Acessing the British and Danhomeans’ Authorities and their Complexity in the Slave Business and Perspectives

Hergie Alexis Seguedeme¹, Alidou Razakou Ibourahima Boro²*, Kossi Joiny Towa-Sello³

¹Université d’Abomey-Calavi (Bénin),  
²Université de Parakou (Bénin),  
³Université d’Abomey-Calavi(Bénin).

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ABSTRACT

This research paper aims at accessing the responsibilities of both the sellers and the buyers of slave respectively the Danhomean rulers and the British leaders during the period of the sorrowful slave trade. To reach our goal, we apply the new historicism and the psychoanalysis as theories. Apart from these literary theories, many books and interviews highly contribute to this research work on such a great human business. As main results, the British people and the Danhomean rulers had been victims of slavery before engaging the two continents. This study has also showed the communities’ authorities’ place and abuse of the power. This paper is a mirror which reflects the consequences of this human tragedy.

Keywords: Authorities, British, Danhomeans, Slavery, Tragedy

Résumé

Ce travail de recherche vise essentiellement à évaluer la responsabilité des vendeurs et acheteurs d’esclaves, respectivement les autorités Danhomeéennes et britanniques pendant la période de cette malheureuse traite des esclaves. Pour atteindre nos objectifs, nous avons utilisé le nouveau historicisme et la psychanalyse comme théories. Hormis ces théories beaucoup d’ouvrages et interviews contribuent hautement au succès d’une si grande entreprise humaine. Comme principaux résultats, nous pouvons retenir que les autorités britanniques et danhoméennes avaient été victimes elles–aussi de l’esclavage par le passé avant d’engager les deux continents. Aussi cette étude a-t-elle fait part de la place et de l’abus du pouvoir des autorités locales. Elle est un miroir qui réflécte les conséquences de cette tragédie humaine.

Mots Clés : Autorités, Britanniques, Danhoméans, Esclavage, Tragédie

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Introduction

As it is commonly said, destruction is mother of construction and necessity is that of invention. It is in this line of thought that centuries ago, there were many clashes between communities, countries and even continents. Such misunderstandings were due to the fact that each community wanted to have hegemony on others to enlarge their power and control them.

The issues of slavery trade apart from Africa had been for long time the concerns of the European countries. In Europe, the UK’s case was one of the unquestionable matter that we deal with through our research paper. The slavery trade in Dahomé kingdom was a simple drawback of the enslavement issues that had not started in Africa at the very beginning of slavery trade around the world. The only dangerous attitude that showed the greediness of Dahoménous was the way they sold their own brothers and sisters with the complicity of the local leaders. This paper mainly focuses on the case of slavery which is the consequence of people mainly the leaders’ ambition to make use of their strength to force other people to do their wills. This research paper aims mainly at enlightening the responsibilities of the Danhomen rulers and the British leaders so as to show that both the sellers and the buyers experienced this sorrowful trade. This is to mean even that the British people had also been enslaved before starting looking for African slaves.

Our work has focused at the first time on the methodological framework used through this research. Afterward, it researches in key words’ etymology and their place in the UK and Danxomè kingdom background, in this process, we contextualise words. The paper pinpoints on the kingdom background of the UK and Dahomé, the foundation of England and Dahomé kingdom through migration, authority power and the issues of slavery in England and in Dahomé. This scientific production is about the UK and Dahomé’s kingdoms building basing on the slavery

1- METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Apart from the literary theories, many books highly contribute to this research work. Accordingly, the qualitative method is also a research method that helps us to carry out our study.

In actual fact, the very first theory we have used is the new historicism. In the matter of history facts, the world events and any other human actions, we apply this theory so as to put aside the past events contained in the historical tools submitted to the ongoing study. To get a cogent and tangible thinkful issues of the particular humans involved into our study. We have completed the first one by the psychoanalyst theory. The resentment of the slaves has thoroughly been studied. With this theory, we have carefully analysed the king power and the issues of slavery trade through the world progress. So, this is an opportunity for us to show human attitude toward materials and everything dealing with human power.

