Commentary

Ray Bush & Morris Szeftel

This issue continues the critical evaluation of aspects of Africa's economic and political crisis offered in previous editions of the ROAPE Review of Books in the hope of an effective alternative to prevailing notions. In the present conjuncture, the dominant forces of global capitalism restrict the policy agenda with regard to arresting economic decline, ethnic conflict and state disintegration. Structural adjustment (imposing externally-regulated liberalisation) and liberal democratic political reform (largely confined to electoral competition among a small elite and the sponsorship of civil society) have been the only games in town. The evidence is everywhere that this narrow agenda is inadequate for the task. Its apologists defend it, not by pointing to their successes or their intellectual coherence and elegance, but by reiterating that there are no alternatives. Hence the need to encourage the widest range of critical contributions in that hope that, from them, alternatives will begin to emerge.

The need for a new agenda is manifest. Economic restructuring, after 25 years of failure and despite the continuing brutality of its social impact, draws only muted criticism. Despite these failures, and notwithstanding occasional hand-wringing by the World Bank (as it accepts that mistakes have been made and launches a new slogan), Africa continues to be 'adjusted' to fit it for its station on the margins of world capitalist markets. The disappointments of democratisation are more recent and thus less fully explored. But the limitations of political pluralism as a means of promoting democratisation and overcoming the instability, ineffectiveness and corruption of post-colonial states, are already clear. While it is too soon to be categorical, multi-party competition appears to have done little to check centralised power and a great deal to discredit the electoral process itself. In Zambia (the liberal democratic flagship in Africa) the 1996 presidential and general elections produced widespread allegations of unfairness rather than providing the MMD government with the unambiguous mandate it had sought (Baylies & Szeftel, 1997). They have been followed by increasing political tension culminating, in August 1997, with reports of police dispersing a political rally and, in the process, shooting former President Kaunda and seriously wounding Rodger Chongwe, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party and a prominent human rights activist. It is a telling irony that Dr Chongwe had been the minister in the first MMD government (after it replaced Kaunda's regime) most closely associated with democratic and constitutional reform. In Kenya, impending elections in 1997 have produced widespread violence with security forces killing protesters. Democratization, in the form it has taken, does not appear to have made free and fair elections any more possible than they were without it. Even those of its critics who hoped for nothing much more than a little democratic space in which ideas and interests could be articulated have been largely disappointed.
The likely limits of multi-partyism as a vehicle for democratisation were explored in this journal from the outset of the process (Allen et al., 1992). More recently (ROAPE 65, 1995) Allen sought to locate the origins of instability and authoritarianism in the combination of underdevelopment with a rapid transfer of power to an indigenous petty bourgeoisie through plebiscitarian politics. The consequence was, he argued, the development of an unstable clientelism and regionalism with high levels of corruption. At best it produced the centralisation of bureaucratic power; at its worst, the post-colonial state degenerated into a spoils system, brutal repression and even state collapse. Allen suggested that liberal democratic reform might offer a partial way out of this slide but a more fundamental process of change, using very different agencies from those in charge of the present process, was, however, necessary:

... there will have to be a second and more radical wave of innovation, this time ... towards stable, decentralised and democratic systems at regional, national and subnational levels. Western agencies and African leaders, who have been so thoroughly implicated in past failures, can provide neither guidance nor initiative in this process. Those are far more likely to come from within civil society, which already has experience of coping with the breakdown of centralised-bureaucratic systems, and of the far more difficult task of the reconstruction of civil and political life in the aftermath of terminal spoils politics (Allen, 1995:319).

In this issue, Allen turns his attention to a fuller examination of the question of civil society, considering its popularity in recent analyses of the social base of political change in Africa and in the thinking of external support for liberal democratic reform. He argues that it is conceptually imprecise and analytically vacuous; its popularity owes much to its ideological value — as a force in opposition to the state — to the liberal policy agenda of external donors and agencies. Allen suggests, correctly in our opinion, that a return to concrete concepts such as class and gender is more useful than this vague shell. This critique of the 'democratic credentials' of civil society adds to two important recent contributions elsewhere: Glaser's (1997) questioning of the simplistic opposition of civil society against the state in recent South African writings on the left; and Mamdani's path-breaking study (1997) of the pernicious legacy of decolonisation in Africa and the limitations of civil society as an instrument for any kind of inclusive democratic transition.

Two other articles in this issue take up questions related to Allen's analysis of repression and breakdown in the terminal phase of spoils systems. Outram's study of warlordism and factional warfare in Liberia shows how civil war over the division of the spoils reduced the country to a state of long-term dependency on foreign aid (aid over which the factions continued to fight without any thought for the citizenry). And Zack-Williams' analysis of the return of military rule in Sierra Leone assesses the May coup in the context of the spoils system as manifest in what Reno has called 'the Shadow State'.

In more general terms, John Saul also takes issue with the liberal democratic project, contrasting two approaches to democracy and democratisation. He shows how what he terms 'the political science of democratisation' (exemplified by Diamond and Huntington, among others) proposes that reform must be consistent with the interests of international capitalism and the neo-liberalism of the IFIs if it is to avoid, in Diamond's words, 'provoking a crisis that might destroy democracy'. Saul argues that this narrow, pessimistic approach is devoid of any real concern with socio-economic outcomes and has a tendency to blame the victims, rather than their
oppressors, for transitions that fail. As an alternative, Saul offers what he calls 'the political economy of democratisation' rooted in the processes of imperialism, class struggle and state-social relations. This approach offers the possibility of examining issues of democratisation in terms of the real interests that move them. It offers a methodology that permits analysis of institutional forms and constitutional change in terms of the interests and historic conjunctures they represent rather than in terms of their own ideological justifications.

The debate about democratisation has taken place in the context of processes that destabilise and erode the African state. This, in part, is the problem for and with liberal democratic theory, rooted as it is in changing institutional arrangements rather than the socio-political relations on which they rest. This issue includes a number of contributions which look at very different aspects of such destabilising forces. Baylies and Bujra report on key issues raised at an international conference in Senegal on social research in AIDS, an instance of useful international co-operation. With their report, we append a newspaper article (published from the Observer with the kind permission of the authors) which indicates a more problematic example of international co-operation in which international pharmaceutical companies test drugs in Africa but then withdraw treatment when tests have been completed.

Using a very different approach to the other articles in this issue, and concerned with a different subject, Mohan opens out some related questions and problems. Rejecting the tendency of most on the left to reject post-modernism out of hand (as a reactionary form of intellectual self-indulgence divorced from reality) he juxtaposes post-structural ideas with marxism and explores the way the former challenge the latter. This is done by exploring the various meanings of 'difference' in relation to contemporary development theories and policies. Mohan argues that this analysis of 'development' theories as a form of discourse reveals the power relations inherent in them, including their eurocentric character. Asking how the 'insights of post-structuralism' can be incorporated into 'a still radical political economy', Mohan suggests a number of issues for a future theoretical agenda: the subordination of markets to social ends, the sovereignty of the state, the reconstitution of state-civil society frameworks, and international democratisation.

Such questions, like those raised in the other articles in this issue, take us beyond the conception of a world order which is implicit in the notions of free markets and multi-party parliaments presently being imposed on the continent. It is possible, too, that events and movements are beginning to change the agenda on the ground. While liberal reforms have so far proved feeble (inevitably leading their advocates to blame Africa and Africans for their 'inability' to sustain transition) a new model of political change, based on radical and egalitarian reform movements, has begun to forge new structures of power out of the ruins of collapsed states and corrupt spoils systems. In states like Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, Eritrea, Rwanda and Zaire, movements have emerged (often by violence) out of long and horrific political crises to promote, not revolutionary transformations but, within the confines of international capitalist controls, a measure of (more) honest and egalitarian government. It will be interesting to see if this proves more successful than the efforts that have preceded it.
References


Mamdani, M (1996), *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton: James Currey

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**Editor's Note:** In *ROAPE 72*, page 215 of Gregor Gall's article, the last sentence should have read: 'There is likely to be a frustration by union members that their former union leaders have little influence over the government and an anger that unions are becoming 'transmission belts' for government policies and appendages of government. The trade union leaders are well aware of this tension but are unsure quite what to do about it.' We apologise for the omission.
Developing Differences: Post-structuralism & Political Economy in Contemporary Development Studies

Giles Mohan

Difference can mean many things – inequality, the non-same or change. This article explores all these interpretations in the context of recent debates around development theory and praxis. In particular I focus on the ways in which post-structuralist ideas have challenged those of various marxisms and how political activism may change as a result. I have taken ten books published in the last two years and drawn out themes which run through them. In many, the concept of development as discourse is opened up and various discourses are, to use the contemporary parlance, deconstructed to reveal the power relations underlying them. In doing this we see development as Eurocentric, patriarchal and disciplining. This also brings our analytical focus onto human agency and the construction and deployment of identities which has the potential to move us well away from materialist accounts of political action. The post-colonial literature is examined briefly as it focuses on such complex issues of identity. After destabilising this knowledge-action axis I look at how the various authors conceive of future change. For some the answer lies in civil society where these identities and resistances form the basis for ‘post-developmental’ change. Others see a need to engage with the existing institutions, especially the state and the international lenders, and work both within and against them. I conclude with some problematics for future research and practice which centre on the need to re-engage with political-economy, re-conceptualise class as an analytical and political category and place clear pressures upon the major institutions of neo-imperialism.


Introduction

There are many motivations for writing this review. After ‘discovering’ marxism as an undergraduate I tend to defend, with an almost fundamentalist fervour, the insights of radical political economy. However, as a postgraduate in the late 1980s and early 1990s I was drawn into the ‘new’ language of post-modernism that was seeping into my own discipline of geography. Some academics rejected post-modernism with a swift jerk of the knee arguing that its emphasis on fragmentation and ephemerality was a bourgeois smokescreen for anti-marxist sentiments (Graham, 1988). Others (Harvey, 1989; Jameson, 1991), saw post-modernity as the cultural logic of post-Fordism and its existence was in keeping with the teleology of ‘late’ capitalism. Following these debates it was difficult not to get drawn into those ever-so-mature either/or arguments. You were either for marxism or for post-modernism,
but you could not be in both camps at the same time. As one of the faithful I stuck to
my marxist camp and repeated the mantra that post-modernism was the new evil and
Michel Foucault the devil incarnate.

While all this was going on structural adjustment programmes had gained
ascendancy and among most of the development policy community neo-liberal
thinking was accepted either explicitly orimplicitly. What is striking was that this
particular body of theory had remained relatively immune from the strident debates
that greeted post-modernism (exceptions Toye, 1987). Such acceptance was given its
biggest rubber stamp when the Berlin Wall came down and the cold war apparently
ended. Not only were the New Right theoreticians ‘correct’ but the mass of ordinary
talk in Eastern Europe had also rejected state socialism, a double-movement that was
crowned by Fukuyama’s populist ‘end of history’ thesis. So the paradox emerged that
during a period when capitalism and free market ideology had won over, the only
theory which explicitly criticised capitalism was seen to be mired in an ‘impasse’
(Schuurman, 1993; Meiksins Wood, 1995), and facing additional challenges from an
ill-defined and poorly-understood body of work called post-modernism. We are now
further down the line and it seems relevant to explore the literature which has
emerged from these debates and to see where it may take us in the future. It must be
noted that much of the critique has occurred outside of development studies which
Moore describes in his collection as the ‘repository of academic trickle-down’ (p.32).

Given that, as the quote by Lee (1994), shows, one of the key themes within
development theory relates to the ‘cultural turn’, it is my intention to assess whether it
offers useful insights for progressive African scholars either indigenous to the
continent or working from abroad? I have used the term difference in the title of this
review because it captures the central paradoxes in contemporary development
theory. Difference can be used to denote either inequality or the ‘non-same’. The
former meaning has more straightforward political implications for the Left since it
refers to exploitation and/or maldistribution of some resource. The latter usage
appears more open, but is crucial to contemporary discussions of culture, identity and
politics, especially those influenced by post-structuralist thought. But difference can
also be used in the context of a recent USAID report entitled Making a Difference in
Africa (USAID, 1996). That is, the politics of development agencies and intervention at
its most general should be uppermost in our analyses. The emphasis of post-
structuralist critiques centres on the discourses of development through which
individual and group subjectivities are formed which in turn shapes the context for
more visible forms of political participation. These are important issues although
there is a danger, as the Takaki (1995), quote cited above shows, that in doing this the
representational may replace the material in explanations of politics in these
supposedly post-marxist times.

This review began as much more modest effort but due to various discoveries in
bookshops and catalogues and contributions from the editors it has reached its
present size. With ten books of such diverse origins (Endnote 1) it is difficult to pick
out individual contributions and I shall instead draw out what I see as the most
significant themes. Following Sklar’s (1987), distinction between political theories of
development and political theories for development I have divided the review into
two main sections. While such a division artificially separates theory from practice it
is useful in, to use post-structuralist terms, differentiating between a deconstruction
of existing discourses and imagining alternatives.
Power, Knowledge and Development Discourse

As the three quotes at the beginning of this review demonstrate there is still, thankfully, a healthy level of debate within the field although heated debate is often indicative of a fundamental crisis. This section explores the major critiques of existing development theories emerging from these books. Much of this involves historical studies of the ways in which power and knowledge are bound together in the shaping of the discipline. This process is circular and reflexive in the sense that ideas enable practical interventions which in turn re-enter the intellectual field. Of the ten books reviewed, Escobar's *Encountering Development* has been the most important post-structuralist intervention and he also has chapters in the Crush and Corbridge collections. However, as we shall see, there are significant differences between the various authors as to the political implications of deconstructing the power-knowledge nexus.

This section begins with a discussion of the terms *discourse* and *deconstruction* which are attributed to the French philosophers Foucault and Derrida and are central to many of the contributions in these books (see also Mohan, 1994). This, then, allows us to see how these tools have been used to reveal the ontological emergence of 'development' and its formalisation as an academic discipline. The second subsection outlines the practical ways in which 'development' is 'applied' to people in the third world which includes a brief look at how discourse analysis has been deployed in analysing specific countries, regions, policy areas or social groups. This leads into an exploration of the more subtle ways in which the development discourse shapes certain forms of subjectivity which involves a brief discussion of the field of post-colonial studies.

Discourse and Deconstruction

The emphasis on deconstruction and discourse comes from the French theory which stressed the role of language in the construction of meaning and identity. This emphasis on the fragile and contextual basis for individual being was largely in response to the excessive determinism of Althusserian marxism. In the introduction to his reader, Corbridge emphasises that students of development should have 'a sense of the often fragile means by which knowledge about 'development' or 'Other' societies is produced and circulated' (1995, p.xiii). A number of contributions in these books does exactly that although it needs stressing that not all authors adopt an explicitly post-structuralist approach. For example, the Moore and Schmitz collection uses Gramscian ideas about 'organic intellectuals' to expose the operation of power/knowledge while Cowen and Shenton take a more eclectic approach in their detailed history. Indeed these differences open up a broader question of whether discourse analysis offers anything more than older style analyses of ideology and praxis.

Much of the post-structuralist impulse in development studies rests upon the notion of discourse, although it needs stressing that there is much variation *within* this body of theory. Following Foucault (1972; Rabinow, 1991), discourse refers to a complex relationship between power and knowledge and a radical reading of subjectivity in the sense that through discourses individuals become 'subjects'. Discourse, then, is 'the interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time' (Foucault, 1972:33). Discourse is more than texts and includes a whole range of representational practices through which knowledge is generated, communicated and transformed. Discourse analysis is also more than a methodological tool, but seeks to reveal the power relations which enable and are enabled by the
discourses themselves. This is where Foucault's contribution is important, because he explored the ways in which discursive orders come into being and thereby 'normalise' certain forms of subjectivity through a dualistic process of 'Othering'. That is, societies produce notions of 'normality' and 'abnormality' through diverse social practices and these may be regularised to produce regimes of 'truth'. Foucault's work focused upon constructions of sexuality, mental illness and criminality although he, like Marx, never explicitly developed a theory of state power (Foucault, 1979; Rabinow, 1991).

Deconstruction is often seen as part of discourse analysis because it destabilizes truth claims. Deconstruction aims to reveal the incoherences in a text by reversing and displacing the taken-for-granted binarisms, such as male/female, which structure Enlightenment thought and accord the former term superiority over its inferior other. So discourses and texts are read for both their presences and absences and the ways in which they structure marginality. In the books reviewed here deconstruction is part of challenging the logocentrism implicit in different interpretations of modernisation, namely the tendency to impose hierarchy and order and to adopt a foundational analytical position which implies a rational centre independent of that being analysed.

Discourse and Development

It was Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), that explicitly used Foucauldian discourse analysis to explore the ways in which imperial power and literary representations were bound together. In the 1980s, anthropologists (Clifford, 1988), began to problematise the deployment of power in representing other cultures. They argued that in much anthropology the western observer was rendered 'invisible' in these powerful narratives of Otherness so they sought to destabilise the authority of the Eurocentric gaze which involved overtly 'positioning' or making visible the voice of the author. Sachs's collection (1992), brought these strands together in a dictionary which sought to challenge the meanings of commonly used concepts in development thinking although it is Escobar who stands out as the main spokesperson for the deconstruction of development discourse.

For Escobar, 'The discourse of development is not merely an "ideology" that has little to do with the "real world"; nor is it an apparatus produced by those in power in order to hide another, more basic truth' (p.104). Here Escobar takes a critical but somewhat functionalist view of ideology in differentiating development as a discourse which involves 'the systematic creation of objects, concepts, and strategies' (p.40). In this way discourse operates in a far more subtle and insidious way than a blunt and cynical ideology. It enables, legitimates, objectifies, subjectifies and circumscribes. Both Crush and Moore subscribe to a similar reading of discourse although both are at pains to stress that they do not view discourse and its analysis purely at the textual level and are both more interested in the relationships between capitalism, development and discourse rather than modernity, development and discourse (I will return to this later). As Thompson points out 'they (discourse analysts), fail to provide a satisfactory account of the non-linguistic sphere and of the relations between linguistic and non-linguistic activity' (Thompson, 1984:9). So Crush argues in the introduction to his collection that we should not divorce the material from the representational. That is, they 'implicitly reject the conceit that language is all there is' (p.5). The analyses in these three books (Escobar, Crush, Moore and Schmitz), also moves beyond the tendency in some marxist work on ideology of focusing on the political as superstructure. This has produced tautological and
abstract analyses of ideology whereas the discursive turn focuses attention on ‘micro-
power’ (Moore, p.30), and the ‘set of relations among those elements, institutions, and
practices and of the systematization of these relations to form a whole’ (Escobar, p.40).
As we shall see most contributions and case studies in these three books do focus
upon the ways in which institutions at varying scales operate in and through certain
forms of knowledge.

The Development Discourse(s)
Hence, the development discourse ‘determines what can be thought and said’
(Escobar, p.40). What then does this involve at a general level? In Escobar’s book and
the Sachs’s (1992), collection, which includes a chapter by Escobar, the era of
‘development’ begins after the Second World War. Many writers cite President
Truman’s speech of January 1949 as the ‘start’ of development. In his book, Escobar
talks of the development dream which was the ‘result of the specific historical
conjuncture at the end of the Second World War’ (p.4) which he analyses in more
detail in chapter two. These conjunctural factors centre upon the expansion of US
markets, the cold war, the cult of scientism and the Keynesian emphasis on the
interventionist state which found its home in development economics.

