be a great enrichment of cultural life and would contribute to the global culture of modern times.

4.8 Perspectives

The rise of the Kingdom of Dahomey coincided with the growth of the slave trade in the area, and consequently has often served as a case study of the impact of the slave trade upon African societies.

To clarify the relationship between the nature of the Dahomean state and its participation in the slave trade, it considers that the rulers of Danhomey had originally intended to the slave trade on it kingdom before the contact with the white people. This would not mean that the white are or were also an angel during the slave trade because it was themselves who were at its base and only deceived the vigilance of the black's people in order to have their bread. "Europeans traders tried to cheat the African at every turn". Tom(2008 p14)¹⁶ Perhaps it can be for this reason that many Europeans authors do not approach too much in their various works, the atrocity, and the barbaric behavior of the whites toward the Africans during this period.

Nevertheless, the transatlantic slavery was unfair because it's created the spirit of inferiority in the mind of the Black people. This act of exchanging human being against goods shows how meaningless the Africans people are. It also regresses the development of Africa precisely the kingdom of Dahomey because of the loss of the brave ones. It's also created ethnical divisions in Benin of today.

CONCLUSION

The Transatlantic Slave Trade represents one of the most violent, traumatizing, and horrific eras in world history. Nearly two million people died during the barbaric Middle Passage across the ocean. The Africa continent was left destabilized and vulnerable to conquest and violence for centuries. Nevertheless these consequences did not leave aside the Kingdom of Dahomey.

It was a quite empire with its civilization before the arrival of white. They came in Africa and particularly in Kingdom of Dahomey and tried to impose their way of living, thinking and behaving during the transatlantic slave trade. The real aim of the Whites expedition in Africa especially in Kingdom of Dahomey was to find slaves who can work on their plantations and in other places. The objective was achieved in one hand because the white succeeded in convincing and implicating the King in slaves trading at the time and exchanged many men and women against some little goods. Those slaves who were exchanged as commodities suffered a lot once in British colonies. They were exposed to many dangers in plantations and worked very hard in several domains in order to develop the British colonies in general, and Europe in particular. As witnessed Hannah Allen "A woman who, forced to work while pregnant 'had a baby out in the field about eleven o'clock one morning". This shows how the slaves were maltreated and they did not have time for themselves but for their explorers. Racial and discrimination are serious issues that continue to compromise equality, opportunity, and justice in our world. In the second hand this practice was not without impacts or consequences in British colonies and in kingdom of Dahomey. So, by that time, many of Dahomean (African) leaders took conscience, preciously some king about this danger of slave trade in their own country development and how their fellow were maltreated until on the board and in the colonies.

The transatlantic slave trade was an unprecedented economic, social, and political disaster in the history of humanity. Despite the fact that, the slavery was abolished in the nineteenth century, the practice is continuing and till be prevalent in the cotemporary

¹⁶ Tom, M. (2008) The Slave Trade by Evans Brothers Limited
2APotman Mansions Chiltern Street p14

world. So nowadays, more people are enslaved than the real period of the transatlantic slave trade.

The modern slaver still exists and constitutes a serious challenge to human rights protection worldwide, and many government as well as international, regional bodies and many organization are working toward preventing and combating it.

Although many believe that the slave trade is over or can be considered as a phenomenon of the past, it is still a very present scourge. Across the globe, criminals continue to find ways to exploit vulnerable adults and children, undermine their human rights and exploit their labor forcibly with no impunity. But it must change for the good of all humanity and give new meaning to human life.

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