2. Words Etymology and their Place in the UK and Danxomè Kingdom’s Background

2.1. Words and Expressions’ Etymology and Contextualisation

In Dahomé (today’s Republic of Benin) and the UK’s areas governed by King or Queen, the way people chose their leaders was different from a country to another, and the historical period depended also on it. The historical context in the UK had permanently been shifted in the matter of kingdom organisation, and in Africa, the countries had also been changed at a given time. Then, things are changing and must absolutely change the way the kings or local leaders did. That is why before handling all the concept of the ongoing history research work, we must evaluate the words or expressions Etymology after their definition in our. Moreover, there are many stakeholders and different kinds of institutions that had been involved into this business.

So, a “chieftaincy” is a political and traditional administrative entity representing territorial communities in a limited territory on a regional basis, subject to the domination of a chief whose authority no longer rests solely on kinship (unlike the clan), but also on prestige, the sacred, a certain. In (Histoire et Espaces de pouvoir Traditionnel en République du Bénin: 8), a chieftaincy is “a group of extended families, lineages or clans around a character that is, initially, a member of the group most formerly established on the site”. (my own translation). In “The Domestication of Chieftaincy: The Imposed and the Imagined” of Rijk Van Dijk and E. Adriaan B. Van Rouverory Van Nieuwaaal they claim: “Indeed, quite a number of the studies have brought to light deliberate attempts by colonial rulers to create African chiefs’ and impose them on subjected population” 1. In the light on these

1 In “The Domestication of Chieftaincy: The Imposed and the Imagined” of Rijk Van Dijk and E. Adriaan B. Van Rouverory Van Nieuwaaal they claimed Indeed, quite a number of the studies have brought to light deliberate attempts by colonial
Definitions, chieftaincy was a political name made by settlers and worn by the selected colonised political people who took part of decision making ground. They were made through any coin by settlers who needed in the past spokesmen whose power could implement their decisions and captivity business. Etymologically,

early 14c., cheftayne "ruler, chief, head" of something, from Anglo-French chiefteyn, Old French chevetayn "captain, chief, leader," from Late Latin capitaneus "commander," from Latin capitis, genitive of caput "head" (from PIE root *kaput- "head"). Now mostly poetic or archaic; in "Rob Roy" (1818) a Highland chiefetain was the head of a branch of a clan, a chief was the head of the whole name. Related: Chieftainship; chieftaincy. 2

From all these details, we could conclude in a few words that “chieftaincy” is somehow the outcome of the Europeans’ attendance in Africa and the UK, somehow the result of the French and Britain conflicts or end products of a colonial vision amongst two countries. Besides, “France and the UK were the exploitation and conquest of nations… (My own translation)".[1] Referring to the traditional authority, there is a matter of customs as both of them, the words customs and traditions are unseparated the ones. Custom as synonym of habit and practice, for Merriam Webster, is an action or way of behaving that is usual and traditional among the people in a particular group or place 4. For instance, in “Le roi de Djadjo” (2009), Gnama, aged of nine year old had been by force recruited as the leader of the local Authorities of his village in a new primary school 5. After this definition it evident that, it seems impossible in our history context to aside the tradition and custom. We may say traditional authority is the spokesman or leader chosen habitually among a particular group of political people to serve as authority in the matter of direct or indirect rule.

As a matter of fact, the United Kingdom is the name of one of the European regions. The name of this country contains the word “Kingdom” that derives from the word “king”. All the animals, birds, and insects in the world can be referred to together as the animal kingdom. All the plants can be referred to as the plant kingdom. Concerning the first human social organisation, a kingdom is a country or region that is ruled by a king or queen. In this perspective, the United of Kingdom is the name of one of the leading country ruled by a queen or a king in Europe. Around the world, in a monarchy an emperor and the both rulers, however the power allied with them is different. An empire can consist of many kingdoms. Today’s Dahomé Kingdom there are many under kingdoms. Then, in Benin Republic, there are the kingdom of Danxomè itself which the biggest one, the other as, Kingdom of Djalloukou, the kingdom of Tchaourou, to list only a few are considered as vassal due to the slavery of business. In this traditional environment, kingdom dealt with the slave as man power to serve the traditional authorities. So, Slavery was the system by which people are owned by other people as slaves.