Cowen and Shenton refute this reading of history and argue that ‘We take the modern
idea of development back to where it was invented, amidst the throes of early
industrial capitalism in Europe’ (p.5). As we shall see the ‘where’ of this invention is
as important as the ‘when’. In the introduction to his collection of, for the most part,
previously published material Leys concurs that ‘development’ emerged in the late
eighteenth century with thinkers attempting to conceptualise a ‘world spirit’ towards
which we were all destined. Of these thinkers Marx and Hegel were central. These
slightly differing versions of the emergence of development as process and descriptor
are important since the latter situates development firmly within the general rise of
capitalism and its crises whereas the former sees it as a relatively recent phenomenon.
However, Escobar does talk about the logocentrism of modernity which began with
the Enlightenment, nineteenth century debates around pauperism, and the limitation
of some marxist analysis which indicates that he is aware of the longer term picture
even if he chooses to downplay it. This is, I feel, largely because he tends to come from
a more culturally-oriented perspective which focuses on modernity at the ideational
level whereas Leys comes from a materialist political-economy which sees modernity
and capitalism as linked.

However, there is considerable overlap in these various contributions regarding the
development discourse. The concept emerged out of various strands of Enlighten-
ment thought. The Scottish school proposed the evolution of economic activity and
set in place a highly influential and normative vision of society. Locke added to the
liberal assumptions regarding the freedom of the individual which, as Parekh notes in
his chapter in the collection he edited with Jan Pieterse, was tied to a dualistic ‘us/
them’ mentality when he attempted to theorise liberal individuality in the emerging
colonial empire. These theories shared a number of core assumptions about the
individual and economic growth but they were also cultural in that development as
an inherently desirable process logically created its Other – namely the absence of
development. For some this lack of development was a reflection of an ‘original state’
where development simply had not yet occurred but it would given the right
conditions. This view was, of course, challenged by the dependency theorists in the
1960s and 1970s.
By the nineteenth century such ideas had been built upon by thinkers such as List, Mill, Comte and the Saint-Simonians who shared the idea that economic growth was necessary but added, in various ways, the importance of rationality in political life. Hence, the sovereign state became the critical initiator and arbiter of development. Leys picks up on this when he discusses that it was the post-war period that saw the formalisation of development theory per se, because it was Keynesianism that cemented the state as the vehicle for national development. Additionally, the cold war imperial rivalry with its politically-charged binarisms enabled the export of ideas and capital to more and more arenas thereby deepening and widening the power of development and modernity. According to Leys it is the demise of the Keynesian state-market regulatory matrix in the 'real world' of neo-liberalism and the ending of bipolarism that has thrown development theory into crisis.

So development theory 'has rarely broken free from linearity, from organic notions of growth and teleological views of history' (Crush, p.9). As such it is economistic, normalising, disciplining and essentially Eurocentric. It is, in part, this common heritage that created the more recent theoretical-practical problems of dependency theory. Both Leys and Escobar analyse the failure of dependency theory to transcend the limitations of that which it sort to refute, namely modernisation theory. For Escobar the CEPAL structuralists still equated development with capital accumulation and technical progress so that ‘they lent themselves to a modernization process that international experts and national elites were eager to undertake’ (p.81). Leys is more careful to point out the innovations that the marxist critique brought which was that, at one level, it was against Eurocentrism and the illusion of statist development. However, in an important piece originally published in 1977, he agrees with Escobar that dependency theory ‘while radical in intention, really remains within its (bourgeois development theory), problematic’ (p.47), and could therefore be easily co-opted into the orthodoxy, such as the basic-needs of McNamara's World Bank. Leys' analysis of dependency is far more thorough than Escobar's and focuses on various bourgeois and Eurocentric determinisms including its economism, its equation of development with the condition of the metropoles, its confused notion of exploitation and its inability to really analyse the dynamics of class struggle.

**Developmental Interventions**

This section examines the ways in which the general development discourse finds practical realisation in policy interventions. In examining the practical ways in which knowledge shapes intervention we will also look at how the various authors have used deconstruction in more specific ways. Indeed it is this inability to separate ideas from action that gives the concept of discourse its power. It is interesting to note that in the cultural turn of recent development theory (and, as we shall see, the post-colonial critique), anthropological theory and methodology have been brought to the forefront. Escobar, Gardner and Lewis are all anthropologists while the collections by Werbner and Ranger and Pieterse and Parekh both include contributions by anthropologists.

Gardner and Lewis’s book is a peculiar mixture of critique, exemplification and guidance on future best-practice. They have both worked within the development machine as anthropologists and their book attempts to create a productive dialogue between the two fields which are facing the same post-modern crisis of authority. Again, Escobar’s deconstructive approach is utilised to reveal the problems of Eurocentrism in both development and anthropology although we will see later how Gardner and Lewis move beyond Escobar’s grassroot’s alternative to development.
Much of Gardner and Lewis's book is a re-telling of old stories, but it has some interesting case studies of how development practice fails because its monolithic assumptions do not allow for the complexities of local social and political structures. On the other hand they argue that anthropologists have too often focused on the local and ‘traditional’ which implies spatial boundedness and temporal stasis. So, one discipline ignores local complexity and the other valorises it to the point of excluding changes stimulated from ‘outside’ the locality. In the same way Escobar discusses his work on Colombia to show how the linearity of development programmes are subverted by ‘real’ people through various acts of resistance which he later builds up into an alternative politics outside of development as we know it.

Cowen and Shenton do not use the terms discourse but prefer to speak of the ‘doctrines of development’. In this sense their book focuses on the more general level of social, and specifically economic, theory although they usefully take case studies of Britain, Canada, Australia and Kenya to show how development as idea is different from development in practice. This focus on a broader historical and spatial field is critical in revealing the emergence of development as part of the process of capitalist expansion and as a response to its various crises (a point made by Anne Phillips in this journal in 1977). This focus on capitalism and imperialism is crucial to ensure that the development discourse/doctrine is not reduced to a purely cultural, Eurocentric idea devoid of materiality.

In a number of the other books the general development discourse is filled out through various analyses of particular countries, policy areas or social groups. The Moore and Schmitz and Crush collections as well as Escobar’s book all include a range of such examples. I do not have the space to detail them although I particularly liked Mitchell’s work on Egypt in the Crush book. Indeed the best of these deconstructions were those which attacked the multiple dimensions of the development discourse. Mitchell brings out the spatial metaphors which frame many analyses of Egypt as a fertile strip of land overburdened by an ever-expanding population and then goes into fine detail about agricultural policy and attempts to naturalise the market through various means. Similarly, Kate Manzo’s chapter in the same collection explores the ways in which black consciousness has filtered through anti- and post-apartheid development activities. Both these chapters capture, in an engaging style, the complexity and circularity of the processes at work.

This brings me onto another issue about the politics of writing. As we have seen one of the main post-modern critiques has been the way the linguistic and extra-linguistic interact and mutually construct one another. However, the writing in some of these books is problematic. First, there is the tendency to take a bit of discourse and deconstruct it and then move onto the next bit of discourse and do the same. In Escobar’s book and the Crush collection we ‘do’ poverty, gender, environment, urban policy and hazards. It got to feeling like an intellectual clay-pigeon competition. Pull! up goes another discourse. Bang! we blow it apart. However, the Crush and Moore and Schmitz collections are well worth reading, because the contributions do, in the main, draw out the inter-connections between different discursive elements within the larger whole and simply by having a number of authors we are given nicely textured books in terms of style.

Unfortunately, the same does not apply in Escobar's case where the same shot-gunning of discourses occurs but it is done by one author who writes rather dryly. More importantly, I feel Escobar’s central thesis, while important, is stretched in filling almost 300 pages. As a colleague pointed out it was a good idea for an article,
but not a book. And, what is more, Escobar has also published countless articles arguing more-or-less the same thing (for example Escobar 1992a, b,c). What this points to is the profound contradiction of a post-modern radical working in a marketising academy. In criticising the effects of development and capitalism, Escobar is unable to distance himself from the dictates of the tenure-publishing nexus. Indeed, his work is so prolific and ‘samey’ that he is in danger of cementing a whole new development discourse which is a not unimportant point that I will return to below. As Epstein warns, ‘The new elites recognize their need to make room for a range of cultures and therefore value the multiplicity of voices, especially elite voices from parts of what used to be the third world in which multinational capital operates or hopes to operate. As long as such elites do not point to the global capitalist order that has created their privileged status, their voices are welcome’ (1996:136). This brings us onto the paradoxes of post-colonialism and its relationships with development theory.

Post-colonial Subjectivities
Related to this ‘visible’ level of intervention is the ways in which cultural practices and identity are shaped through discourse. This is where much of the analysis moves beyond straightforward ‘development studies’ because its ontological priorities are to problematise in order to prescribe. Indeed, this section could come later because it represents, in some ways, a response to the post-modern critiques of development that we have already discussed. Much of the debate termed ‘post-colonial’ studies attempts to move beyond these culturally-biased and power-laden formulations of Eurocentric thought. It is here, and in the political implications of this type of study, that the greatest contention exists for Left-oriented scholars and activists. The most pressing is that class analysis, and its central focus on exploitation, may be lost in the rush to reveal, in ever more subtle ways, the construction and deployment of ‘identities’.

The two collections by Werbner and Ranger and Pieterse and Parekh both situate themselves within the debates around post-coloniality. The Werbner and Ranger collection is extremely stimulating and draws together work on Africa by anthropologists (Geschiere, Masquelier), political scientists (Cruise O’Brien), and those engaged in African Studies (Chabal, Ranger). The Pieterse and Parekh book also has diverse authorships but is far less successful in its focus on ‘decolonising the imagination’. Like the other deconstructions there are some contributions which rather predictably take some element of discourse and open it up. However, both books focus on the relationships between imperialism, thought, identity and representation which are similar concerns to the criticisms raised in regard to the development discourse. As Watts states in his chapter in the Crush collection: ‘The post-colonialism literature has unleashed a ferocious debate which speaks directly to the writing of development history and the practice of development’ (p.54). In this section I will briefly explore how these analyses do or might ‘speak to’ development theory.

The entire field of post-colonial studies has flourished over the past five years but focuses upon the problems of boundaries (both conceptual and physical), identities and power. In Werbner’s introduction to his co-edited collection he argues that ethnicity in Africa is but one of a multitude of ‘shifting identities’ so their book will broaden out to examine ‘the cultural politics of identities in transition within postcolonial Africa’ (p.2). Similarly Pieterse and Parekh examine the problem of change which questions the periodicity and spatiality of accounts of both colonization
and decolonisation at both the universal and particular level. Both books challenge the existing analyses which see the transition from pre-colonial through colonial to post-colonial as representing radical disjunctures in politics and identity. Werbner argues that the marxist idea of dependency/neo-colonialism is too functionalist and generalising and tends to reduce culture, identity and politics to a product of western hegemony. Hence, both books aim to problematise and re-insert human agency into a more culturally-oriented, yet broadly political, analysis. As Pieterse and Parekh note ‘this means that colonialism introduced no more than one new idiom, one new strand, in the complex mosaic of the societies subjected to it’ (p.2). Likewise Werbner asserts that ‘History as linear progress has nothing to do with our usage of the postcolonial. Instead we take the colonial legacy, its nature and its impact, to be problematic’ (p.3). So if colonialism was not a totalising and hegemonic project neither can decolonisation mark any straightforward change. Hence ‘the post in postcolonial is a marker of dynamic complexity’ (Werbner, p.4), which, when engaged with, reveals a polycentrism which can generate spiritual-intellectual-political ‘boundary crossings’ (Pieterse and Parekh, p.10).

My immediate response to the first few pages of both books was one of alarm as I envisaged a multi-centred cultural analyses which celebrated intellectual playfulness. However, subsequent theoretical discussions and many of the case studies revealed a more complex picture in which culture and materiality were not separated. As Pieterse and Parekh note in many postcolonial studies ‘political economy is neglected ... the determinism of Marxism has made place for the “discursivism” a la Foucault’ (p.13). However, beyond these valid but rather general statements they fail to reconstitute critical research questions. It is the Werbner and Ranger collection that more forcefully does this. Of particular importance is their insistence that in Africa we must retain a state-centred analysis. This, though, is not in the same way as the dependencists treated the state as comprising comprador elites. Instead, we need to explore the relationships between ‘high’ (state), politics and ‘low’ (everyday life), politics and not artificially separate state from civil society. By focusing on multiple identities we can move beyond a delimiting analysis which privileges one dominant class as ‘creating’ political life. Instead, we need to look at the ‘reciprocal assimilation of elites’ and hybridity rather than mono-causal domination. However, they are at pains to stress that the African state has not lost its monopoly on the use of violence which should never be under-estimated. Finally, cultural symbols and practises need to be incorporated centrally into a political analysis at all levels and not treated as some ‘traditional’ relic for academic marvel. In particular occultism, stereotyping and subversion are seen as critical.

Patrick Chabal's chapter in the Werbner and Ranger collection opens up fascinating questions regarding not only the implications of postcolonial scholarship but its politics. In particular he argues that our current fascination with blurring identities in various ‘post-isms’ is less about wanting to understand Africa in more sensitive ways and more to do with the West's sense of lost empire and post-cold war uncertainties. Indeed our own doubts about the success and progressiveness of modernity are being reflected in studies of a region which we feel is the epitome of a failed or aborted modernity (Schuurman, 1993). Hence, we have only listened to Africans when they have told us things which confirm our own concerns such as the intractability of ethnicity or tribalism. The result is that we often accept simplistic explanations of social phenomenon that we would never accept in analysing our societies. In a complex argument Chabal calls for more thorough reading of African societies which he expands in his book (Chabal, 1992).
Again, space precludes a detailed discussion of the ways in which these ideas have been applied in the empirical world. As previously stated, the contributions to the Pieterse and Parekh collection are rather uneven although Yoshioka's discussion of identity in Japan is outstanding. In it he reveals a complex process of internal colonization where 'external' national stereotypes of the Samurai have been adopted 'internally' by the Japanese in order to reject 'external' pressures of westernisation. As such 'every Japanese is colonizer of his (sic), own mind' (p.107), which reveals the difficulties of attributing imperial hegemony to a straightforward imposition from without. In the Werbner and Ranger collection Filip de Boeck's chapter on Zaire shows how chiefs have negotiated their power not only with respect to state politics, but in relation to gem wealth and 'local' culture. He argues that it is impossible to talk of state and society as a conceptual dualism (as with all dualisms such as urban-rural, internal-external, traditional-modern etc.), because they are deeply implicated in one another. It is only through studying individual identity that we can begin to understand the shifting dynamic between compliance and resistance to various nodes of power, including the state. Finally, Jessica Ogden's study of the struggles over the identity of being/becoming a 'proper woman' in Kampala shows how cultural values are continually negotiated as social conditions change. In her study she focuses on the changed morality associated with AIDS and how this is locally contested within the lifeworld of the neighbourhood.

In general this so-called postcolonial critique should be welcomed. However, there are two inter-related caveats, one of which I have already mentioned and one which I will return to again. First, there is the question of authority since 'the arguments are most forcefully driven by diasporic intellectuals as literary critics' (Werbner, p.6). As with Escobar's work there is a danger of western intellectuals and/or the legitimate third world 'Others' who have been let in to the project re-inscribing the power/knowledge inequalities they seek to supplant. In this way there is a potential new universalism in the advocation of pluralism (or a new essentialism in prescribing anti-essentialism). Second, there is a danger that in downplaying the effect of monocausal totalities we may lose site of the growing inclusiveness of capitalist relations. The question arises as to how we can theorise the totality of capitalism without reducing its impacts to a single logic, a problem which was central to the debates over dependency in the late 1970s.

Imaging Alternatives

As Escobar (p.16), notes, 'the process of deconstructing and dismantling has to be accompanied by that of constructing new ways of seeing and acting'. This section takes on board the critiques of the previous section and analyses the ways in which development theory might be reformulated. It is divided into four interrelated areas. The first focuses upon identity and new social movements while the second develops this to explore the interactions between state and civil society. The third and fourth sections look at whether or not we should engage with existing development institutions and, if so, how. For the Left one of the key issues is whether and in what ways the 'free' market can be controlled.

Identity, Radical Democracy and New Social Movements

At one level the argument of the post-structuralists is that the act of deconstruction opens up fissures in dominant discourses and thereby creates the conditions for imagining alternative political spaces. Again, there is the paradox that they seek to
distance themselves from any form of power-laden ‘determinations’ so they cannot prescribe change although the very act of ‘not prescribing’ is in itself a form of prescription. However, these logical deconstructive twists are only one strategy and, by themselves, could easily lead to political paralysis. As we have seen in various works there is an emphasis on human-centred identity as the political driving force. This opens up questions about the place of new social movements (NSMs), as a ‘post-marxist’ political project. Most research has been focused on India and Latin America rather than Africa which may in part be explained by the relative lack of these social movements in Africa (Watts in Crush); a fact which also needs explaining. The insights of the Werbner and Ranger book regarding the simplistic ways that African societies are conceptualised coupled with extremely repressive states may account for the simultaneous absence of, and lack of attention paid to, civil society and micro-politics.

The post-marxists such as Escobar rightly use the existence of diverse ‘new’ social movements to support their argument for the multitude of struggles that cannot be represented by ‘old’ classist movements such as trade unions. In the third world context these movements became increasingly visible following the oil crises and the deepening of various, ongoing crises of governance. Hence, new movements emerged which shared a number of common features (Escobar, 1992a/c). They were local and sought to regain autonomy over livelihood decisions. These movements were pluralistic in the sense of lying outside major political alignments and were sometimes linked horizontally. Cultural considerations were not subordinated to economic motives especially in valorising local knowledge over ‘expert’ systems. Unfortunately this recent emphasis on ‘new’ social movements is problematic precisely because there is not much new about them (Fuentes and Frank, 1989), which reflects the eagerness of the post-marxists to create theories of NSMs without really analysing their history and aims.

The initial analysis of these movements was highly optimistic as they represented a new way of doing politics which linked micro- and macro-struggles and incorporated the diversity of subjects which constitutes the social (Escobar, 1992a, c; Schuurman, 1993). However, it is unclear whether this optimism was justified. Fuentes and Frank (1989), note that many political struggles in the third world in particular are reactive in terms of material wellbeing rather than proactive in a more progressive and ‘radical’ sense. In the first world identity/lifestyle politics tends to be more visible compared to livelihood struggles the third world (Spivak and Plotke, 1996). This implies, at one level, that in analysing many third world struggles identity is not a useful starting point given that not all local political struggles are about identity despite superficial similarities with first world struggles (Schuurman, 1993), or at the very least it requires a more complete analysis of the relations between materiality and identity as discussed below (Jordan, 1995).

Similarly, as Schuurman (1993), notes in contrast to Escobar (1992c), many social movements are not ‘anti-’ or ‘post-’ developmental seeking to reject the values of modernity, but are in fact the product of an ‘aborted modernity project’. To characterise third world countries as post-industrial and post-modern is to wholly misinterpret their histories of imperialism and underdevelopment. These observations point to the heterogeneity of social movements which probably cannot be captured in a single explanation, no matter how ‘unfixed’ it might be. Similarly, there is a misplaced assumption that the new social movements were anti-state since the state was perceived to be a site of subordination (Epstein, 1996). While this may be
true in many cases some social movements were anything but progressive in this regard and sought accommodation within the state apparatus rather than creating new political spaces outside it. Additionally, as we have seen, in numerous cases the state is fully capable of co-opting these movements. As Cardoso (1983 cited in Escobar, 1992c), notes 'the State ... widened and diversified its field of activities' (p.427). Hence, it is important in this new democratic imaginary to realise the power of the state and not demean it.

State, Class and Civil Society

As we have seen in some versions of polycentrism the state and civil society are reconceptualised (Laclau & Mouffe, 1984). These traditional arenas of socialist politics are downplayed in the focus on the social as a symbolic realm. If society as a closed totality is impossible, as Laclau and Mouffe argue, then the state too has little meaning other than as a partial ‘fixing’ within the social. While Laclau and Mouffe do not deny the existence of the state they ‘deny states any positivity and de-privilege them as sites of political struggle’ (Jessop, 1990:293). This leads to downplaying the importance of the state power and the struggles over it at a time when states in general have become less accountable. Hence, Werbner and Ranger are right to give the state ontological priority, but, given their purely academic agenda, they say little about the possibility of reconstituting state/civil society linkages.

In a few of the contributions in the works reviewed here there are attempts to open up this debate. Leftwich in the Corbridge reader and Schmitz in his co-edited collection both attack the orthodox vision of governance put forward by the lenders since the late 1980s. Leys also pulls apart the simplistic and ideologically charged use of the rational choice theory of Robert Bates and Douglass North which increasingly finds its way into the lender’s policy prescriptions. In all these formulations there is an attempt to ‘naturalise’ income maximising decision-making in both government and civil society. When this becomes policy prescriptions for the ill-defined ‘strengthening of civil society’ we find an even more amorphous concept of institutions which can be anything from families to markets to churches. However, in the last instance, institutions become those which clearly support the market such as property rights and business associations.

So, the debate remains as to the role of the state. It is Leftwich (1996, also Rapley, 1994), who has become the champion of the developmental state. His analysis is useful in highlighting the political factors which have contributed to developmental success. They are the determination of a developmental elite, the relative autonomy of the state, a competent and insulated economic bureaucracy, a weak and subordinated civil society, effective management of non-state economic interests and a combination of legitimacy, performance and repression (Leftwich, 1996). Leftwich uses this to argue that contrary to the neo-liberal vision better rather than less state intervention is required. His reformist argument is heavily counterfactual in that it is not clear whether these factors are necessary or simply sufficient. That is, he stops short of asking whether authoritarianism is actually necessary for economic growth. The evidence suggests that markets can only be created by anti-democratic means which then undermines the notion of development. His analysis, despite his own well-argued evidence to the contrary, is very much state-centred and has no real analysis of how the world system might be changed. Instead the argument centres on how states can accommodate the world system. However, I support his general contention that the political vision of the lenders needs challenging.
The previous discussion of NSMs and the state opened up the question of civil society. However, civil society is implicitly treated as a space of freedom from the state. As Yurick notes when talking about Eastern Europe in his chapter in the Pieterse and Parekh collection 'almost none of these freedom seeking intellectuals ever seemed to mention food, housing, and clothing' (p.207). The non-state arena may be in one sense a space of political freedom but not of economic freedom despite countervailing ideology (West, 1993). Meiksins Wood's (1995), analysis of the origins of civil society is instructive in clarifying this position. As the state distanced itself from the 'autonomous' economy a number of political functions formerly carried out by the state are performed within civil society. These centre on the commodification of social life including most obviously, though not exclusively, labour. Hence, 'it marks the creation of a completely new form of coercion, the market – the market not simply as a sphere of opportunity, freedom and choice, but as a compulsion, a necessity, a social discipline' (Meiksins Wood, 1995:252). Hence the emergence of NSMs does not necessarily indicate these are cultural phenomenon devoid of materiality.

This materiality of identities means that while class may not be the only political referent it is not possible to equate it with all other political identities since the concept of class is rooted in capitalist exploitation. Some bases for identity, such as sexual orientation, are not inherently exploitative (though they have become so), and could exist in any political-economic system whereas class is irreducibly linked to capitalist exploitation. The plurality of identities and the non-fixity of social relations mean that post-marxism could 'potentially endorse any – even exploitative – social relations' (Hennessy, 1996:228), or as Coole (1996:19), notes, 'The decentring of class and of the materialist approach it involved, means, however, that economic differences have become largely invisible, or at least mute or marginal.'

It seems that we need to move beyond a simplistic dualism of culture-materialism and its manifestation in an identity-class dichotomy. As Coole (1996:24), notes 'diverse classes will need to be theorised differently and complexly and not only as differential positions vis-à-vis capitalist production'. In this way the political imaginary can accommodate both material struggles and identity but remain sensitive to the differential causality attached to an identity position.

Inside or Outside the Development Machine?
We saw that Escobar argues that only through NSMs can the development discourse be transcended and alternatives to development imagined. This raises questions about the role of the development community and the place of critical scholarship. In Escobar's new democratic imaginary the intellectual is cast in a more 'organic' mode and should contribute to the creation of 'local knowledge'. The use of Participatory Action Research (PAR), following Paulo Freire and other less radical options such as Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA), have been suggested as progressive alternatives to westernised, objective scientific analyses. Gardner and Lewis, as anthropologists, agree with Escobar's general thrust but go beyond his cynicism towards the development machinery to argue that anthropology in particular has a lot to offer in subverting the dominant approaches to development. They assert 'discourses of development are not all the same; nor indeed are they fixed' (p.128), and we should be thinking about ways to change them. Griesgraber and Gunter also see a role for the academy which 'offers the activist and political communities its insights into how to effect genuine institutional reform' (p.xii). Gardner and Lewis go on to make a strong case for getting involved politically. They argue that,
the relativism of post-modernist approaches is in danger of collapsing into depoliticised irresponsibility ... (and), ... the deconstructionalist stance ... makes active involvement in processes of change difficult (p.157).

They argue that there are moral absolutes and we should be engaged in attacking inequalities which are not simply textual, but material. Hence rather than talk of achieving development per se, we should focus on ways to alleviate material inequalities. It is here that anthropologists, but we could substitute enlightened critical scholars of any discipline, can get involved from 'within' and 'outside' the dominant discourse. The role of the intellectual then becomes one of cultural mediator, sceptic in arguing for more complex analyses of societies and becoming involved in information gathering which involves the people concerned and is more sensitive to their needs. This echoes Said (1994), who talks of the need to retain our 'amateur' status outside the dominant 'professional' bureaucratic discourse and West (1992), who believes that politically 'the academy is only one terrain among many' (p.689).

**What Role for International Organisations?**

The whole issue of sovereignty and policy determination raises critical questions not just for states and NGOs but international organisations. The collection by Griesgraber and Gunter is aimed at the issue of reforming global institutions for the next century. Hence, the focus of the contributions in their book compared with the other books is that they 'are all eminently practical' (p.xv), and they argue that the global lenders 'have adapted neither institutionally nor intellectually to keep pace with the globalization of the international economy' (p.xii). The book brings together a number of development faithful such as Hans Singer, Reginald Herbold Green and Norman Girvan. The basic argument is neo-Keynesian in that it believes global economic and political regulation is needed but reforms are required to bring them in line with the changed conditions since the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs), were established. Singer calls for a closer relationship between the United Nations and, the BWIs which involves altering their voting structures based upon one country, one vote rather than voting according to financial weight. Girvan argues against conditionality as this undermines empowerment. Instead the emphasis should be on partnerships aimed at achieving a universal set of social goals. This democratisation of the aid industry should be accompanied by an increase in concessional finance and a flexibility in deciding upon the right mix of market and state rather than righting the state off completely. Green is the least progressive but generally agrees with much of these reforms only he tempers his recommendations with a strong dose of experience of working with the institutions concerned.

**Conclusion**

One line of argument is that much of contemporary development theory is a re-working of the dependency-modernisation duality, but with more subtle cultural implications, while others clearly envisage a radical 'post-development' rupture. There are many political and economic issues at stake which can no longer be thought of in terms of some utopian socialism (Munck, 1993). In exercising realpolitik we need to recognise the multiple political identities and sites of exploitation without relativising away critical centres of power and exploitation. The related analytical issue is whether and how we should incorporate the insights of post-structuralism into a still radical political-economy. This conclusion is a sketch towards some of these issues.
Political Economy and Sovereignty

Yurick in the Pieterse and Parekh collection argues that while marxism may have been undermined in terms of its predictive power it should not be written off for its descriptive importance. Similarly Leys calls for a 'reinvigorated political economy' (p.vii). Leys like West (1993), Spivak and Plotke (1996), and Zaretsky (1996), all argue that the strength of marxist analysis is its historicity and materiality. While some marxism is reductive and economistic it does forcefully analyse the constraints posed by capitalist social relations. However, the corollary of moving away from cultural analyses is not reductive theorisation and the advocacy of state socialism. We can re-engage with a political analysis under capitalism without reducing this politics to the logic of capitalism. And one of the key issues is the 'resubordination of markets to social purposes' (Leys, p.194), which needs to take place at and across a variety of sites.

Speaking in the African context, Leys asserts that the state 'remains a potential line of defence for Africans against the depredations of the world economy and political system' (1994:46; Beckman, 1993). It is still questionable whether any state can adequately defend its citizens against capitalist exploitation but there is sense in attempting to re-assert some measure of sovereignty in order to better support democracy given that the former is a prerequisite for the latter. Hence, the lack of 'true independence' (Gills and Rocamora, 1992), precludes counter-hegemonic articulations. As Bienefeld (1994), notes there are areas where the state can usefully guide integration into the world economy such as promotion of new industry and support for agriculture. However, there is a need for democratising the supranational organisations and, if possible, writing off substantial amounts of debt which enabled the excessive leverage in the first place (Agnew and Corbridge, 1995).

State and Civil Society

If the developmental state presents a pragmatic alternative for defending African citizens against the 'depredations of the world economy' it remains to see how it might be linked to wider social forces. Wamba-dia-Wamba (1994:258), suggests that an 'emancipatory politics will be a politics without parties but through political organizations' which clearly echoes the radical democratic project. The key becomes alliance-building between organisations at a multiplicity of local political sites such as factories and villages. This politics will also be built upon the everyday material experiences and consciousness of Africans themselves so that hegemonic thought and politics is more effectively 'de-colonised' (Chachage, 1994). However, this does not rule out the need for a state since the state sets the rules in which this popular and progressive democracy can function. In the longer term, alliances may form which can lead to 'a reconstitution of state-civil society relations, and not one but many, depending on concrete experiences and openings' (Beckman, 1993: 31). This politics is, however, not parochial in that it needs to be linked to a global agenda since it must challenge the hegemonic neoliberal orthodoxy before any locally relevant and sustainable form of democracy is achieved. That is, to recognise the global in the local and vice versa. Agnew and Corbridge (1995), argue that some elements of globalisation are indeed opening new possibilities for progressive politics as global networks.

International Democratisations

I am in agreement with the feeling that there should be a review of the Bretton Woods Institution's (BWIs) operations. In addition to the Griesgraber and Gunter collection
reviewed here there has been the Holland Report (Barratt Brown, 1994), and an Oxfam campaign (1995), which agitate for reforms such as increasing the accountability of the BWIs, changing their voting structures and totally re-designing structural adjustment programmes. To facilitate this, they advocate raising investment in infrastructure and increasing the allocation of the special drawing rights which are effectively ‘soft’ loans. However, recent US budgetary debates in the run up to the presidential elections called for far less development co-operation and any finances which are released seem destined for the emergent market economies of Eastern Europe. It is unlikely that in the face of these geo-economic realities that the BWIs will be opened up in favour of third world countries. In all these senses development theory can no longer be an exercise in third world area studies but must reflect a more global level of ethical responsibility.

Giles Mohan, Department of Geography, University of Portsmouth, UK.

Endnote
1. There is one reader (Corbridge), five edited collections arising mainly from conference sessions over the past five years (Crush, Moore and Schmitz, Pieterse and Parekh, Werbner and Ranger, Griesgraber and Gunter), and four single or dual authored books (Escobar, Leys, Cowen and Shenton, and Gardner and Lewis). Most of the books are explicitly about ‘development’ although I purposefully included two ‘non-development’ books (Werbner and Ranger and Pieterse and Parekh), as they explore the concept of ‘post-coloniality’ which involves the inter-play of culture, power and identity without reducing these issues to ‘problems’ which need rectifying.

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'Civil society' has become a popular concept in both the analysis of the social bases of recent political change in Africa, and in external policy support for processes of liberal democratic political reform. In the latter case, civil society, as represented by a set of (largely urban) formal organisations and especially by NGOs with external links, is portrayed as the driving force behind and guarantee of democratisation and the containment of the state. Conceptually, however, 'civil society' proves to be diffuse, hard to define, empirically imprecise, and ideologically laden. Analytically it is vacuous, and concepts such as class or gender contribute far more to understanding recent political change than can 'civil society'. Its popularity and continued employment rest on its ideological underpinning, notably on claims that civil society is necessarily distinct from the state, in opposition to the state, and the source of (liberal) democratic values and pressures. It is thus the proponents of liberal democratic reform, notably those external to African polities, that 'need' civil society.


While it has a long history in political theory, use of the concept 'civil society' has only been current in discussion of African politics for a decade (since, e.g. Bayart 1986), and in particular since its close association with the analysis of African struggles for democratisation since 1989 (e.g. Bratton, 1989, 1992). One of the volumes under review (Civil Society and the State in Africa, henceforth CSSA) dates from the middle of this latter period, originating in a 1992 conference. Its answer to the question 'who needs civil society?' would be tentative, at least in the eyes of one of its co-editors (Harbeson) and several of the contributors. Ndegwa, completing his doctoral research a couple of years later, is much less circumspect. For him, there is a well-established 'civil society-political liberalisation thesis ... that organisations in civil society, including NGOs, are central to opposing undemocratic governments and to furthering and consolidating democracy'; this thesis he associates with Bratton and Chazan, respectively contributor to and co-editor of CSSA. So familiar a part of his
intellectual landscape is this thesis that while Ndegwa contests it – on empirical grounds – he does not regard ‘civil society’ itself as requiring definition, still less discussion.

In a sense, Ndegwa is justified. Since 1990, and despite the carefully expressed misgivings of many of the contributors of CSSA, of political theorists (Gellner, 1991; Kumar, 1993), and of contributors of this Review (e.g. Beckman, 1993; Marcussen, 1996; Stewart, 1997), the thesis outlined by Ndegwa has been widely current, especially among NGOs, IFIs and grant-seeking academics, as Stewart has recently made clear. Yet the empirical evidence for the thesis is weak; the concept of civil society is difficult to pin down empirically, and the theoretical arguments with which it is involved are so closely associated with neo-liberal ideological campaigning, as to cast doubt on the value of the concept overall.

The problems with civil society start with its definition, a matter that preoccupies Harbeson and Young in CSSA. The earliest uses of the concept do not so much distinguish ‘civil-society’ from ‘society’, as see civil society as a way of conceiving of society when the latter is self-consciously politically active (and creative). For Locke, and several others, society is, or becomes, civil when it seeks to define and establish legitimate political authority. By extension, the processes of establishing the norms that define legitimacy are also an aspect of ‘civil’ society. In this version – which in Gramsci has become the ideological process by which a dominant class creates and protects its hegemonic grip on the state, and allows that grip to be presented to subordinate classes as legitimate – ‘civil’ society is essential for the existence of the modern (post-absolutist) state, but also inconceivable without the state. This tradition is reflected in CSSA, primarily by Harbeson, in passages such as these:

Civil society is treated not as synonymous with the adoption of particular rules of the game but as those behaviours by which different cultures define the rules of the game (Harbeson, 299).

The missing dimension supplied by the idea of civil society is that, in process terms, working understandings concerning the basic rules of the political game or structure of the state emerge from within society and the economy at large. In substantive terms civil society typically refers to the points of agreement on what those working rules should be (Harbeson, 3).

[Civil society] should be used in a very restricted sense relating to the emergence of consensus on norms defining a civil sphere ... In this sense, civil society would be ... a space or realm defined by newly constituted norms about what the state should and should not be and by the rules of politics in that space, including politics by non-state actors (Callaghy, 235).

In practice, however, a quite different definition now predominates, claiming a somewhat uncertain descent from Gramsci, and turning not on political processes so much on the actors supposed to be (largely) responsible for them. Callaghy, critical of this usage, summarises it thus: civil society consists of ‘autonomous societal groups that interact with the state but delimit and constrain its action: here associational life is seen as the core of civil society’ (CSSA, 234). This definition is close to Bayart’s ‘society in its relation to the state ... in so far as it is in confrontation with the state. The process by which society seeks to ‘breach’ and counteract the simultaneous ‘totalisation’ unleashed by the state’ (Bayart, 1986:111). It also flourishes, importantly, in Bratton.

Bratton is unfortunate to be thus fingered, in that he is careful in CSSA to root his discussion of civil society in the tradition discussed above: ‘civil society ... embodies a core of universal beliefs and practices about the legitimation of, and limits to, state
power' (52). He frequently reminds readers that it is a 'theoretical concept rather than an empirical one' (57). At the same time, his interest in analysing the relationship between protest and political transitions has led him to argue that 'protest has led to reform in countries where popular forces have an independent material, organisational, and ideological base - that is where there is a strong civil society ... (and) political transition in different countries unfolds at least partly as a function of the institutional characteristics of their respective civil societies' (51-2). Now, instead of society becoming 'civil' - instead of 'civil' society - we are offered entities called 'civil-societies', visible as 'intermediate associations and the institutional linkages among them' (66).

Bratton reached this point (as he did in earlier work; see Bratton 1989, 1992) because he wished to understand the link between the growth of associational life and activity, and the growth of pressures for (viable) political reform. Others have chosen - as Callaghy's curt summary above makes clear - to drop the context within which Bratton uses the term in favour simply of identifying civil society with associational life. Thus McGaffey:

_I will first define civil society as Michael Bratton does ... as an 'arena where manifold social movements ... and civic organisations from all classes ... attempt to constitute themselves in an ensemble of arrangements so that they can express themselves and advance their interests' (CSSA, 169)._

Likewise Jane Guyer:

_we understand by civil society those organisations created by non-state interests within society to reach up to the state and by the state to reach down into society (CSSA, 216)._

In practice, most of the authors in CSSA, Ndegwa, and the bulk of the contemporary literature uses the 'associational life' version of civil society. With its use have tended to come a number of theses:

(a) that civil society is not only distinct from the state, but in conflict with it; Bayart is often quoted (perhaps wrongly) in this context; 'civil society exists only in so far as the is a self-consciousness of its existence and of its opposition to the state' (1986:117);

(b) that civil society is at the heart of the democratisation struggle - or process, as these authors prefer;

(c) that NGOs form a highly significant part of civil society, and thus of forces driving democratisation (Fowler, 1991).

This last is the precise thesis that Ndegwa attempts to test, though he is less concerned with the relevant NGO literature that Marcussen (1996) and Stewart (1997) have recently criticised in the Review.

**Civil Society, Democratisation and the State: a Critique**

Ndegwa's book is a straightforward empirical critique of the last two of the theses above. By examining the activity of Kenyan NGOs collectively (in one instance) and of two of the largest indigenous NGOs over many years, he is able to argue that there is no necessary connection between NGO activity and democratic struggle. An example of close involvement is offered (the Green Belt Movement, an environmentalist group,
with tree-planting as a primary activity), as is one of deliberate non-involvement (the Undugu Movement, concerned with urban poverty and especially street children). The case study of collective action – NGO resistance to the 1990 NGO Coordination Act which sought to place NGO activity and resources under the control of the Kenyan Interior Ministry – leads him to conclude that this was not an instance of NGOs seeking political reform as a result of their values, structure and dynamic, but of the mounting of

oppositional action only after their own existence had been threatened and after the wave of general societal mobilisation was already under way – NGOs did not see their actions as enhancing democratisation; instead they saw the openings achieved by the democratic movement as giving them a right to operate freely in their own development activities (Ndegwa, 52-3).

Ndegwa concludes that on his evidence

civil society activity does not cause political liberalisation; ... the democratic movement is a larger force engulfing the whole of society to which civil society actors respond ... NGOs ... are not the originators of reform movements. Indeed they are respondents to both the repressive capacities of the state and the reformist backlash against the state from sectors of civil society. The resurgence of civil society and its political activity in Africa therefore reflects a social movement of which it may be only a belated but nevertheless significant sign (111).