2.2. Kingdom Background of the UK and Danxomè

According to the different kinds of definitions of the word “kingdom”, we cannot handle with certitude its definition in the UK and in Danxomè as the same. As a result, the way the “kingdom” has been organised around the world depends on the customs, culture and even the story of each country or lands. In the history book titled Anglo-Saxon England, according to M. F. Stenton:

"Between the end of Roman government in Britain and the emergence of the earliest English Kingdom there stretches a long period of the history cannot be written. The men who played their parts in this obscurity are forgotten, or are little more than manes with which the imagination of later centuries has dealt at will" 6

So, the statement below reveals some difficulties related to the history accuracy in today’s Britain past. Consequently, the issue of the history’s writing around the world since the very beginning of kingdom which was the first ground of Authority or governance throughout the World Continents. In actual fact, the king of Wessex, Egbert, and Offa, king of Mercia are sometimes called the first kings of England. Offa dominated a large part of southern England in the late eighth century, but his descendants did not manage to keep the area as a

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1 rulers to create African chiefs’ and impose them on subjected population
2 https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=chieftaincy
4 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/custom
6 M. F. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, p. 8
kingdom. Egbert, king of Wessex, managed to conquer Mercia in 829, but he, too, lost control over this territory. Wessex was the largest Anglo-Saxon kingdom by the late ninth century and Alfred the Great was crowned as “King of the Angles and Saxons.” He ruled over western Mercia, but not ruled northern or eastern England (Danelaw).

Hence, legally talking, Egbert was the first king to establish a stable and extensive rule over all of Anglo-Saxon England. After returning from exile at the court of Charlemagne in 802, he regained his kingdom of Wessex. Following his conquest of Mercia in 827, he controlled all of England south of the Humber. After further victories in Northumberland and North Wales, he is recognised by the title Bretwalda (Anglo-Saxon, “ruler of the British”. A year before he died aged almost 70, he defeated a combined force of Danes and Cornish at Hingston Down in Cornwall. He is buried at Winchester in Hampshire.

Regarding Aethelwulf King of Wessex, he was the son of Egbert and father of Alfred the Great. In 851 Aethelwulf defeated a Danish army at the battle of Oakley while his eldest son Althelstan fought and beat the Danes at sea off the coast of Kent, in what is believed to be the first naval battle. A highly religious man, Athelwulf went to Rome with his son Alfred to see the Pope in 855. Likewise the settlement of the kingdom has been as we have seen through in England, the Benin kingdom realities has not been exception.

In fact, Do-Aklin or Gangnihessou (Ganye Hessou) or Dogbri was known as the founder of the Kingdom of Dahomé and the first person in the royal lineage of the Kings of Dahomé. He was the first king of Dahomè even though the kingdom was founded after his death. So, many people didn’t know much about Do-Aklin and most of him was connected to folklore. But it is generally claimed that he settled a large group of Aja people from Allada to the Abomey plateau amongst the local inhabitants in 1620. His son Dakodonou would eventually build a palace on the plateau and began forming the Kingdom of Dahomé. According to oral tradition, the Aja were led to Allada by King Agassu from the city of Tado. Agassu was the son of a Tado’s princess and a leopard (or in some versions a brave Yoruba hunter). When Agassu tried to take over Tado he was defeated and moved with his followers to find the city of Allada.

Around 1600, three brothers (two in some versions) in the lineage of Agassu fought over the succession to the throne and it was decided that each would settle a new territory. The agreement was reached at Ouégbô (in today’s Hounêgbô of Toffo’s city council) that Tè agbanlin would found a state at what Hogbonou is now Porto-Novo, another son would take control in Allada, and Do-Aklin would settle on the Abomey plateau to the north. It is said that Do-Aklin brought significant gifts for the local population and was allowed to live amongst them, the mixing of the local population with the Aja from Allada created the new ethnic group called “Fon”. Do-Aklin’s son Dakodonou became the founder of the palace and the kingdom of Dahomé around 1640 by defeating a local chieftain. Anthropologist J. Cameron Monroe contends that the lineage connections to royalty in Allada is probably a later creation, used to legitimize the conquest of Allada and other aspects like Dahomè’s rivalry with Porto-Novo.