Two questions arise, if one accepts Ndegwa's general conclusion. If there is no necessary connection between being a 'civil society organisation' and democratisation, then what does determine whether and under what conditions a given organisation is or is not involved in political transformation? More broadly, one should also ask what are the boundaries of civil society, seen as associational life? Are any and all associations eligible, no matter what their function, origin or membership? Several contributors to CSSA point out that many organisations are either hostile to democratisation, or encourage tendencies which may undermine it (e.g. ethnic politics). Bratton's own essay in CSSA makes clear, too, that organisations found to be active in democratisation movements are drawn – to an even greater extent than those that contributed to nationalist activity in the post-war period – from urban groups, often with middle class membership and/or leadership: student groups churches, trade unions, professional bodies, human/legal rights groups, women's organisations etc. It is one thing to argue that civil society (as associational creation, growth and life) expands dramatically from the mid-1980s in Africa, quite another to assert that the same 'civil society' lies undifferentiatedly behind democratisation (and yet another to identify NGOs as the quintessence of civil society).

Ndegwa's answer to the first question above is twofold: that involvement depends on the organisation's leadership, and that we are looking in the wrong place for the democratising impact of NGOs (if any). The latter, he argues, lies in the way that the routine developmental activity of NGOs helps empower their grassroots members or clients, and not in their conscious organisational contribution to reform movements. Both arguments are open to doubt, as can be seen from his case studies. The Undugu Society, led by Ezra Mbogori, took no part in political protests, although Mbogori was a key member of the NGO Network that opposed the 1990 Act. By contrast, Wangari Maathai's Green Belt Movement was actively involved, spinning off a civic education campaign to help ensure free and fair elections in 1992 (the Movement for Free and Fair Elections). This contrast Ndegwa attributes to the 'institutionalised' nature of the
former's board of directors, which prevented Mobogori from using its resources for general political goals. The Green Belt Movement was not institutionalised, and did not therefore impede Maathai's use of its resources (Ndegwa,105). Ndegwa's somewhat inconsistent summary of his argument runs thus:

the explanation for the two faces of civil society lies in the willingness of the leadership of these organisations to use organisational resources against the repressive state ... This political will stems from a fairly arbitrary element of personal leadership within civil society organisations (111).

Later, in discussing the fluctuating stance in the early 1990s of the leadership of the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU), he remarks, 'where does the trade union movement in Kenya belong - among progressive forces for democratisation, or among reactionary forces for the dominant former single party? This depends very much on the direction that the labour elites choose' (113). Ndegwa confuses the membership with the organisation, and the organisation with its leadership: rank and file trade unionists in Kenya had little doubt about where they 'belonged'.

Perhaps the stress on grassroots empowerment is more promising, seeming to have parallels with Beckman and Jega's careful analysis of the centrality of internal political relationships, and of internalisation of democratic values, in the important role played by student and lecturer organisations in Nigeria's democratic struggles (Beckman & Jega, 1995). Yet the empowerment described in the two Kenyan organisations differs in significant ways. Undugu, which thinks in terms of clients, not members, 'focuses on the individual as the appropriate point of entry for helping a community: the goal is to make that individual self-reliant and conscious of his or her community' (Ndegwa, 61). It distances itself from political actions undertaken by (former) clients, and indeed those actions may as readily reflect as be distinct from Undugu's own close relationship with the Moi regime. One such action - taken in 1990 and described at length in Undugu's 1990-91 biennial report - involved 20 women who had been given leadership training and assistance in building low-cost housing in 1988 by Undugu. In 1990 these women had their trading kiosks damaged in a riot stemming from official destruction of a nearby shanty settlement. The women tried to get a new site, going in turn to the local chief, to the District Officer, and the Provincial Commissioner, and at each step being fobbed off. Eventually a threat to march on Moi's official residence secured an interview with the Commissioner. The report comments: 'the women did confirm that the self-confidence to do what they did on their own resulted from their previous interaction with Undugu' (Ndegwa, 61). This is quite possible, but what they did, on their own, however brave, was to appeal to official structures, and had little or nothing to do with political reform.

By contrast the thousands of rural women's groups associated with the Green Belt Movement (GBM) join as groups, not individuals, and are encouraged to act collectively. Their involvement in tree-planting campaigns 'enhances the women's felt power'; but in addition,

educating them on the immediate local and national social, economic and political realities has enhanced members groups' awareness about broader political issues ... The environmental movement in Kenya, the GBM believes, cannot ignore the position of women in society. Moreover ... the GBM's working philosophy entails a critique of the marginal political position of the masses of citizens in Kenya (82, 94).
According to Ndegwa, group members are 'strongly committed to what Maathai does at national level' even when not directly involved, are actively involved in the government of GBM, and were heavily involved in the voter education campaign (93-102). It is now somewhat easier to understand why it was GBM, and not Undugu, that was involved in the democratic struggle, and to judge to what extent this was merely a manifestation of 'the unfettered drive of Wangari Maathai' (Ndegwa, 105).

Empirically, then, the thesis that civil society 'can become a source of counter-hegemonic social movements that occasionally are sufficiently strong to effect a regime transition' (Bratton, CSSA, 75), or more baldly that 'organisations in civil society ... are central to opposing democratic governments' (Ndegwa, 61) is supported only in a vacuous sense. The concept of 'civil society' does not take us far in analysing, or even in describing, struggles for democratisation – something which both Callaghy and Young foresaw in CSSA. Thus the latter asks whether civil society is 'merely a metaphor masquerading as a player' (43), while the former doubts 'whether civil society as commonly defined can do much to elucidate important processes in contemporary Africa, can do more than label them vaguely ...' (235).

If 'civil society' does not 'behave as a change agent in all circumstances, let alone as a catalyst for a particular kind of change, such as democratisation' (Harbeson, CSSA, 298), then by what means may we identify such agents? While 'the hypothesis of this book (CSSA) is that civil society is a hitherto missing key to sustained political reform' (1), its texts leave one with either a definition of civil society that is too limited to be a key (norm-setting, Endnote 1), or one which is empirically unsustainable. To see civil society as 'associational life' continually requires one to ask what are its boundaries: which associations, when, and under what conditions act in the ways supposedly characteristic of civil society? As Harbeson admits in CSSA (297), this issue arises in most contributions, but – like the question of the ethnocentrism of the concept – is usually sidestepped.

The Dakar-based Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (Codresria), which has encouraged so much valuable work in African social science, is thus rightly cautious in using the term. When it chose to put together a collection on popular protest and democratisation at much the same time as the CSSA collection, it published them under the title of 'African studies in social movements and democracy', with civil society banished to a short but emphatic critical essay by Mahmood Mamdani. This collection, focused largely on Northern African case studies, uses the older concept of 'social movement', together with those of class, gender, ethnicity and the state.

Alli Mari Tripp, in her contribution to CSSA, complains that 'the discussion has yet to fully incorporate and problematise the gender implications of civil society' (150). She argues that the example of the recent growth of small, informal women's organisations in Tanzania, the ways in which they necessarily link 'public' and 'private' domains (state the household, which civil society is supposed to separate), and their contribution to the political awareness, skills and action of women, makes such incorporation essential. What her essay shows, however, is that the values, dynamics and extent of these organisations, and the political values and capacities women get from them, is best understood in terms of gender, as is their contribution to democratisation in Tanzania. Similarly the significance of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya is more fully understood in terms of gender than in Ndegwa's terms of civil society.
Similar arguments can often be offered in favour of class and class categories when analysing the role of workers or the urban poor in democratic struggles, through the contributors to Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba are cautious in doing. Chikhi, for example, uses class concepts largely descriptive in his analysis of workers and democratisation in Algeria, while Zhagal identifies the key role of young women workers in a provincial town in the 1983-84 Tunisian bread riots, but avoids analysis in gender terms. The editors comment that ‘neither social forces nor social movements can be presumed to have internal consistency and coherence, or be the agents of a transhistorical agenda’ (9-10). What one can presume is that one tries to identify social forces underlying democratic struggles, whether in specific cases or more generally, then ‘civil society’ vanishes as a viable analytical tool in favour of older concepts: gender, class, etc.

The Ideology of Civil Society

If ‘civil society’ has been widely used despite its manifest weakness, why should this be so? One reason for its popularity is its ideological component (or what Mamdani calls it ‘programmatic’ elements). The ‘associational life’ version of civil society has carried with it, like bedbugs in a threadbare blanket, three assertions:

1) civil society is the source within contemporary African political systems of liberal democratic values of pluralism, accountability, transparency, the rule of law, etc;

2) civil society is the prime engine of democratisation (seen in terms solely of liberal democratic models);

3) civil society is necessarily opposed to the state, not simply in the sense of confronting authoritarian regimes, but also – and primarily – in the sense of containing and constraining the scope and action of the state. For it to flourish, and in its flourishing, civil society thus requires a state which is limited, non-interventionary, and which furthers the ‘freedoms’ of individual citizens, notably their market freedoms.

These three form a neo-liberal package, linked to notions of ‘governance’ and to contemporary IFI arguments on the links between economic and political reform. Since 1989, the World Bank and the IMF have argued that instances of ‘failure’ of structural adjustment programmes are linked to the maintenance of authoritarian regimes which serve the rent-seeking interests of those controlling the regime. Liberal-democratic political reforms would weaken – or end – their grip, while also creating means for the constituencies presumed supportive of SAPs (business circles, peasants and others) to influence policy, make regimes accountable, etc. Hence political reform is not just consistent with economic reform, but essential for it.

From such arguments flow the setting of political conditions for loans (Baylies, 1995) and the variety of programmes designed to support civil society and especially NGOs. A key element of policy towards NGOs has been the diversion of resources from the state (seen as bad) to NGOs (seen as civil society, and thus good). ‘This preference for NGOs’ says Ndegwa ‘reflects a fundamental tenet in current development theory and practice that holds in disdain existing official state arrangements and seeks to ‘get government off the backs of the people’ by elevating private and public non-state actors’ (20-21). Marcussen, who has discussed such arguments more fully in a recent review provides us with a telling quotation from Alan Fowler:
The dominant western concept of socio-economic development based on liberalism and market forces maintains that NGOs must be supported because of their political role within civil society. It is envisaged that people must be empowered to take over some aspects of development from the overbearing, autocratic, inefficient and corrupt states that have commonly ruled in Africa. NGOs must also provide countervailing power to government expansionism; strengthen people's ability to hold public servants and politicians accountable for their actions; and, foster democratic change by expanding social pluralism (in Marcussen, 1996:406).

In this discourse, rooted in US academic and policy practice but by no means limited to that, the 'state' is not only portrayed as inherently overweening, inefficient, bureaucratic, self-interested, etc, but it is sedulously confused with particular political systems, and even particular regimes. Thus the quite valid observation that many 'civil society organisations are opposed to (say) the current Nigerian regime is taken as evidence that 'civil society' is opposed to the 'state', and that movements for democratic reform must necessarily also be for a neo-liberal, market supportive, non-interventionist state form and development strategy. As the painstaking case studies in Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba make clear, there is no such necessity: although 'social movements in Africa are not just about opposing the state, but also about redefining the form of the state', equally, 'just as there is no single social project characteristic of social movements, there is no one state project that they come to define 'ultimately' (34, 33). In practice, as Ndegwa points out, there is no single pattern of relationships between regimes and elements of civil society. Not only are there some organisations close to authoritarian governments, but there is a general sense in which civil society as associational life depends on the state, while its growth may depend on material support from government. Past history too, shows us that organisations that have been actively involved in pursuing democratic reforms – such as trade unions in the late colonial period – may readily fall victim to the incorporation of national and local leaderships into the politics of clientelism and corruption: civil society may ultimately become part of the state. To summarise: the empirical evidence for 'opposition to the state' as integral part of the programme of civil society is thus as flimsy and ambiguous as that for its role in democratisation; it appears to be merely an ideological construct.

Who Does Need Civil Society?

Who, then needs 'civil society'? It is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for democratic struggle to occur; indeed civil society may more often need democratic struggle than the reverse. As the concept it is too vague, difficult to define, and empirically elusive, to contribute to analysis or description. The significant theses associated with the concept appear not to be derived from a body of empirical evidence and well-constructed theory but from a set of neo-liberal nostrums, incorporated into the argument as assumptions and then proudly presented as valid conclusions. As such, civil society forms part of the 'liberal project' analysed recently by Tom Young (who describes the Africanist civil society as 'absurdly naive' (1995:533)). As Young himself points out, it is the 'liberal project' that can be seen to 'need' a suitably defined civil society. Writing as part of the project, the process of 'erosion of traditional understandings by liberal democratic norms', he argues that 'its essential component, as is recognised by the more candid western analysis, is a 'civil society' which will marginalise, and if necessary pulverise, groups whose modes of existence and values are not compatible with liberal democracy (544). Mamdani makes the same point in arguing that civil society is a polar term whose
matching term is not ‘state’ but ‘community’, and in referring in his final sentence to the ‘uncompromising modernism of the ‘civil society’ theorists’ (Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba, 613-614).

Thus apart from the grant-seeking NGOs and the academic, it is proponents of the ‘liberal project’ who need civil society: western governments, their associated agencies, multinationals, and IFIs. Africanists can dispense with it: ‘civil society’ forms part of a large body of general concepts that have appeared briefly to illuminate analysis but which are too diffuse, inclusive and ideologically laden to sustain illumination: nation building, modernisation, elite, dependency, disengagement – even, perhaps, ethnicity.

Chris Allen is in the Politics Department, University of Edinburgh, UK.

Endnotes
1. It is also worth pointing out that the norm setting has to a large extent been done by external agencies, notably the apparatus of ‘democratic institutes’ and election and human rights monitoring bodies, acting through local elements of civil society. Even this version of ‘civil society’ is empirically dubious.

2. The literature on civil society (with the exception of Crawford Young) is oddly ahistorical, making only the most modest references to the growth and activity of ‘civil society’ under colonial and immediate post-colonial rule. By contrast, many of the essays in Mamdani & Wamba-dia-Wamba have a substantial historical component.

References


'For Fear of Being Condemned as Old Fashioned': Liberal Democracy vs. Popular Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa

John S. Saul

This article is a theoretical companion to an essay on the ‘transition to democracy’, which we published in our previous issue, ROAPE 72. Here John Saul contrasts two approaches to the understanding of democracy and democratisation, both of which see democratic transition as part of a larger political and economic process, which for one limits the possible scope and sustainability of democratisation, and for the other both threatens but also enhances its scope and strength. The latter approach, older and currently less fashionable, sees democracy and democratisation (and our analysis of them) as rooted in processes of imperialism, class struggle and state-society relations. This ‘political economy’ of democratisation’ approach, characteristic of the work of Issa Shivji and of John Saul, is contrasted with a larger and more pessimistic body of work, which Saul labels as the ‘political science of democratisation’. Thus Diamond, Huntington, Przeworski, Di Palma and others, while stressing the necessity of democratic institutions and values, at the same time argue that only a highly attenuated version of these is feasible under current (African) conditions, and that ‘if reform is to be adopted without provoking a crisis’ (Diamond), then it must be reform consistent with the demands of capital and the neo-liberalism of the IFIs: ‘thin’ democracy.

The Tanzanian scholar Issa Shivji is amongst those who is currently writing most eloquently on the question of democracy in Africa, and it is also Shivji who argues most vigorously a distinction between ‘liberal democracy’ and ‘popular democracy’, one that will be central to the argument of this article (Shivji, 1991a). Note, however, the difficulties Shivji himself has experienced in defending this distinction in recent African debates. He speaks, for example, of an important conference in Harare several years ago at which

... the liberal perspective seemed to be dominant. In my keynote address I attempted to address the key issue of constitutionalism within the larger question of democracy and situate it in a popular democratic perspective. Understandably it was not particularly well received. Former radicals trying to find a niche in the rising tide of liberalism felt a bit embarrassed; liberals were irritated and the statists saw in it their traditional bête noire. Liberalism held such sway that even revolutionaries got defined as consistent liberalism! Be that as it may. It is clear to me that in the current debate on democracy, the divide between the liberal, in whatever variant
including radical, and the popular perspective – thoroughly anti-imperialist – from the standpoint of popular classes ought to set the term of debate. If not, we are likely to get a celebration of the liberal triumph; jump indiscriminately on compradorial (for that is what liberalism degenerates into in most of our imperialist-dominated countries) bandwagons and confuse the long human struggle for democracy (equality) with its particular historical form – western liberalism (individualism) (1991a:255).

And yet, as Shivji goes on to say, much that 'would clearly distinguish the popular perspective – [its] position on imperialism, state and class, class struggle, etc. – remains unsaid by its intellectual proponents for fear of being condemned as old-fashioned or demagogic.'

The main reasons for the prevalence of such an intellectual atmosphere are not hard to find. In part, as Shivji suggests, this atmosphere is defined by the difficulties even radicals have in defining what the alternative model – 'popular democracy' – might actually be expected to look like, concretely, under African conditions; this is, self-evidently, a point to which we will have to return. But another element in the present milieu is even more central. Thus, in the kind of circles Shivji describes, the discussion of democratization has tended to be elided with, even subordinated to, a parallel discussion of the related process of economic liberalization that has swept the continent so dramatically in recent years. Too often these processes – political democratization and economic liberalization – are seen to be merely two sides of the same coin. Moreover, this approach tends, in turn, to proceed as if the debate regarding the wisdom (and/or inevitability) of 'neo-liberalism' as the essential framing premise for both economic policy and democratic possibility were pretty much settled – and settled, overwhelmingly, in neo-liberalism's favour. True, one of the best of recent books on the impact of neo-liberalism/structural adjustment on Africa counsels some measure of caution with regard to such premises. '[T]here may be more tension', its editors write, 'between fostering individual freedoms and good governance on the one hand and creating rapidly growing marketing economies on the other than many people might like to admit' (Callaghy & Ravenhill, 1993:17).

But even these authors seem hostage to a liberal perspective on 'market economies' that, in its own way, blunts the possibility of having the kind of root and branch discussion of African alternatives counselled by Shivji. In short, the ubiquity of the liberal/’neo-liberal’ perspective tends, crucially, to frame the scientific discussion of democratization in Africa. One other distinction might help us to think through the impact of such a narrowing of the terms of the recent discussion of democracy. For, within this intellectual milieu, such discussion has come to focus all too exclusively on what might be termed the 'political science of democratization' – with any simultaneous consideration of the 'political economy of democratization' assumed to be foreclosed (as being 'old-fashioned' perhaps!). I will attempt to elaborate this distinction – between the 'political science' and the 'political economy' of democratization – below (while also noting the importance of this distinction for the manner in which we conceive the linkages between 'democratization' and 'state-' and 'nation-building' in Africa). However, in order to offset the temptation to operate at too high a level of abstraction in doing so, I will also draw briefly in this essay on the experience of the two 'transitions to democracy' in Africa that, in 1994, I had the opportunity to study at first hand, those that centred on the national elections held in South Africa and in Mozambique.
The 'Political Economy' of Democratization

Much of the literature on 'Third World' democratization has come to turn on a very narrow reading indeed of democratic possibility, one rooted in the political elitism of Schumpeter and of the American theorists of 'polyarchy'. As I have noted elsewhere (Saul, 1994), the most baldly stated variation on the theme is probably the best known, that advanced by the ubiquitous Larry Diamond in his various writings. As he puts the point:

\[\text{Perhaps the basic tension in democracy is between conflict and consensus. Democracy implies dissent and division, but on the basis of consent and cohesion. It requires that the citizens assert themselves, but also that they accept the government's authority. It demands that citizens care about politics, but not too much (Diamond, 1993a:103).}\]

Note the parallel with a much earlier formulation by one of the gurus of the current democratization literature, Samuel Huntington: 'Problems of governance in the United States today stem from an “excess of democracy” ... [T]he effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and non-involvement on the part of some individuals and groups' (1975; as quoted in Barber, 1984:95). Diamond further warns,

\[\ldots \text{if reform is to be adopted without provoking a crisis that might destroy democracy, the costs to privileged economic interests of overturning democracy must be kept greater than the costs of the reforms themselves. This requires realism and incrementalism on the part of those groups pressing for reform. It also requires sufficient overall effectiveness, stability and guarantees for capital on the part of the democratic regime so that privileged economic actors will have a lot to lose by turning against it (Ibid., 105).}\]

This concern for the sensibilities of capital, phrased here, commonsensically enough, in tactical terms, is merely one dimension of a much more fundamental conceptual slide - expressed in its most unabashed form in Diamond's influential work, but present in the bulk of the transition literature - from 'democracy' through 'liberal democracy' to (in Diamond's own phrase) 'liberal capitalist democracy'. Fortunately, he writes,

\[\text{the past four decades of Third World economic development have furnished invaluable lessons for distinguishing the policies that work from those that do not. Broadly speaking, market-oriented economies develop while state-socialist economies fall behind. Internationally open and competitive economies work; closed (or at least rigidly and persistently closed) economies do not. Economies grow when they foster savings, investment and innovation and when they reward individual effort and initiative. Economies stagnate and regress when bloated, mercantilist, hyperinterventionist states build a structure of inflexible favoritisms for different groups, curtailing change, experimentation, competition, innovation and social mobility (Ibid., 98).}\]

This is an extremely one-sided way in which to present the development record in Africa - to go no further afield; Diamond's formulations ignore the catastrophic outcomes of most capitalist development strategies on the continent, as well as the crucial role the state (authoritarian, interventionist) has played in settings (the Asian NICs, for example) where capitalism has been more successful. Here, as so often in their 'scientific' writings, Diamond and his colleagues in the democracy business are marketing almost pure ideology. Small wonder, then, that for Diamond the effort to create 'a balanced [democratic] political culture - in which people care about politics
but not too much' requires, 'in Eastern Europe and much of the developing world, restraining the partisan battle [by] deflating the state and invigorating the private economy' (Ibid., 106). And beyond that – at the conclusion of his text we have the customary invocation of polyarchy and of 'democratic elitism' – there lies, precisely, the crucial role of 'political elites' and of the pacts they create amongst themselves:

[Elite actions, choices and postures can have a formative impact in shaping the way their followers approach political discourse and conflict. Opposing party leaders must take a lead in crafting understandings and working relationships that bridge historic differences, restrain expectations and establish longer, more realistic time horizons for their agendas … Competing party elites must set an accommodating and civil tone for political life (Ibid.).

The thrust of much recent literature is, then, to define the terms of any transition of democracy ever more narrowly and cautiously. One more example may be in point: Giuseppe Di Palma emphasizes the importance to the 'crafting' of democracies – defined as the 'setting up [of] government in diversity as a way of defusing conflict' – of accepting certain stern limitations upon such efforts (Di Palma, 1990:22-4). As he argues, 'one factor that reconciles to democracy reluctant political actors tied to the previous regime is that in the inaugural phase coexistence usually takes precedence over any radical social and economic programs'.

Such precedence [he continues] stems from understanding the limits of democratic (and other politics) as natural harbingers of material progress. It stems as well from a fuller appreciation that willfully using democracy as a Jacobin tool of progress not only is ingenuous but may also raise intolerable political risks; namely, authoritarian backlashes and, in anticipation, escalation into a virtuous 'guided' democracy. Past democracies – the most instructive example from the 1930s being the second Spanish republic – have foundered on such Jacobin instincts. By giving reform precedence over coexistence and making support for reform the test of legitimacy, they have unintentionally fulfilled a prophecy: the losers would be unwilling to reconcile themselves to a nascent democracy. The example looms large among political practitioners in Europe and Latin America. Indeed, the importance of coexistence has not gone unnoticed, despite its significant policy sacrifices, by those who still sympathize ideally with a more Jacobin democracy.

There is some bluff 'good sense' in this, of course. A preoccupation with the way in which a would-be democratic society develops norms of tolerance and due process is not an irrelevant one. Yet how easy it is for such an approach to emphasize this issue at the expense of any real concern about socio-economic outcomes, how easy for it to underwrite, conservatively, a tendency to 'blame the (willfully unrealistic) victims' rather than their oppressors for any transitions that fail. Thus Di Palma is quick, quite specifically, to identify 'mobilizational models for the third world' based on dependencia paradigms and undue popular suspicion regarding the role played by the 'advanced industrial democracies' in the 'global economic order' as representing a particularly clear danger to 'democratic crafting'. Not surprising, then, his comfortable conclusion that, currently, 'democracy's disengagement from the idea of social progress [is] a silver lining because it has actually given democracy more realistic, more sturdily conscious grounds for claiming superiority in the eyes of public opinion and political practitioners'.

Is it any wonder that Perry Anderson can write of such tendencies that 'what is missing [in contemporary political thought] is any conception of the state as a
structure of collective self expression deeper than the electoral systems of today. Democracy is indeed more widespread than ever before. But it is also thinner – as if the more universally available, the less active meaning it retains’ (Anderson, 1992:355-6). Put more sharply, Gills, Rocamora and Wilson (1993; see also Robinson, 1996) have presented the new orthodoxy as converging around a practice of ‘low intensity democracy’ – a practice designed both to help legitimate the present global status quo and to limit/contain possible challenges to it. Nor, as noted above, is it difficult to identify the tacit (and not-so-tacit) premises that lie behind such a narrowing of the democratic optic. What is at stake is, quite simply, a dramatic abandonment of the politics of public purpose and a fetishization of the market – the latter premise part of a broader and now quite omnipresent world-view recently characterized, by Colin Leys, as follows:

Our leaders are currently directing a process of self-destruction of our societies in the name of a utopia no less irrational than the beliefs of the Solar Temple ... This utopia is the idea of a world-wide market in which the people of the world relate to each other directly as individuals, and only as individuals: and ‘globalization’ [linked in turn to acceptance of the unchecked ‘freedom of capital to move across national boundaries’] is the process of trying to realize this ideal (Leys, 1996:17).

And what about ‘democracy’ under such conditions? Manfred Bienefeld continues the argument (1995:52):

Unfortunately genuine democracy is hard to reconcile with neoliberalism’s mystical belief in the magic of disembodied markets, its fierce hostility to the notion of state and society as organic entities capable of defining and pursuing a common interest, and its insistence on pervasive deregulation. Under such conditions, the state lose the capacity to manage economies in accordance with democratically determined social, ethical or political priorities. Only the shallowest and most meaningless democracy will survive in a ‘cowboy capitalism’ where property rights become virtually absolute because states and electorates are disempowered by the mobility of capital ...

In Africa, Leys suggests, the result of such globalization – with its attendant processes of structural adjustment and the like – ‘has not been a market-based social and economic recovery based on individuals and their initiatives in the marketplace. It has been, instead, an ethnic-based regression, as people have been pushed back into reliance on precolonial social bonds for survival; and in some cases it has resulted in economic and social catastrophe …’ (Leys, 1996:19). In short, if the realities of Africa’s present-day political economy qualify the democratic prospect on the continent, they also create conditions that undermine the prospects for any smooth consolidation of domestic peace and ‘state-building’. This latter is a point to which we will return in the following section.

Even for those who have rather sharper doubts than does Diamond regarding the capacity of neo-liberalism to be the universal solvent of the development problem and the guarantor of democracy in the ‘third world’ (including Africa) the challenges ahead are still pretty daunting, of course. Some seem prepared to choose a posture of resignation. In this respect, Adam Przeworski, one of the more astute students of the global ‘transition to democracy’, might be taken to exemplify the tone of a defeated left most starkly: ‘Capitalism is irrational, socialism is unfeasible, in the real world people starve – the conclusions we have reached are not encouraging’ (Przeworski, 1991:122). In such a context, Przeworski asserts, transitions from authoritarian to
more democratic politics will tend to find their transformative content constrained by the continuing strength of the holders of socio-economic power: ‘[A] stable democracy requires that governments be strong enough to govern effectively but weak enough not to be able to govern against important interests ... [D]emocratic institutions must remain within narrow limits to be successful’ (Przeworski, 1991:37). Under such circumstances, Przeworski concludes, the best case scenario for a ‘successful’ transition is one in which ‘reformers’ within the erstwhile power structure distance themselves from their own ‘hardliners’ and agree to negotiate a form of democratic outcome with ‘moderates’ within the democratic camp – those who, in turn, are prepared to distance themselves from the ‘radicals’ who occupy a position further over on the ideological spectrum. True, this probably implies acceptance by such moderates (Przeworski terms their’s to be ‘the traditional dilemma of the left’) ‘that even a procedurally perfect democracy may remain an oligarchy: the rule of the rich over the poor. As historical experience demonstrates, democracy is compatible with misery and inequality in the social realm and with oppression in factories, schools, prisons, and families’ (Przeworski, 1991:34). Self-evidently, the tone here is very different from anything the Diamonds and di Palmas might adopt. Yet, in the end, there is little more that Przeworski can offer us, given his premises (‘socialism is unfeasible’): a left bending over backwards to avoid ‘chaos’; a left propitiating the powers-that-be; a left that is nothing if not ‘prudent’. Such is the shrunken vision of the transition to democracy that the ‘realism’ of the epoch would seek to fashion for us.

Nor is Przeworski alone in his realism/pessimism. Thus even so committed a socialist as Ralph Miliband also felt forced, writing just before his death in 1994, to acknowledge that ‘in the “third world”, it is quite clear that where economic development occurs, it will be under capitalist auspices, with Western capital much involved in the process’. Of course, Miliband is as convinced as Przeworski that capitalism is ‘irrational’ and is therefore not sanguine about the prospects for much ‘economic development’ occurring under such capitalist auspices in many parts of the world. Nonetheless, for him the fact remains that virtually all ‘governments in the “third world” have accepted the hegemonic role of the West and adapted their economic and social policies to it. The price for not doing so is beyond their capacity and their will’ (Miliband, 1994:190-91). But what if this means, in turn, that the vast majority in the ‘third world’ are merely doomed, by the present il/logic of imperialism, to underdevelopment and to ever more severe versions of social distemper, unless dramatic structural changes, both global and national, begin to occur? There is certainly one stream of authors on Africa who attest as much, focusing on the ‘stranglehold’ presently exerted on Africa by international forces (and their local agents) and, in particular, on the policies of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in further promoting such a situation. Thus John Loxley and David Seddon, in introducing a valuable recent thematic issue of this Review, comment as follows:

Where the IFIs identify failure they blame the domestic policies of African governments, but many observers ... would insist that Africa's problems today are predominantly 'external' in origin and that the IFIs in particular have played a significant role in reducing Africa's capacity and prospects for development. We share this view and suggest that the strategy adopted and the lending policies and conditions imposed by the IFIs are heavily to blame for the dismal performance of most African economies over the last decade or more - although there are also 'internal' factors which should not be discounted and 'external' factors which precede the interventions of the IFIs (Loxley and Seddon, 1994:485).
Adopt such a premise for a moment – that capitalism really is irrational and destructive in its workings in Africa – and the otherwise cosy and ‘reasonable’ world of the new democratic theorists turns very sour, very quickly. Take di Palma’s image of ‘Jacobins’ wilfully wielding democratic claims in order to realize ‘progress’, for example. In practical terms, isn’t he actually evoking the ‘danger’ that the vast mass of the third world will begin to demand a different, more rational world order than the present process of globalization can be expected readily to provide? Others, even some professing to approach these matters from the left, attempt to shuffle such difficulties aside in other ways: by implying that global capitalism (now in its ‘post-imperialist’ phase, according to Becker and Sklar [1987]) is, in the end, profoundly developmental – although, to be sure, in need of somewhat greater (if rather unspecified) pressure from below in order to operate more equitably. In such a context, it is argued, ‘capitalism versus socialism is no longer the prime issue of class analysis; it yields pride of place to the question of liberty versus dictatorship’ (Becker and Sklar, 1987:ix).

But what if, to repeat, global capitalism is, cumulatively, making the situation of African countries worse, how sanguine can one really be about proclamations as to the probable ‘unfeasibility’ of the socialist alternative? There is, to be sure, one other alternative, one exemplifying, in the recent literature on Africa, a kind of ‘post-modern turn’. This approach also suggests an abandonment of the ‘grand narratives’ of ‘socialism’ and of ‘capitalism’, of the developmental/predatory state and of the world market – and proposes instead an embrace of the village and the locality: Africa’s potential for democracy is more convincingly revealed by the creation of small collectives established and controlled by rural or urban groups (such as local associations) than by parliaments and parties, instruments of the state, of accumulation and of alienation (Bayart, 1986:125). But this is only partly helpful. True, Africans must strengthen their capacities to act from the bottom up. But the negative impulses that spring from an irrational (global) capitalism and/or from the typically predatory state will not merely leave them alone to do so. The sources of these impulses must be transformed as well; we simply must not make things easier for ourselves by pretending this is not so, however difficult/impossible the task of doing so may seem. As Leys (reviewing Bayart’s work) suggests:

I would say that the African state, for all its record of abuse, remains a potential line of defense for Africans against the depredations of the world economic and political system: part of the solution, if there is one, and not necessarily part of the problem, as the drive of the IMF and the World Bank to weaken the African state in the name of market efficiency implicitly acknowledges (Leys, 1994:46).

Yet how is any such state to come to act consistently in this way if not in response to pressures from below? Clearly analysts who see capitalism as part of the problem and not part of the solution, and who insist on taking ‘imperialism’ seriously, have pressing reasons of their own for valuing democracy – would it not be a ‘popular democracy’? – highly. Note, for example, the final sentence of Loxley and Seddon’s overview article on the IFIs’, ‘Stranglehold on Africa’ cited above: echoing Leys’ point that African governments must have ‘a bigger voice in their own futures’, they nonetheless conclude their (largely economically-driven) argument with the following challenge to the democratic theorists of Africa: ‘As to how these governments may be rendered more representative of, and accountable to, the broad mass of their citizens, [that] is another matter’ (1994:493).
The ‘Political Science’ of Democratization

We will return to a consideration of this concept. However, what will be apparent is that, precisely because it does not take the question of imperialism seriously, much of the current literature on democratization in Africa finds itself limiting the conception of democracy with which it works – the better, as noted, both to legitimate the neoliberal project and to insulate it against any unmediated claims by popular classes from below. This implies a firm step away from any consideration of an alternative economic project, prompting the suspicion that, from such a perspective, ‘democracy’ is valued more as a plausible narcotic than as the route to any kind of genuine popular empowerment. With ‘political economy’ (concerns about imperialism, class struggle, and the like) now bracketed off, the democratization debate can proceed on other fronts without bad conscience. The result: whether it is because they feel the left/socialist alternative to be irrelevant (Diamond), dangerous (Di Palma) or impossible (Przeworski), these and other theorists are prepared to shift quite sharply the centre of gravity of the debate about democracy, towards what I have called, for want of a better term, ‘the political science of development’. We must avoid caricature, however. The emphasis upon the political within democratization theory can take different forms and they are worth distinguishing. Only at its most crass – as in much of the literature on ‘governance’, for example – does the narrowing of the democratic optic take an overtly manipulative turn, with ‘democracy’ viewed as being as much a problem as opportunity, its claims hedged in accordingly. As Susan George and Fabrizio Sabelli have recently documented, the World Bank has been a particularly important reference point for generating this discourse: its earlier efforts to downgrade the claims of the state to a developmental role are now qualified by a clearer recognition that some kind of viable state-like structure be in place in order to maintain a minimum both of order and of legitimacy (George & Sabelli, 1994). In order to put ‘governments ... on notice to get their acts together’ and in order to specify ‘this process and this requirement’ the Bank ‘has chosen the rather archaic word governance’ (‘Government’, they add, ‘would have been a bit too blatant since the Bank, according to its Articles, is not allowed to intervene in politics at all!’).

They then document the cautious dance that World Bank authors weave around the notions of ‘transparency’, ‘public choice’, ‘responsiveness’ and ‘accountability’ in their texts on governance. In fact, George and Sabelli’s conclusions do not differ from Gerald Schmitz’ recent summary of much the same literature:

[1]In contrast to self-empowerment and grass-roots democratic action, it is ‘we professionals’, with access to our reams of paper, who know best how others should do participatory development. Extending the paradox, more ‘participation’ ends up reinforcing the Bank’s role, even though more real democracy in developing countries would quite likely reduce it (Schmitz, 1995:32).

The result: academic advocates of the Bank approach find themselves saddled with the unenviable task of theorizing, in Joan Nelson’s formulation, a working balance between the ‘contradictory pressures of political opening and economic management’ in situations of ‘simultaneous dual transitions’ (i.e. situations witnessing both economic liberalization and some form of political democratization).

Not surprisingly, they are forced to twist themselves almost out of shape in their efforts to do so. Thus Nelson notes that ‘recent research on the politics of economic reform suggests a need to insulate key economic management functions from direct political pressures and at the same time to improve the channels for ongoing
consultation between the government and concerned interest groups on other aspects of economic policy and reform’ (Nelson, 1993:459-60; for a relevant and suggestive African case-study see Burdette, 1992). As an example, Nelson argues that

the question of how to contain yet also integrate organized labour merits particular attention ... The process of economic liberalization inevitably hits labour hard ... Most Third World successes with sustained economic liberalization in the past two decades have entailed periodic or consistent repression of unions: among the obvious examples are Korea, Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, and Turkey. Some theorists have suggested that labour restraint is crucial not only for sustained economic development but also for consolidation of democratic openings, in order to encourage confidence and loyalty from business. Yet failure to integrate labor into democratic processes can also threaten democratic consolidation (1993:461).

It is difficult to know just where to add the emphases in such quotations, the tensions within them being so close to the surface. Small wonder that various ‘hired guns’ from the academy have been working overtime to smooth down the rough edges of the ‘governance’ approach. In African studies a key figure in attempting to do so has been Goran Hyden, whose essay on ‘Governance and the study of politics’ is widely cited. His work is also all too typical of this genre: seeking to give us an ‘objective’ model of governance – one that, in its abstraction, only obliquely evokes the socio-economic policy content such a model is designed to ensure – he nonetheless produces something readily available for use by neo-liberals. For, within this model, ‘democracy’ is, once again, a safely contingent and manipulable variable, not a defining requirement.

In its assumption that what matters now, and in the future, is whether politics is good or bad, the governance approach is cast in a postmaterialist and postpositivist vein ... This is where it departs from the literature trying to measure democracy or freedom. While that literature is important in its own right and obviously overlaps to some extent with the concerns of this approach, the study of governance is performance-oriented. It examines how well a polity is capable of mobilizing and managing social capital – both fixed and movable – so as to strengthen the civic public realm. In this respect it comes closer to the literature on business management[1]. In the same way as business management theory treats the organization as crucial to business success, the governance approach treats regime – the organization of political relations – as essential for social and economic progress (Hyden, 1992:22).

Meanwhile, in sharp contrast to the calculated blandness of such a way of presenting things, Schmitz feels able to conclude from his counter-efforts to demystify the governance approach and to evoke ‘a more truly democratic ... praxis’ that ‘manufacturing “democratic consent” is (fortunately, I believe) proving to be more difficult at the mass than the elite level’ (Schmitz, 1995:41). Time alone will tell. But if ‘governance’ encapsulates one currently fashionable, and highly suspect, ‘political science’ approach to democratization, it must be emphasized there are other, much better reasons for a preoccupation with the political interactions that mark an attempted transition to democracy. In taking seriously such approaches, we will see that the main charge against them is not that they are wrong-headed but rather that, in their tendency to ignore or downplay the political economy of democratization, they are one-sided. Two emphases in particular are worth noting in this respect. First, practicing democrats in Africa, as well as those who theorize their activities, stress the importance of establishing democratic institutions in order both to discipline entrenched autocrats and to help pre-empt the authoritarian tendencies that have become so much a part of African political life. Second, both practitioners and theorists also stress the possible importance of democratic institutions to the
reconciling of ‘differences’ – especially those that are ‘communally defined’: by ethnic, by religion, and by race – and the facilitating of ‘order’ and ‘state/nation-building’. Take the first point first: the demand to democratize the ‘predatory state’ in Africa. This demand is quite understandable in light of recent African history and indeed has a rich history of its own. As the editors of a special issue (on ‘Surviving democracy?’) of this Review remind us,

the present struggles form part of the long African struggle for democratic politics and systems, visible in the radical nationalist movements of the post-war decade in South and West Africa, in the populist revolts of the early 1980s in Ghana and Burkina Faso (and the related victory of the NRM in Uganda), and in the continued record of opposition, dissent and resistance to authoritarian and repressive regimes of the last 20 years (Allen et al., 1992:6).