3. Foundation of England and Dahomé Kingdom through Migration

Migration comes the verb to migrate that means move from one place to another, especially in order to find work. According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, migration is “the movement of large number of people, birds or animals from one place to another”. Then, when we foreground the first one meaning of migration and the dictionary’s definition, we can assert that the human migration is the movement of people from one place to another with the intentions of settling, permanently or temporarily in a new location. The movement is often on over long distances and from one country to another, but internal migration is also possible; indeed, this is the dominant form globally. We think the last definition is the appropriate regarding the kingdom foundation of England, Dahomé and the one of vassal kingdom in today’s Benin country. For the UK’s kingdom building, we must talk about the every aspects of human beings’ movements since the negative sides of slavery in overseas. That is why according to President Kennedy, “...the United Kingdom at the very beginning was peopled of immigration come from other parts of Europe, and after the wars, of commonwealth. However, the UK has essentially played, with exceeding emigrants (outflow), and the exporting traditional role of population. From this connexion with human beings coming and leaving and their survival issues and the England foundation, English citizens knew

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migration, immigration and emigration. First of all, as Roman, Julius Caesar from the 26th to the 31th August 55BC (Before Christ) attempted to invade Britain, such a thing was the attempt to migration and nobody can deny. Because of the fact that Romans didn’teach their goal with their own army, on July to Sept 54BC, the King Julius Caesar become the first Roman king of England. For long time (54BC – 410 AD)\(^8\) anno Domini “in the year of our Lord\(^9\)”. During all those times, the Roman Empire was attacked by many different barbarian tribes and soldiers stationed in England, the first time England citizens had experienced slavery during the upheaval. On 410AD, Honorious, the Roman Emperor recalled all the Romans to join Rome and told the British citizens that they no longer had a link with Rome and so that they should defend themselves in the case of any situation. Regarding the under title dealing with the paragraph the migration definition, not only England country known slavery, barbarian issues, led by a settler but also was led by the Roman migrant. We say Roman migrant since they had been recalled to Rome and this issue of migrant in the past had led conflict around the world. That is why, Danxomè kingdom, for a long time had been in the very close situation. In actual fact, resentment related to the European people had impacted the whole world and mainly Africa. In the framework of growing and holding permanently power, there were enslavement projects on two sides around the worlds apart from the slavers’ issues among the Europeans themselves. So the revenge of the European leaders had been quickly poured on the African countries. As a result, the slavery business that European countries experienced had had begun when since they were aware of the importance of slavery in their economics’ building in developing country.

According to this view, wealth from the provinces flooded into Italy, massive economic inequalities developed, the rich acquired huge estates known as latifundia (‘wide lands’) by fair means and foul, captive slaves replaced free workers as cheap labor in the countryside, cash crops (e.g. wine) began to supersede staples (e.g. wheat) so that Rome became dependent on foreign grain for bread, small landowners succumbed to the depredations of the rich and the demands of constant military service, the decline of small landowners meant fewer recruits for the legions, displaced rural dwellers drifted to the cities in search of employment, corruption increased, overcrowding and poverty in Rome saw the rise of mob violence, patrons employed mobs in political settings, Italians and provincials chafed under various abuses, extended campaigns meant that Rome’s soldiers became full-time professionals, and the legions were forced to recruit the poor, who sought rewards from their generals and effectively formed private armies, which were eventually prepared to march against the state itself.\(^10\)

The above statement is mainly about the socio-economic consequences of the kingdom or empire. It illustrates the way the kings or emperors of Romans used the British slaves to solve their socio-economic problems. In this light of getting free hands, European leader sent to Danxomè kingdoms the slave traders in order to buy to human beings. This means that all over the world, wherever there were conflicts in the kingdoms revenge, there were enslavement through the contribution of the locals or the tradition’s authorities. In this way the slave trade was simply transformed into ‘a new system of slavery’ represented by indentured labour.\(^11\)

4. Authority Power through the Issues of Slavery in England and in Danxomè

Slavery is a system that includes forced labour in which people are held against their will. Slaves had no freedom of decisions about their work because they are bought and sold like private properties. Working conditions are generally very poor. In many cases, they were physically abused if they do not follow their owners’ wills. Slaves can be men, women, and even young children. In the matter dominance, there is always enslavement. As a result, through the history of England from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the revolution\(^12\), there was of slave trade. During the struggle, the slave’s mind became weaker and weaker and others were arrested by stakeholder. In New Encyclopedia of Philosophy,

\(^8\) https://rcg.org/questions/p104.a.html  
\(^9\) https://rcg.org/questions/p104.a.html

\(^10\) JULIUS CAESAR AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC, P. 24  
\(^12\) "CLASSICS IN THE HISTORY OF LIBERTY DAVID HUME, THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM THE INVASION OF JULIUS CAESAR TO THE REVOLUTION IN 1688 (1778)”, THE ONLINE LIBRARY OF LIBERTY Libery Fund, Inc. 2004
Slave morality is according to Nietzsche the morality which, as to the slaves, positively appreciate that what is weak, and calls evil that what is strong, hard and horrible. This morality would originate in the resentment of the weak against the strong.  

In this vein, England knew this pledge called slavery since the native people of Britain who were conquered by the Romans were usually known as the Britons. They were descended from people who had lived in this country for many generations. They were also related to the native people of Gaul and Germany. All of these people are sometimes referred to as 'Celts' and they spoke similar Celtic languages. Many of captured Britons became slaves because they lost all their right under the emperor Julius Caesar, (100-44 B.C.E.), the dictator of the entire Roman Empire.

The resentment of the weak one against the strong one, for Grooten & Streenbergen (1972) generates the issues of revenge around the world. That is why so far, the today’s world has been made up conflict hostel. During this battle of Roman king against the British people throughout roman king power, invader were arrested English people and used them as business goods. English people became the outcome of this Roman imperialism in the UK for the matter of the enslavement issue. The UK enslavement is regarded as the power abuse and witnesses how much the traditional authority through their Kingdoms participated to the slavery business in order to use free hands or promote free of charge labour. It was another way to have human being freely and use them in the light of growing Roman’s financial budget. As a result, the market of the slaver in process of Roman conquest solved increasingly, directly or indirectly and consciously or unconsciously the budgetary issues. At the same time, over the English people’s mind, the revenge and all things related to resentment were set up. Accordingly we infer that the resentment related to the enslavement in Europe and mainly in the UK had generated secret diplomacy. This diplomacy gets as role the rule of other countries under the domination of the poor countries around the world. Lately, Karl Marx has drawn people’s attention on the importance of the secret diplomacy through history of the international relation. It was between 1856-1858 in Diplomacy of London Review. So, in the light of Mr. Marx’s point of view and while taking into consideration the definition of slavery, the international diplomacy had been negatively impacted at the very beginning of the slavery around the world.

Like the today’s UK’s Kingdom, Dahomè kingdom had been, for a long time under the Kingdom of Oyo. The kingdom of Oyo was an ancient African state, funded in the fifteenth century by Yoruba community, the current Nigeria. It had been created or funded by Shango, the very first king of Oyo. Dahomè Kingdom as vassal kingdom of Oyo kingdom from 1748 to 1820, was rival Oyo kingdom, since Oyo kingdom kept Dahomè kingdom under its domination for one century. Accordingly, during this period, Dahomè kingdom paid over the time tribute to Oyo Kingdom. So during that time, Oyo kingdom used as hands in their army Beninese soldiers, and also exploited them on the trade and household ground. Slave trade, in the 18th century had positively contributed to the greatest, Oyo kingdom progress among the vassal one as Dahomè and the powerful Yoruba cities. Towards 1820, the slaver trade’s abolition had negatively reduced Oyo kingdom’s power on each level and had created the resentment of Dahomè kingdom’s people. That is why there was a permanent political conflict between Dahomè kingdom and Oyo Kingdom.

In today’s Benin Republic, until to today’s Togo Republic was occupied by many dominant kingdoms such as, Adjia-Tado, Ké, Hun, and Ifongnein apart from the dominant Oyo. So, the very first kings were established through migration of people who came from Igbo, Ahoussa, Shango, Edo, Enugu and Yoruba. Djalloukou’s King in current Benin country, His Majesty Issikotan claims that his ancestors came from El-Mina of Gold Coast (current Ghana) in 1519. He added that when his forefathers came in Djalloukou, they saw some natives, Ifè people that originally came from Osun State in Nigeria. On the way, we can infer that Dahomè kingdom was made up people from Ghana too.