Of course, it is this upsurge that Shivji found so often to be presented in exclusively ‘liberal democratic’ terms (as at the Harare conference which he cites): some African writers have been so preoccupied, for very good reasons, with breaking the elision long central to continental political discourse between ‘democracy’ and ‘the single party system’ that they have themselves tended uncritically to embrace alternative notions of ‘pluralistic democracy’ and its ‘most manifest criterion ... a multi-party system’ (see, e.g. Nzouankeu, 1991). Not that one can easily escape the conclusion that an embracing of the legitimacy of multi-partyism is a necessary condition for the kind of societal openness necessary to the building of a democratic culture and practice. While being very far from being a sufficient one, the fact remains that those who once argued for the possibility of a ‘democratic one-party state’ (the literature on the Tanzanian experience in the 1960s and early 1970s provides numerous examples of writers tempted by such a formula, including the present author) have had good reasons to rethink their position.

Nzouankeu, and others, have of course thrown up a variety of relevant considerations about the constitutional means by which the promise of a more open society might be more permanently and effectively realized in Africa (in Shivji, 1991a). At the same time, they often seem insufficiently alert to the kind of nagging questions that the ROAPE editors – from a more ‘political economy’ driven perspective – permit themselves in concluding the editorial cited above:

Multi-partyism and the rule of law, indeed even the codification of basic human rights, do not of themselves imply participation, representativeness, accountability or transparency. They may be essential to the possibility of reducing inequalities and of removing oppression, but do not accomplish this of their own accord. Much more commonly democracy serves as a system through which class dominance and various forms of systematic inequalities are perpetuated and legitimated. The challenge of those African nations undergoing a process of democratization is to use the space it opens to press for greater justice for the mass of the population (Allen, et al., 1992:10).

Some African commentators do, of course, recognize the danger that the democratization process in Africa may merely halt ‘at the level of periodic decorative elections’ (Kaballo, 1995). Sidgi Kaballo is a case in point, arguing forcefully the need to establish, alongside electoral mechanisms, a much deeper culture (and attendant institutionalization) of ‘universal human rights’ than has heretofore existed in post-colonial Africa. Kaballo even notes in passing the possible class determinants of such a culture, in his case lamenting the weakness in this regard of the class on whom he might otherwise pin his hopes, the African bourgeoisie. This failure is further defined, Kaballo suggests, by the inability of the African bourgeoisie ‘to generate an
ideological and intellectual discourse that would rally the masses under its leadership’ (1995:203; compare Shivji’s emphasis on the need for ‘reconceptualizing the dominant human rights and constitutionalist ideologies into ideologies of resistance of the oppressed’ (1991a:257)). Even more suggestively, Peter Anyang Nyongo, an influential Kenyan advocate of democratic processes and human rights, notes the existence of diverse cases of democratization in Africa. In some he finds ‘profligate bureaucrats and politicians came under severe attack for corruption and mismanagement’ from the ‘vocal middle classes’ (who found their ‘standard of living ... threatened by a tight economic atmosphere’). In others, he highlights the case of Zaire, mentioning the writings of Nzongola-Ntalaja, he finds democratization to be driven by the yearnings of ‘the popular masses’ for a ‘second independence’ (Anyang Nyongo, 1992:97). This is suggestive – yet in the end, Shivji might argue, too little is made of the possible implications of such distinctive social bases for the substance of diverse democratization processes. True, some, like Claude Ake, are prepared to expand Nzongola’s point evocatively to the rest of the continent:

The ordinary people of Africa are supporting democracy as a second independence. This time they want independence not from the colonial masters, but from indigenous leaders. They want independence from leaders whose misrule has intensified their poverty and exploitation to the point of being life threatening. And they are convinced that they cannot now get material improvement without securing political empowerment and being better placed to bring public policy closer to social needs. [Nonetheless] democracy is being interpreted and supported in ways that defeat these aspirations and manifest no sensitivity to the social conditions of the ordinary people of Africa. Generally the political elites who support democratization are those with no access to power, and they invariably have no feeling for democratic values. They support democratization largely as a strategy of power ... The people can [only] choose between oppressors and by the appearance of choice legitimize what is really their disempowerment (Ake, 1995:39-40).

By and large, however, the class analysis of Africa’s democratization boom remains to be done. As for Kaballo, he also acknowledges that ‘the prevailing economic crisis and the harsh austerity measures required by the international financial institutions and donors decrease [the bourgeoisie’s] chances of reaching compromises on the demands for better living conditions of the masses’ (quite possibly creating conditions within which ‘the way to authoritarian politics opens up again’). He concludes: ‘it is not enough to include the respect of human rights and the establishment of multi-party democracy as a new political conditionality in international and bilateral relations: the democratization process ... needs [international] backing by relaxing the austerity measures and the provision of more economic assistance’ (Kaballo, 1995:203). Interestingly he quotes Diamond in support of this conclusion. But Kaballo gives no more reason than does Diamond (cited above) to anticipate the kind of global turnaround that guaranteeing such a benign context for democratization would require. He is, in short, as unsuccessful in carrying the contradictions of the global economy as the contradictions of Africa’s domestic class structures into the centre of his analysis.

What, secondly, of the question of order, and of ‘nation-building’? In a world, and a continent, scarred by the extreme tearing of the social fabric that has occurred in such settings as (the former) Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia, it would be unwise to trivialize the preoccupation of political scientists with this issue. This is, in fact, the other side of the coin of Przeworski’s pessimism, cited above, regarding the (unlikely) radical/socialist dimension of any transition from authoritarian rule. For he also argues passionately for the possibility that,
under certain circumstances, protagonists to such transitions will agree (if it proves possible for them to agree at all) to terminate conflicts over institutions because they fear that a continuation of conflict may lead to [or perpetuate] a civil war that will be both collectively and individually threatening. The pressure to stabilize the situation is tremendous, since governance must somehow continue. Chaos is the worst alternative for all (Przeworski, 1991:85).

As it happens, Przeworski casts his concerns primarily in terms of the compromises amongst classes and contending power blocs that might be necessary to facilitate a transition. In the African literature, with its own distinctive tilt towards the political science of transition, far greater attention has been paid to another possible route towards 'chaos', that threatened by the uncontrolled escalation of 'identity politics' – particularly as driven by an extreme expression of the politicization of ethnicity (although regionalism, race and religion have also been mentioned as other possible modalities of such hyper-politicized identity). From this angle, too, 'settling and healing' has seemed an important goal, with 'democracy' then assessed primarily in terms of its projected contribution to the underwriting of an effective level of societal order (di Palma's 'setting up [of] government in diversity as a way of defusing conflict'). In the two case studies (South Africa and Mozambique) that were published in ROAPE 72, we looked at the way in which the introduction of electoral, and other, related, constitutional solutions to outstanding situations of deep-seated social conflict have, recently, helped to produce far more stable societies and polities than had previously existed.

Of course, as scholars have also warned, the implications of 'democracy' for the securing of order in fragile societies may sometimes be far more negative, the competitive aspects of democratic processes serving to exacerbate the claims and counter-claims of different communal interests rather than to assuage and domesticate them. Still, we would be unwise to ignore the contribution that the exercise of political imagination, of 'statecraft', can and must make – both during the period of constitution-making and the run-up to the initial elections, and after them – to the ongoing reconciling of such claims and the creation of some greater sense of enlarged community and shared citizenship. There is a major limitation to this way of formulating things, however. It is a limitation anticipated above when we noted the roots in Africa's contemporary political economy of the intensity of many such 'claims and counter-claims'. The fact remains that any sense of 'enlarged community and shared citizenship' or of national institutional consolidation (of 'state-building', in the language of the present volume) that is won, momentarily, by statecraft may already be in the process of being lost, once again, to the fragmenting logic of 'underdevelopment' and of peripheral capitalism. True, the specific tensions that mark the various fragile societies we study are the product of quite specific histories and circumstances. But such weaknesses are exacerbated – make no mistake – by the current global capitalist disorder (and by such corollaries as the undermining of any sense of a possible developmental role for the presently-existing nation-state). Sapped of confidence in socialist and other related projects, 'modern', collective and humane, people turn for social meaning to more immediate identities, often to grasp them with quite fundamentalist fervour (as we have seen Leys, quoted earlier, to suggest). Here is Ralph Miliband's 'extremely fertile terrain' for the kind of 'pathological deformations' – predatory authoritarianisms and those 'demagogues and charlatans peddling their poisonous wares ... of ethnic and religious exclusion and hatred' – that now scar the landscape in Africa and elsewhere (Miliband, 1994:192). For, as Nancy Fraser has effectively argued, it seems extremely unlikely that tensions rooted in
struggles for 'recognition' can be resolved, in the long-term, in any very effective and healing manner unless tensions rooted in struggles for 'redistribution' (broadly defined) are also being addressed (Fraser, 1995). We are drawn back, in other words, to a consideration of the necessary simultaneity of the moments of 'political economy' and of 'political science' in the discussion of Africa's transition to democracy and of the links of that process to 'nation-building' (for case studies in this approach, see Saul, 1997).

The Prospects For Democratic Empowerment

Of course, the question of whether popular forces-in-the-making can become strong enough to stem the logic of recolonization and the further underdevelopment of Africa that is occurring in the name of an ascendant neo-liberalism remains a very open one. Should we not admit, in fact, that it is difficult to be sanguine regarding the prospects for democratic empowerment in Africa – in large part because it is difficult to be sanguine about the prospects for the social and economic transformation of Africa under the current regime of neo-liberalism and global-market hegemony? This is a painful truth, but, unfortunately, it is one that is not as 'old-fashioned' as it is sometimes made to appear. Nor should acceptance of this truth serve as an invitation to trivialize other concerns that drive the debate about democracy in Africa: the need to discipline abusive authority; the need to create fresh space for individual and collective self-expression; the need to institutionalize the possible means of reconciling communal (ethnic and racial) differences and of reviving and refocusing some more positive sense of national purpose. The 'political science of democratization' must not be allowed to displace 'the political economy of democratization', but it must never again be merely reduced to it either – as the left has too often been tempted to do in the past.

Yet the fact remains: institutional ingenuity in the name of democracy (and of 'state- and nation-building', for that matter) can only do so much to contain and humanize Africa's contradictions so long as the socio-economic 'terrain' remains so 'fertile' for 'pathological deformations' (to allude to Miliband's formulation, cited above). Indeed, under such circumstances, the tendency for 'democracy' in Africa to exacerbate, rather than resolve, the difficulties of 'nation-building' may well be the predominant one. Must we not conclude, in short (and pace the likes of Becker and Sklar, quoted earlier), that the twin issues of 'capitalism versus socialism' and 'liberty versus dictatorship' are inextricably linked in Africa? But if this is true, are we not also left with a mere counsel of despair (socialism being 'unfeasible', after all)? Certainly, as Colin Leys has recently put the point so tellingly, ideas that might begin effectively to address the question of Africa's economic crisis 'could come to seem rational only in a world that was in the process of rejecting the currently predominant ideology of the market. While this world must come, it is not yet in sight, and meantime the African tragedy will unfold' (Leys, 1994:46). 'While this world must come ...?' Would that it were so. Still, his sentiment parallels that of Miliband: 'Such a situation cannot endure.' As the latter concludes his final book:

... [C]hange in the political system and the advent of 'democracy' do not change the social order; but the demand that it too should be radically changed is certain to come into focus ... The specific demands and forms of struggle which [are generated] will vary from country to country: there is no single 'model' of progressive or revolutionary change. But everywhere, there are common goals and aspirations – for democratic forms where they are denied, and for more democratic forms where they are a screen for oligarchic rule; for the achievement of social
order in which improvements in the condition of the most deprived – often a majority of the population – is the prime concern of governments; for the subordination of the economy to meeting social needs. In all countries, there are people, in numbers large or small, who are moved by the vision of a new social order in which democracy, egalitarianism and cooperation – the essential values of socialism – would be the prevailing principles of social organization. It is in the growth in their numbers and in the success of their struggle that lies the best hope for humankind (Miliband, 1994:194-5).

Not least in Africa.

**John S Saul**, Department of Political Science, York University, Toronto

**Bibliography**


"It's Terminal Either Way": An Analysis of Armed Conflict in Liberia, 1989-1996

Quentin Outram

The wars which have wracked Liberia since the end of 1989 have reduced a country which was once regarded as one of the more fortunate in Africa to a state of long-term aid dependency. Perhaps 150,000 or more have been killed and at many points over the last seven years a third of the country's pre-war population has been living as refugees in neighbouring states and another third has been internally displaced by the conflict. The continuing warfare has made it difficult to address the large-scale humanitarian problems inevitable in such circumstances: rates of undernutrition have sometimes reached very high levels and on at least one occasion have reached heights which rival the worst recorded in any part of the world (Outram, 1997).

This article seeks to advance our understanding of the causes of this suffering. It does so not primarily by examining the experiences of the victims, important though this is, but by investigating the political economy of the Liberian wars including the circumstances and the actions of the warring factions. In this I follow Keen's call to understand the actions of oppressor groups involved in humanitarian emergencies, as well as those of their victims (1994:232).

The Liberian wars have followed a complex of trajectories. Major offensives have been separated by lulls inaugurated by cease-fires, accords and agreements promoted by the Economic Organisation of West African States (ECOWAS). The 'First War' of 1989-90 between Charles Taylor's previously unknown National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the national army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), appeared to be a straightforward war of national liberation from the brutal dictatorship of Samuel Doe. Taylor's forces grew rapidly and he was prevented from capturing the capital Monrovia only by the arrival in August 1990 of a force provided by ECOWAS and later endorsed by the United Nations Security Council: this was the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group, ECOMOG. With the death of Samuel Doe in September 1990, the Liberian state became little more than a diplomatic fiction, wholly dependent on ECOMOG troops for its security and with a writ which ran no further than the Monrovia-centred zone controlled by those troops. Despite repeated attempts, ECOWAS was unable to broker a stable peace. From 1991 onwards, new armed factions emerged and the underlying conflict between the NPFL and ECOMOG has been overlaid and complicated by inter-factional wars. By the time of the Abuja Agreement of August 1995, which inaugurated one of many short-lived and uneasy peaces, the wars had reduced the NPFL to merely the most powerful of half a dozen warring factions (Table 1 and Map 1).
Table 1. Armed Forces in Liberia 1995-1996: Warring Factions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Title/Leader</th>
<th>Territory 1995-96 (a)</th>
<th>No. of combatants (b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFL</td>
<td>Armed Forces of Liberia the former national army Ltg. J. Hezekiah Bowen</td>
<td>In barracks within the ECOMOG zone</td>
<td>8,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDF</td>
<td>Lofa Defence Force Francois Massaquoi</td>
<td>Lofa County, north west</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPC</td>
<td>Liberian Peace Council G. E. Saigbe Boley Sr.</td>
<td>Eastern counties</td>
<td>4,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPFL</td>
<td>National Patriotic Front of Liberia Charles Ghankay Taylor</td>
<td>Nimba &amp; Cong counties &amp; adjacent areas</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULIMO-K</td>
<td>United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy: Kromah Ltg Alhaji G. V. Kromah</td>
<td>North west</td>
<td>12,460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peace Keeping / Peace Enforcing Troops

| ECOMOG | Ecowas (Economic Community of West African States) Military Observer Group | Monrovia & surrounding areas to Kakata & Buchanan | 7,269 |

Notes and sources: (a) Based on reports relating to 1995; factional territories appear to have been fairly stable between then and April 1996. Sources: UNSG (1995b to e)(b) Except for ECOMOG, as declared to the ECOMOG Disarmament Committee in October 1995. For ECOMOG, as reported by the UN Secretary-General. Source: UNSG (1995f: paras. 32, 35).

The Liberian Wars: Inter-ethnic Conflict?

An 'inter-ethnic conflict' comprises two features: conflicting parties which define themselves ethnically and which pursue a programme of ethnic liberation or of ethnic domination possibly including genocide. The sense of ethnic identity necessary for an inter-ethnic conflict to arise can be understood in a number ways (Young, 1976, 1993; Welsh, 1996). The oldest approach is 'primordialism'. Here, ethnic identity stems from the 'givens' of social existence: 'immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language ... and following particular social practices' (Geertz, 1963:109). Ethnic identity thus has ancient origins and is resistant to change; it is older and more fundamental than identities based on citizenship or on class. 'Constructivism' emerged in opposition to primordialism in the later 1960s and rapidly became conventional. Constructivists argued that sharply-defined ethnic identities were of relatively recent origin and had often been 'constructed' by the practices of ruling elites pursuing projects of economic, social and political domination and the intellectuals who came with them (Colson, 1969:201).
The ‘instrumentalist’ approach is the most recent and can be seen as a development of constructivism. Here, ethnicity is conceived as a resource available to elites in the furtherance of their objectives and ethnic identity is ‘claimed’ rather than ‘imposed’; the emphasis is on the manipulation and malleability of ethnic identity by indigenous elites. One could summarize these approaches to ethnic identity by saying that for one ethnic identity is simply ‘there’; for another it is a by-product; for another it is a deliberate and conscious creation. Each model offers something to aid an understanding of inter-ethnic conflict. Primordialism speaks to the depths of commitment mobilized in inter-ethnic conflicts, even if, at bottom, it says little more than ‘Well, ethnic identity’s like that’. Constructivism and instrumentalism both offer ways of comprehending the dynamics of inter-ethnic conflict.

Inter-ethnic conflicts can usually be linked to a history of real or imagined oppression by one ethnic group of one or more others. Such, indeed, is the history of Liberia. But the primary ethnic cleavage in Liberia before 1980 was between the indigenous peoples and the ‘Americos’, descendants of the freed US slaves who were settled in the area in the early nineteenth century. The Americos rapidly inserted themselves as a comprador class between the indigenes of the interior and the international market. They created and dominated the Liberian state. Access to the state and an ability to
manipulate its administrative, fiscal, legal and military resources became central to the process of Americo exploitation (Khafre, 1978; David, 1984:59-67). The indigenous peoples were denied formal citizenship until 1904. Even after this, political activity and access to official positions within the state apparatuses and the education that it required continued to be controlled by the Americo elite through wholesale election-rigging, systems of patronage and mechanisms of incorporation (Rotberg, 1965:335; Clapham, 1978:122-6; Liebenow, 1987:25-7, 47-52, 57-8, 94, 155-8). During the twentieth century the Americo elite encouraged the exploitation of the country's natural resource base by foreign capital. The Firestone rubber plantation, one of the world's largest, was established in 1926; in the period after the Second World War Swedish, German and US capital joined in the exploitation of Liberia's iron ore reserves, some of the world's richest. These developments exacerbated conflicts between the Americas and the indigenous people as land was expropriated and a subject labour force created through coercion, regulation and the suppression of labour protest (Clower et al., 1966:17-20; Mayson and Sawyer, 1979:3-6; Knoll, 1991). With the political economy developed a political culture among the elite and its agents marked by authoritarianism, a disregard for the human or legal rights of the indigenous peoples, predation, bribery, corruption and an early resort to force to resolve conflicts. A national, Liberian identity was restricted to the elite; for the indigenous peoples, a 'Liberian' was not a compatriot but an Americo. In short, the elite 'created a situation in Africa not unlike the very one against which the repatriated Americo-Liberians had rebelled in America' (Liebenow, 1987:47, 154).