Between 1670 and 1860, the port of Ouidah (called Glévé or Glehue in the past-Benin) was the greatest

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15 https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Royaume_d%27Oyo
16 https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Royaume_d%27Oyo
17 https://www.symbole-amitie.com/histoire-de-lesclavage-selon-la-tradition-dahomeenne/
18 Majesté Issikotan Labité Agbokonou II, ROI de DJALLOUKOU, Département des Collines, République du Bénin Afrique de l’Ouest DJALLOUKOU ancien royaume vassal du Royaume de DANXOME Abomey
and the most regional slave transportation port of the whole Africa apart from the one of Luanda in Angola. More than one million Africans people had been transported through Ouidah port in the frame of transatlantic slave trade. At that period, the slave trade brought Dahomè kingdom to the importance of permanent conflict interest. The tangle proof is the Dahomè kingdom desired in 1716 to lunch slave trade. In actual fact, Dahomè’s Kingdom had no choice in the matter the slave trade since the kingdom need weapon so as to fight against enemies during their conquests. Apart from the materiel conflicts, the kings of Dahomè kingdom provide to the Dahomè’s people European goods and hands for the kingdom activities.

5. The UK and Dahomé Kingdoms Profits from the Slavery

In accordance to the way the emperors used the slaves to construct Roman area, the British kings in the provision of the English needs or wants, they used the slavery trade goods to well organise the UK kingdom. The UK kingdom created through African Black slavery ports where they put their representative called chieftaincies. Around Africa, Ouidah or Gléwé port had been one the main ports of transatlantic slavery trade. Moreover, all the time, the resentment of slave had generated permanent conflict not only in Europe but also all over Africa. For instance, it was the case of American However, Dahomé Kingdom had been a kingdom that has greatly contributed to the slavery trade for many reasons. Firstly, Oyo kingdom had made Dahomé kingdom pay huge tribute. As a result, the resentment of Dahomènou had created and even increased physical their kings’physical power. Accordingly, Dahomé kingdom’s conflict toward Allada’s Kingdom in 1724, then the kingdom of Savi (Xweda), vassal kingdom of Allada, in 1727. The conquest allowed Dahomé kingdom to control the slave trade port of Ouidah and overpower Oyo kingdom. In the process, Dahomé kingdom, apart from the weapon materials, Dahomé kingdom sold their own brothers and sisters and others from Oyo Kingdom, and its vassal kingdom

6. Perspectives

The drawback of the resentment of English people of the UK and taking into consideration damages caused by the conflict between the UK and Roman kings, there was and will be a permeant revenge among the world leading countries. Likewise, revenge calls revenge and in this light of thought the UK kingdom lunched the slave trade with other European countries and made African people depended to European so far. Unfortunately the African American people’ of the United State of America’s case was special. As the sons the black slaves, they had definitively finished with every issues regarding the settlers and totally independent today. African countries were more engaged in the direct slave trade. However, the indirect rule of the UK continues destroying African countries. As one, African countries should decide their goal by behaving destiny like the Americans so as to consume their own products, use own language in their schools and Universities.

In one word, Africans must rely on their own goods, knowledge, cultures, costumes, beliefs, languages and then drop down the other languages, any kinds of material made in Europe. They should also innovate on every ground so as to face the worldwide challenges. Politically speaking, the leaders should revise the way they do. In this way, African continent should design a new political system based on the African customs and traditions and decree all over Africa the project of forgiving and promote the Unity of Africa.

Conclusion

Human beings’ importance in the world’s development is very valuable. They are the very first useful instrument and it is worth focusing on them. As Protagoras said: “L’homme est à la mesure de toutes choses”, meaning Men are more important than anything (our own translation). This is the European conception when they very soon started looking forward to enslave black people and use them for the development of their nations. This business has become more profitable for them because of the means of exchange. Such a way of doing thing generated the culture of resentment in the slaves ‘mind. As you saw you shall reap, Dahomé Kingdom became the main slavery trader by side of the Great Oyo Kingdom that had been for long time the leading slavery trade kingdom. Most of the time during the slavery trade, there was the social movement. People, for many reasons moved from an area to another and so on. So the weaker people ‘community became great and the greatest


one last power, there was building the kingdoms are made up of people from everywhere through migration, emigration, immigration, to list only a few. The slavery trade around the world had been importantly leaded by the kings, churches, chieftaincy, and the goods made in Europe, the resentment culture and acculturation etc… (Case of USA and UK)

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