The pre-war Liberian state officially recognized sixteen different ethnic groups as well as the Americas; others have defined twenty-eight; sometimes a threefold division based on language family is made (Liebenow, 1969:30-2, 37). Map 2 shows the areas supposedly occupied by the officially recognized groups. While such maps are useful they may also give the misleading impression that each ethnic group can be distinguished from others without ambiguity and that a territory for each group can be delimited with boundaries as clear as those of a modern nation state. In contrast, Liberian ethnographers have had to admit that the classification of Liberia's people into mutually exclusive groups and territories rides roughshod over the reality of uncertain and fluid ethnic identities, geographical mobility and the interpenetration of ethnic groups in multi-ethnic societies (Moore, 1990).

No one of the officially recognized groups is numerically dominant. The largest is the Kpelle who accounted for about 21 per cent of the indigenous population, followed by the Bassa (15 per cent) and the Gio, Kru, Grebo and Mano (8 or 9 per cent each) (Liebenow, 1987:35, reporting the results of the 1974 Census). Nevertheless, the practices of Americo domination were largely based on a simple division between the Americas and 'the country people' with only minor differentiations made within the latter category: for example, the Loma were regarded as 'warlike' and were recruited into the armed forces along with Krahn; the Mandingo were identified with petty commerce and cultivated because of this (Liebenow, 1969:34; 1987:181, 192; Ellis, 1995:176, 179).

The political economy created by the Americas collapsed in two stages: the first took place in 1980, when Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, a Krahn, seized power; the second in 1990 when the Liberian state disintegrated during the First War. It is not possible to provide a full discussion of the reasons for this collapse within the confines of this article. Suffice it to say that in the period before 1980, urbanization, increasing levels of education, and rising political and economic aspirations posed increasing challenges to Americo hegemony at a time when a faltering world market for Liberia's
Map 1 here/landscape: printer to drop in
major exports limited the regime’s ability to buy-off its opponents. Against this background, the failure of the regime to develop the means of repression, symbolized by its reliance on Guinean troops to quell the 1979 food riots, and to secure the loyalty of the army’s lower ranks proved fatal to Americo supremacy (Liebenow, 1987:153-93). Doe’s initial rhetoric promised liberation, stressed national identity and deprecated references to ethnic groupings but Doe failed to carry out the social transformation he had promised (Liebenow, 1987:237-8; Kandeh, 1996:392). In the face of a deepening of the problems that had beset the Americo elite in its final decade, Doe responded by attempting to continue the practices of the previous regime. By 1984 a popular slogan justly summarized the Doe’s Liberia as ‘Same Taxi, New Driver’ (Liebenow, 1987:263; Kandeh, 1996:394).

The second stage in the collapse of the Liberian state was foreshadowed in the mid-1980s by Doe’s construction of a power base founded on ethnic identity. The police and armed forces became dominated by Krahn and the allegiance of Krahn individuals to the regime was cemented by the provision of economic and educational advantages (Liebenow, 1987:267-8; Africa Watch, 1991: note 7; Ellis, 1995:179). Any remaining shred of legitimacy that Doe may have enjoyed was destroyed by the rigged 1985 election. The failed coup of the same year led by Quiwonkpa (a Gio) bred an intense animosity within the state apparatus towards the Gio and also the Mano, a neighbouring ethnic group with whom the Gio are closely identified. This was new. In the words of ‘Esther T’, a Gio woman who became a refugee in 1990, ‘[Krahn soldiers] used to say that they were sorry that they hadn’t killed all the Gio people in 1985, and they were just waiting for the order. From 1985, the Krahn people began to hate the Gio people and it has been that way since’ (Africa Watch, 1990a:152). Gio and Mano were purged from the armed forces and became subject to discrimination in employment, to extortion, to looting and killing by agents of Doe’s regime. Despite this background, none of the parties to the First War openly defined themselves in ethnic terms. Nor does it appear that the NPFL had an ethnic programme at its inception. The declared programme of the NPFL was the liberation of Liberia from Doe’s regime on behalf of all the people of Liberia: retrospective protestations that this was the ‘noble’ cause of the NPFL were made as late as 1994 (Woewiyu, 1994).

The NPFL launched its initial attack in Nimba county, populated by Gio and Mano. The very first victims were government soldiers and government officials; some Mandingo were killed, accused of being government informers. After AFL units had responded with attacks targeted on the Gio and Mano however, the NPFL responded in kind. NPFL soldiers sometimes used a language test to target their killing: women and men who could speak Gio or Mano were spared, those who could not were killed. Sometimes, they were more specific, targeting Krahn and Mandingo in particular. One technique used to distinguish ethnic friend from ethnic foe was to beat prisoners: those who lost control of themselves in their pain and screamed out in Krahn were killed (Africa Watch, 1990a:153-5; 1990b:135, 137; Bennett et al., 1995:33). But in Grand Gedeh NPFL soldiers ‘didn’t try to choose between the [ethnic] groups, but killed everybody because they thought they were all Krahn in Grand Gedeh’ (refugee ‘Harris B’, quoted by Africa Watch, 1990b:134). A similar story emerged in Sinoe County (Africa Watch, 1991:135, 144). By October Africa Watch was describing the civil war as ‘near-genocidal’ (Africa Watch, 1990b:131). However, the NPFL continued to kill people with connections, real or imagined, with the Doe regime regardless of ethnicity. And in many cases, Liberians were killed, regardless of ethnicity, because they refused to give up their possessions (US Department of State, 1990: 120).
The Liberian Wars: Warlordism?

The stalemate following the end of the First War was shattered in October 1992 when Taylor launched a surprise attack on Monrovia. This was the start of the 'Second War'. Taylor failed in his attempt to take the capital and expel the ECOMOG troops and the Second War formally ended with the Cotonou cease-fire signed in July 1993. During the Second War "‘It was not the same concerted effort at ethnic cleansing’, a State Department source explained. ‘Murder was incidental to robbing’" (Africa Watch, 1993:289). The evidence suggests that, possibly from the Second War, but more definitely from the ‘Third War’ of 1994-5, ethnic identity gave way to factional affiliation as the primary cleavage in the Liberian conflicts. The reasons for this shift are obscure. However, it is worth pointing out the consequences of small size of the Liberian ethnic groups in general and of the Krahn population in particular. The 1974 census counted 71,177 Krahn; by 1989 this might have grown to, say, 115,000. Perhaps 30 per cent of these might have been in the 15-30 age group and half these male. If these figures are roughly correct the ‘pool’ of young Krahn males available for recruitment would have been about 17,000. Adding something for boys and women (Endnote 1) might raise this to 20,000. These calculations make no allowance for Krahn killed and forced into exile by the First War. Yet the supposedly Krahn factions (AFL, ULIMO-J and LPC) declared a combined strength of over 21,000 fighters to the ECOMOG Disarmament Committee in October 1995 (UNSG, 1995f: para. 32). These numbers don’t add up. And whatever the precise arithmetic, the orders of magnitude involved make it clear that a warring faction that limited its recruitment to members of a single ethnic would be inviting defeat at the hands of any less discriminating faction. Competition may have been the enemy of discrimination (Becker, 1957).

Whatever the reasons, the evidence of a shift from ethnic to factional identity is clear. By the 1994 attack on Taylor’s ‘capital’ at Gbarnga the pattern of inter-factional alliances and conflicts ceased to be conform to the apparently simple Krahn and anti-Krahn cleavage. At the top, a fraction of the anti-Krahn NPFL broke away under Tom Woewiyu, a long-standing member of Taylor’s cohort, to form the NPFL-CRC; it allied itself with the LPC (supposedly Krahn), the AFL (supposedly Krahn) and ULIMO-J (supposedly Krahn). On the ground, the identification of individuals as friend or foe seemed to be no longer based on tests of ethnic identity. Instead the possession of any item linking an individual, whether voluntarily or otherwise, to a faction became the main means of identification: identity cards issued by the NPFL’s National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government; a t-shirt bearing an NPFL slogan (Africa Watch, 1993:302; 1994:165-6). Victims reported in 1994 that the warbands that abused them were usually composed of men and boys speaking a number of different indigenous Liberian languages (Ellis, 1995:183). A report of an NPFL attack on Pleebo, Maryland County, in October 1994, held by the LPC, states that after taking the town the NPFL murdered civilians, targeting church and medical personnel and any persons suspected of aiding or supporting the LPC, often merely on the grounds that they had remained in the town while it was under LPC control (Catholic Church of Maryland County, 1994). To quote one foreigner interviewed by Africa Watch in Buchanan in 1994: ‘It’s terminal either way. If the NPFL comes, they say you are LPC, and vice versa’ (Africa Watch, 1994:164).

The relations between the Liberian factions and the civilian population during the Second and subsequent wars have been marked by two key features: first, as in the First War, physical insecurity punctuated by gross abuses of human rights and, second, economic predation. Predation has occurred at two levels. At the very top of the NPFL and possibly in other factions predation has paralleled aspects of the pre-
war political economy in its focus on the exploitation of natural resources and their sale to foreign dealers and firms (Reno, 1993, 1995, 1996; Sesay, 1996:48; UNSG, 1993a:153). The income gained from these activities has not been used to pay or feed soldiers. None of the Liberian factions (with the partial exception of the AFL) have paid or fed their fighters (Endnote 2). Instead they have been left to fend for themselves and they have done so by extortion and theft. The extent of the extortion and theft has varied greatly and so has the level of abuse involved in the process. One end of the spectrum is illustrated by a scene witnessed by Berkeley: four small boys armed with AK-47s shuffle into a tea shop; one lifts his fingers to his mouth; the shop owners fetch some bananas and butter some rolls; the boys leave (1992:127). The other end of the spectrum has been described by Ellis in an account based on refugee testimony:

[UIMO-K] war-bands up to 40 strong would reconnoitre a village often using a local youth whom they had persuaded to inform them of the lay-out of the village and, above all, which people had possessions worth looting. The war-band would then attack, instilling the maximum fear in unarmed villagers by perpetrating some acts of exemplary violence. They would then assemble the people and read out lists of names of those whom they knew to have goods worth looting. A common tactic was to capture women, and threaten to kill them unless their husbands paid ransom money. Having looted everything worth taking, the war-band would then abduct some men to act as porters. Attempted escape would be met by instant death ...[LPC raids were conducted by bands] of perhaps 10 men, who would systematically torture them [the villagers], typically by beating and by branding them with heated machetes. They would then take all the goods they could find and force men to head-load the booty to their base. In all cases, rape, including gang-rape, and other gratuitous violence, were commonplace.

Accounts given to aid workers by civilians in Tubmanburg in September 1996 tell similar stories.

[F]ighters on the ground had forced them to work and one child said, 'My grandma makes the food, but sometimes the fighters come and take it away'. They also reported that some fighters were taking what little food they were able to forage in the bush (UNDHA, 1996b: para. 5).

Violations of the human rights of the civilian population have been widespread. They have included harassment, looting, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, rape, murder and massacre of civilians including children (Africa Watch, 1994; Fleischman, 1994 provides a summary up to that year; US Department of State, 1996 reviews 1995). Violations carried out in connection with the village raids described above clearly have the function of terrorizing individuals to part with their assets and to deter those conscripted for forced labour from escape. Killings often appear to have been aimed at murdering any conceivable supporter of opposing factions, including those who have merely remained in place when an opposing faction has taken the area. But there have been many atrocities where the viciousness and the extent of the violence appears wholly incommensurate with any conceivable advantage obtained by the perpetrators. Here one can only conclude that the violence has yielded its own intrinsic satisfactions to those who have carried it out.

It is partly from these abusive and exploitative relations between the factions and the civilian population that the question of warlordism arises. Writers on Liberia have used the warlord label without discussing its meaning or applicability: it has been used simply to denote the history of inter-factional conflict evident since 1992. Understandably, the focus of much research and writing on Liberia has been on the
experiences of the warlords' victims rather than on the warlords themselves. But, as Keen (1994:232) has argued with respect to famine in Sudan, the design of policy responses to the humanitarian crises created by warlordism requires an understanding of the objectives and strategies of perpetrators as well as victims. Previous contributors to ROAPE have initiated this project. Roberts (1989) surveyed the state of warlord studies by sinologists interested in the 'era of the warlords', usually dated as 1916-28. Charlton and May (1989) applied the concept to the collapse of the Chadian state and Darch examined its applicability to the MNR in Mozambique. Adam (1992) has delineated some of the origins and specificities of warlordism in Somalia. Here, I attempt to deepen and extend these analyses by investigating the structural features of warlordism and bringing out their consequences, and by relating warlordism in Liberia to the pre-war political economy and hence identifying some of the specificities of the Liberian case.

For a sustained discussion of the warlord concept it is necessary to turn to the work of the sinologists. The definition of 'warlord' offered by Sheridan remains central: 'A warlord exercised effective governmental control over a fairly well-defined region by means of a military organization that obeyed no higher authority than himself' (1966:1). Lary has suggested that a consensus general characterization of the Chinese warlords would feature: 'the possession of autonomous military force; the control of a base region; the use of force as the final arbiter, the reliance on personal rather than impersonal patterns of rule, and a ruthless and extractive attitude towards society and the economy' (Lary, 1980:441).

The use of this definition and characterization has been in controversies internal to the world of China scholarship. Because of this they take some things for granted which leap to the eye of anyone concerned to use the concept of warlordism in a different context. As has been pointed out, Sheridan's definition of a warlord 'does not distinguish a Chinese warlord of the twentieth century from a medieval baron of China, Japan, or Europe' (Ch'en, 1968:568) or, one might add, any run-of-the-mill modern military dictator. So there is something else intended, but taken for granted, in Sheridan's definition. That 'something else' is twofold: the competition for power, pursued through armed conflict, by many warlords and, as Sheridan recognized (1966:8), the wielding of power in the private interests of the warlord. It is the armed competition for power which distinguishes the Chinese 'era of the warlords' from countries and eras dominated by unitary military dictatorships. It is the pursuit of private interests that distinguished the warlords from the communists of the Chinese Red Army and which would make it eccentric, to say the least, to treat Mao Zedong as a warlord. There is, however, no eccentricity in classifying the leaders of the Liberian factions as warlords: they and their factions fit the definition developed by sinologists exactly.

The 'ruthless and extractive attitude towards society and the economy' held by the 'model' warlord is the key feature of this kind of warfare for those concerned with the fate of the civilian population. The Chinese experience shows clear parallels with the Liberian case. Warlord soldiers in China physically abused and murdered civilians, raped, looted, and thieved. They gathered extraordinary levels of tax; they arbitrarily requisitioned goods, they conscripted labour and they forced sellers to accept worthless paper currencies (Sheridan, 1966:23-9; Myers, 1970:278; Ch'i, 1976: chapter 7; Ch'en, 1979:86-7, 130-8). In the words of a Henanese peasant, the drably uniformed warlord soldiers preyed on the peasantry like 'grey rats and grey wolves' (Lary, 1985: ch. 6). Myers argues that 'the emigration of millions of peasants from north China to
Manchuria during the 1920s was principally due to the breakdown of peace and order in the countryside and the great loss of property at the hands of warlord armies' (1970:277). Warlord activities contributed to the 1925 famine in central China and exacerbated or, in some accounts, caused the north China famine of 1928-30 (Mallory, 1928:78, 80, 82; Nathan, 1965:17-21; Sheridan, 1966:24; Lary, 1985:109).

The parallels between warlord China and Liberia are striking and suggest that ruthless predation of the civilian population is a general feature of warlordism. If this is so then warlordism has an economic as well as a military dynamic (cf. Keen, 1994:216). Warfare of this kind becomes a means of 'primitive accumulation'. Yet this perception raises at least one major question. Predation pressed to the point of famine and wholesale civilian flight is not easy to understand: it is killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Abuses of human rights by warlord soldiers have been so gross and economic exploitation so severe in Liberia that they have been intolerable and unsustainable. Large areas of faction territory in Liberia have become deserted or severely depopulated. Food production outside the ECOMOG zone has all but collapsed (FAO, 1996; Outram, 1997); the result has been that supplies of food for the fighters have shrivelled. 'Fighters interviewed [in September 1996 around Tubmanburg] tell of a growing disaffection for the ULIMO-J leadership in Monrovia, citing [among other factors] lack of food' (UNDHA, 1996b: para. 69). In resolving this puzzle it is useful to return to China and consider the contrast between warlord practice and the Maoist doctrine of 'protracted war'.

Mao's analysis of the conflict between the Red Army and the Japanese stressed the opposing strengths and weaknesses of the two combatants: the Japanese were attempting to occupy a large country with relatively small forces and vast swathes of the country lay outside their grasp and were likely to remain so. But China was 'manifestly inferior to the enemy in military, economic and political-organizational power' (Zedong, 1938:123). In the long-term, if the fragmentation of China's society and politics could be overcome, the Japanese could not win but in the short term, Japan's powerful but small-scale forces would be formidable. Out of this came the doctrine of 'protracted war'. The existence of large areas of China outside the control of the Japanese enabled the Red Army to base its strategy on 'large scale mobile warfare' in which the defence of territory was subordinated to the imperatives of preserving its forces and destroying those of the Japanese. Relations between the army and the people had to be sustainable if a protracted war was to be fought. Hence there was a military as well as a political necessity for the 'principle of the unity of the army and the people which means maintaining a discipline that forbids the slightest violation of the people's interests' (Zedong, 1937:53-4). In short, the strategic situation faced by Mao allowed and necessitated a protracted war and hence demanded that calculations of cost and advantage consider not only today, this week and this year but next year and many years beyond that.

The contrast between this strategic context and the one faced by the Chinese warlords could not be greater. As Ch'i has noted there was an apparent contradiction between the ends and actions of the Chinese warlords: their deep, unsustainable predations put their futures at risk. He argued that the fragility of the warlords' control over their territories put a premium on the short-run maximization of the rate of exploitation (1976:172-8). This has been the situation in Liberia. None of the Liberian warlords has been able to establish a large, secure base area beyond the reach of the opposing forces. Taylor, who has come closest to this achievement, saw the territory under his control whittled away by new warlords and his capital briefly occupied during the
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Third War. For him, and even more so for the lesser warlords, the pressures of today have prevented a concern with tomorrow. In Liberia, as in China, the result has been that predation has been pushed beyond sustainable limits, to the point of flight and famine.

While no Liberian warlord has been able to act on the assumption that their control of territory is permanent there are differences between ‘core zones’ and ‘contested areas’. In ‘contested areas’ the incentive to limit predation to a sustainable maximum diminishes and may vanish: those who consider restraining their exactions calculate that not only they, but also their competitors, will gain the benefits of their restraint and this reduces or nullifies the private benefits of restraint. Indeed, because in military competition a stronger enemy threatens one’s survival, the benefits of restraint may, in truth, be costs. This reasoning would lead a warlord away from sustainable rates of predation towards the devastation of the resources and people of contested areas. In these circumstances, the flight of civilians and the starvation of those that remain does not indicate failure, but success.

The short-termism of the Liberian warlords and the tendency towards unsustainable predation which follows from this has been exacerbated by the nature of the pre-war Liberian political economy. Taylor has financed his war not primarily by ‘taxing’ agricultural production but by exploiting, with the aid of foreign capital, the timber, rubber and mineral resources of the area he controls (Reno, 1993, 1995, 1996). To Taylor a functioning agricultural sector has been of only secondary importance. In these ways Taylor’s practice has replicated the basic features of the pre-war political economy. In the south west, too, the fighting between ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K over areas rich in easily exploitable alluvial diamonds and gold suggests that mineral rather than agricultural resources are seen as the prime necessity. However, an explanation of the high levels of predation seen in Liberia along these lines will take us only so far. Were this the whole story one would expect to be able to see a contrast between civilian conditions in the resource-rich ULIMO-J, ULIMO-K and NPFL areas and those in the south east controlled by the LPC where there are few economic resources outside agriculture and logging. Yet the torments suffered by civilians in the LPC area seem to lie at the worst end of the Liberian spectrum (Carver, 1994: section 7.1).

All attempts, such as these, to understand the maltreatment of civilians by faction fighters in terms of rational action within a very short time horizon, suffer from a major failing. This is that they offer no explanation of the extent and depth of the violence involved. The underlying assumption behind such accounts is that violence is instrumental and controlled: a rational means calculated by the leaders of a unified organization and executed by their followers. But this is to misapprehend the nature of factional organization in Liberia and it is to this that I now turn.

The Internal Organization of the Factions

The heads of the warring factions in Liberia have exercised only limited control over their own fighters. Although this became widely noted only in 1994, it has been true since the beginning. During the First War the NPFL distributed arms to villagers (Berkeley, 1992:129; Ellis, 1995:167) and as the NPFL grew ‘control of those forces evaporated’ (Africa Watch, 1990b:131). NPFL fighters were early described as
a law unto themselves ... While security in a given area depends largely on the discipline 
exercised by the local commander, individual fighters have considerable latitude to arrest, 

Similar indiscipline was evident in the AFL: in 1993 Brigadier Malu, the ECOMOG 
Chief of Staff, stated contemptuously that the AFL was guilty of 'every type of 
indiscipline ... looting, indiscriminate firing, ... trained soldiers wouldn't do what 
they do' (quoted by Africa Watch, 1993:208). AFL soldiers were said to abandon their 
positions once they had finished looting (Ibid.; cf. Barrett, 1992). By August 1994, the 
UN Secretary-General was remarking that 'Command and control problems abound 
within every faction' (UNSG, 1994c: para. 29).

An example of the character of factional discipline is given by an outbreak of fighting 
in January 1996 in the Todee area of Montserrado County between ULIMO-J and 
ECOMOG which resulted in ULIMO-J's capture of the town of Goba, from which the 
civilians fled. ULIMO-J officers from Monrovia 'negotiated with' (did not 'order') the 
local ULIMO-J fighters who agreed to re-site a checkpoint and 'promised' not to enter 
the town or harass civilians. However the accompanying UN officials refused to 
recommend that the civilians return, explaining that 'The fighters were on drugs and 
still very agitated. After the death of the ULIMO-J area commander last week, there 
has been much internal strife among the fighters. At least four fighters claimed to be 
the commander in charge of Goba town' (UNDHA, 1996a).

The state of the evidence does not permit a conclusive explanation for the command 
and control problems seen in Liberia. However, it is possible to point to some features 
of the Liberian context, to note some clues and to draw attention to some historical 
parallels. Heads of warring factions have had few resources with which to exert 
authority, instil discipline and motivate their troops. Since the end of the First War 
none of the factions has been in a position to appeal to strongly held ideological 
convictions. There are also technical problems facing the heads of factions. Faction 
fighters in Liberia appear to operate most of the time in small dispersed bands but all 
factions appear to have been short of logistic and communications equipment: UN 
agency and NGO assets in these categories have been prime targets for looting. This 
suggests that any commander seeking to maintain control over his troops by 
strategies based on close control and supervision would encounter substantial 
difficulties. The exertion of both Weber's 'charismatic' and 'bureaucratic' forms of 
authority and domination requires constant contact (whether immediate or through a 
hierarchy of subordinates) between the leader and the led. The UN Secretary-
General's remark that 'In some instances ground commanders seem to have wrested 
the initiative from faction leaders, in particular those who visit their forces infrequently' 
(UNSG, 1995a: para. 21, emphasis added) is consistent with the view that command 
and control failures have been the result of difficult logistics and poor communica-
tions.

These problems are very old ones in the history of warfare; early modern continental 
Europe was plagued by the consequences (Crevel, 1977:7-14; Parker, 1996:46-81). At 
that time communications between a commander and any troops outside his 
immediate vicinity were of course slow and uncertain. Payment of troops was 
frequently delayed and intermittent. Troops were recruited and motivated by the 
promise, express or implied, of enrichment by looting and plunder; troops were, in 
favourable circumstances, fed by their commanders but, in unfavourable circum-
stances, were allowed to 'forage' for themselves. The consequential predation, abuses 
and atrocities were often severe, widespread and gross but no commander who
wished to retain his army could risk imposing penalties on those troops who abused civilians in the course of 'foraging' or in the sacking of a town just taken. Any such attempt would have led to mass desertion and the commander would have no army to command. Despite the consequences for civilians these practices of early modern European warfare enabled the more effective commanders to keep rates of desertion under control and to motivate their soldiers to fight. In Liberia, these practices may have been resurrected in circumstances which are not dissimilar and for not dissimilar reasons. Certainly, NPFL soldiers were motivated to capture Monrovia during the Second War by the promise of the loot of Monrovia, including a house: NPFL fighters wrote their names or units on the outside walls of houses, hoping to be able to return and claim 'their' houses after the fighting (Africa Watch, 1993:288).

However, there may be one important difference between the command and control strategies of early modern Europe and modern Liberia. While early modern European soldiers were motivated by the chance, however remote and at whatever risk, of enrichment, in Liberia an additional motivation seems to be hatred and vengeance. In the context of the inter-ethnic First War, that this might be so is easy to accept but the continuation of gross abuses into the subsequent wars suggests that the emotions expressed inter-ethnically in the First War had deeper roots.

That the First War was traumatizing perhaps needs little substantiation. Blamo Nelson who heads the Special Emergency Life Food Programme, a Liberian NGO, said, 'We have been angry for a long time.... We all wear masks. Behind these masks is a mad, horrified people' (quoted by Berkeley, 1992:131). That the traumas of the First War led to a demand for vengeance is also not difficult to accept:

> If the [rebels] killed your husband, you could go out of your mind. What is the next thing [to do]? You are going to take up arms. If they kill your husband, kill all your children, loot your whole house or end up burning your house, what is the next thing? You go crazy. So, most of these women took up arms (an anonymous Liberian refugee quoted in Bennett et al., 1995:33; interpolations in the original).

But such motivations have not led to a continuing cycle of inter-ethnic revenge and slaughter. Instead, as argued above, ethnic identity has ceased to be the principal organizing force of the Liberian wars. The hatred and vengeance expressed in the subsequent wars appears general and undirected. It is this that suggests that these emotions have deeper roots. Scheff's (1994) analysis of emotions and wars stresses unacknowledged shame. Shame is provoked by humiliation and, if the shame is unacknowledged, feelings of anger and demands for vengeance may result. Acts of vengeance are not necessarily directed at those who have been responsible for the humiliation.

Earlier, I indicated the political culture of pre-war Liberia. It was one which allowed the frequent humiliation of the great majority of its citizens by agents of the state and other members of the Americo elite. Coercion by holders of civilian and military posts within the state apparatus outside any legal framework was commonplace:

> [Tax officials] are often regarded as undesirables who make harsh financial demands on the poor. In the interior, this unfavourable characterization goes further: they demand rice and chickens from the people, 'eat tax money', and falsely reduce assessments if handsomely 'dashed' [bribed] ... Liberian soldiers are perhaps the most feared government employees in the interior. They are stationed at regular checkpoints in each district. In the name of the government, and often on the mere basis of wearing a uniform, they demand rice, chickens,
cattle, money, and various services from the tribal people. Every town has stories of brutality by soldiers whose demands were not met (Clower et al., 1966:16-17).

It is unnecessary to stress the parallel between the practices of Liberian police and soldiers described in this extract and the day-to-day routine of the last seven years. Americo supremacy and tribal humiliation was emphasized by extremely low levels of literacy, estimated in 1984 at 31 per cent among the population over 10 years old and only 19 per cent among the population over 30 years (UNICEF, 1995:53). Exertion of civil rights was further limited by a corrupt and brutal policing system and a judicial system that was in practice subordinate to the presidency (Liebenow, 1987:129). The message trumpeted by these features of pre-war Liberian society was overwhelming pride on the one hand and abasing humiliation on the other.

However suggestive these features are, an application of Scheff’s ideas to the Liberian context has to remain speculative in the current state of evidence. Nevertheless, the hypothesis, were it confirmed, would explain much. The obvious way to recruit faction fighters in the circumstances I have outlined is to promise not only the chance to loot but also the chance to wreak vengeance and exert power in a manner as brutal, or more brutal, than that of the previous regime. If this is the attraction of the factions for young fighters, the failure of their superiors to control the abuses of their subordinates and discipline the perpetrators is no surprise. In this perspective the extraordinary level of violence and abuse suffered by the civilian population, though no less appalling, becomes less perplexing.

Summary
I have argued that the Liberian wars have undergone a transition. The First War can be described accurately as inter-ethnic, resulting from the final collapse of a political economy in which ethnic identities had been revitalized as an instrument of rule. But by the Third War, at the latest, factional affiliation, not ethnic origin, became the most important form of identity for those involved in the Liberian wars. Inter-ethnic slaughter has given way to warlordism. Warlords, in Liberia as they were in China are beholden to no one. They have no programme of political, social or economic change. They are autonomous armed bodies concerned to pursue their own, private, economic interests. In Liberia, as in China, warlords are locked into a precipitously short time horizon by the military competition between them and the consequent instability of their grasp on territory; the result is an extreme level of economic predation. Liberian warlordism is marked by its own specificities. Predation at the highest level has targeted natural resources saleable on the world market, paralleling the pre-war political economy. Liberian warlordism has been exacerbated by the very loose control heads of warring factions have chosen to, or have been forced to, exercise over their fighters. Extreme predation has gone hand in hand with gross abuses of human rights at the hands of these fighters. Partly, this can be understood as a response to the constraints on effective command and control posed by poor communications between heads of factions and their dispersed troops. But it may be a response to the willingness of Liberians exploited and humiliated by pre-war regimes and turned angry and vengeful to join a faction in return for a licence to rob, to humiliate, to abuse and exact vengeance on whomsoever they please.

Quentin Outram is at the Leeds University Business School, Leeds University, UK.
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Endnotes
1. The use of children as fighters is well documented (e.g. Human Rights Watch, 1994). The existence of women fighters is documented by the refugee interviews recorded in Bennett et al. (1995:33, 38-9, 43-4, 48).

2. Most of the evidence on this point pertains to the NPFL (Africa Watch, 1991:128; Africa Watch, 1993:288) but Ellis (1995: 185) asserts it to be true generally and the UN Secretary-General has also not found it necessary to distinguish between the factions on this point (UNSG, 1995e: para. 41; 1995f: para. 16). In this context, as in others, I do not include ECOMOG as a faction.

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Democracy of Peace

The coup d'état of 25 May 1997 came as a surprise to most observers of the political scene in Sierra Leone. For many it was a major blow struck at the heart of a nascent democracy, one which the international community should not tolerate. The coup has been condemned by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth and the United Nations. Within Sierra Leone, the junta has encountered opposition from the ECOMOG forces and those of the ethnic Kamajors (of whom more later), and passive resistance from the public as school, shops and offices remained closed two months after the coup. Thousands of Sierra Leoneans have fled to neighbouring countries.

A cursory look at recent developments in the transition to civilian rule points to certain dangerous pitfalls in the path to sustained democracy. The drive for a return to civilian rule orchestrated by the donor community was based on a weak premise, that the democratic will of the people as expressed in elections would prevail and force the rebel fighters of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to sue for peace. In this Briefing I want to draw attention to some of these pitfalls, and the underlying reason for the recent blow at democracy.

Military intervention in Sierra Leonean politics is nothing new. The first occurred in 1967, following an inconclusive election in which the opposition All Peoples' Congress (APC) claimed victory over the governing Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP). The leader of the Congress was asked to form a new government by the Governor-General, but before he could do so he was swiftly arrested and removed from power by the then Force Commander, Brigadier David Lansana. Lansana argued that in such an inconclusive election, it was wrong for the Governor-General to ask the leader of the opposition to form a new government before convening Parliament to test the state of the parties. Within a couple of days, Lansana was removed by a group of middle ranking officers who appointed Major Andrew Juxon-Smith to lead the National Reformation Council. He ruled for a year until he was overthrown by a group of non-commissioned officers who then invited the ousted leader of the opposition, Siaka Stevens, to take over the reigns of government. This NCO-led coup marked the first intervention in Sierra Leonean politics of what Kandeh has called the militariat (Kandeh, 1996), as well as the beginnings of political thuggery and the politics of decline in Sierra Leone (Zack-Williams, 1985).

Stevens survived several attempted coups between 1968 and 1984 when he handed power over to his Force Commander Major-General Saidu Momoh. Part of Stevens 'state hegemonic project' involved the creation of a quasi-personal army, the dreaded Cuban-trained, Internal Security Unit (ISU), whose nomenclature was changed as a public relations exercise after its notorious role in putting down student demonstrations in 1977, to the
Special Security Division (SSD), and was aptly nicknamed locally as 'Siaka Stevens' Dogs'. Stevens' tenure in office was marked by the institutionalisation of what Reno has called the 'Shadow State', the rule through a whole network of informal markets (Reno, 1995). One major effect of this strategy of political legitimisation (with implication for the present crisis) is that it leads to social marginalisation (those who are excluded from clientelistic relationship), thus posing major challenges to the state. Stevens' long tenure as leader was marked by economic decline, growing political authoritarianism and the disenfranchisement of the mass of the Sierra Leonean people. It was not long before the state became synonymous with the Party: senior civil servants, and members of the armed forces were all expected to be card-carrying members of the Congress. The head of the army and police were members of the Government; and the Congress used its radical and populist origin to incorporate a section of the trades union leadership into its ruling caucus. More significantly, economic decline, the hallmark of the Stevens' era, posed a major threat to the shadow state strategy, as sources of rent-seeking became increasingly limited. In particular, Stevens and his successor were unable to win the support of the people in the southeast of the country: this area remained strong opposition territory even in the face of violence and political thuggery, such as the Taninahun Massacre (Zack-Williams, 1991). This area served as a launching pad for rebel forces of the RUF who sought to overthrow Stevens' successor.

**Fighting in Sierra Leone**

Momoh, Stevens successor, was ceremoniously imposed upon the nation. He did not have a political base within the Congress, and the nature of his appointment set him up against those who saw themselves as Stevens' natural successors. Momoh resorted to ethnic corporatism, as he continued to rule with the help of the Ekutay, an association of ethnic elite based around Momoh's home town of Binkolo in the Bombali District (Zack-Williams, 1991). Indeed, he urged the people of Sierra Leone to organise themselves into ethnic cabals in order to ensure that 'no group was left out'. However, the economy continued its downward thrust as government expenditure outstripped export earnings. Momoh soon reached an accord with the IFIs, and unlike his predecessor he tried to go the whole hog by implementing the full conditionalities of SAP. As the effect of SAP started taking its toll, the Government defaulted with its payments to the IFIs, a situation which led the latter to unanimously abrogate the agreement. In his attempt to win favour with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, Momoh in 1990 embarked on a 'shadow adjustment programme', that is, adjustment without the loans to mitigate the effects of SAP. One major effect of SAP was to further reduce the legitimacy of the state, as more and more citizens turned to the informal economy for sustenance. In the midst of stagflation generated by the crisis and the corrective measures to deal with it, in 1991, war in neighbouring Liberia spilled over into Sierra Leone, which soon engulfed the country in a bloody and costly civil war resulting in the death of thousands, as well as displacing almost 50% of the population. It also created major security problems for the Government, culminating in the overthrow of the Momoh administration in April, 1992 by a group of junior officers (the militarit) led by Captain Valentine Strasser. They formed the National Provisional Revolutionary Council (NPRC), and the populist rhetoric and administrative structures were modelled on that of the Provisional Defence Council of Ghana.

Strasser condemned the opulence and corruption of the Momoh administration and its inability to prosecute the war successfully. He promised to bring peace to the nation, though his period as leader
saw growing rebel incursion all over the country. After a period of pariah-state status, following the execution of 28 people including a pregnant woman in December 1992, Strasser reached an accord with the IFIs, and in exchange for loans, he implemented the programmes negotiated by his predecessor with the IMF. This gave the green light to other donors as this was quickly followed by loans and grants from the EU for infrastructural development, the ILO and the African Development Bank. The stabilisation programme produced widespread unemployment, as over 30,000 workers were made redundant, though the figure was ameliorated by the rapid expansion of the army. On the positive side Strasser was able to reduce the rate of inflation from over 120% when he assumed power in 1992, to under 50% by the end of 1994; as well as maintaining the value of the currency.

Peace & Democracy: The Chicken or the Egg?

The domestic and international pressure for a return to civilian rule was compelling on Strasser. On the war front, the rebels continued to hit targets in the interior of the country, including occupying for a time the rich diamond fields of Kono District, and on one occasion they were reported to be only 45 kilometres from the capital city. By this time it had become clear that the Sierra Leone Army was no match for the guerrilla rebel forces. Initially the military Government sought the help of Ghurkhas, and later a South African-based corporate-linked mercenary organisation, Executive Outcomes (Harding, 1997). The latter whilst being successful in pushing rebel forces, out of the diamond fields, was a major drain on the Sierra Leone exchequer, at a cost of US$1.7m a month (Riley, 1997). The scaling down of fighting as a result of a cease-fire, and demands from the IMF to reduce payment to the organisation, led the civilian Government to re-negotiate its agreement with Executive Outcomes, and their early departure. The departure of Executive Outcomes paved the way for a new fighting force, an adjunct of ‘civil society’, the Kamajors, or Mende traditional hunters.

The Mendes of southeastern Sierra Leone traditionally provide the bulk of support for the SLPP. They account for about 40% of the total population of Sierra Leone. The Kamajors had distinguished themselves in 1994 in a series of encounters around Bo with elements of the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF). In these clashes, the Kamajors were able to demystify some of the fetishism and claims of invincibility made by rebel forces. As a result the influence and confidence of the Kamajors grew, as they swapped ‘home-made rifles, machetes, and other crude weapons … for more sophisticated weaponry’ (Riley, 1977:288). The SLPP Government of President Kabba became increasing dependent on the Kamajors for security. In early March, the Government ordered the army and the Kamajors to flush out rebels who had attacked civilians. The major link between the Government and the Kamajors is Deputy Minister of Defence Samuel Hinga Norman, who is also leader of the Kamajors. Within a short period of time, the stature of the Kamajors rose from ‘ethnic hunters’ to quasi-national army. This growing confidence in dealing with rebels impelled the Kamajors to confront other civic associations, particularly in the North. Some of these clashes were also with Government soldiers who had turned rebels to loot and to work the diamond deposits. These aptly named Sobels (soldier/rebels) created greater security problems than the rebels. It was common knowledge that many of these had links not only with rebel commanders, but also with junior members of the army, the militariat. Thus by routing the Sobels, the Kamajors were vicariously confronting the militariat, thus sewing the seeds for future discord. This newfound confidence among the Kamajors led to serious tension and skirmishes
with the national army in Bo, Kenema, Matotoka and Zimmi. The Kamajors, like the SSD, were essentially an ethnic based fighting force recruited on the grounds of ethnic chauvinism; SSD recruited mainly from Northern ethnic groups, especially the Limbas. Not only did the army see these two fighting forces as usurping of army roles, but they argued that they were being used to perform functions which should only be undertaken by the national army. During the rule of Stevens there were a number of clashes between the SSD and the army, including a potentially bloody confrontation in the National Stadium in 1976. Stevens grip on both forces helped to put the lid on SSD-Army conflicts, to the point that these tensions and jealousies never became a major security issue. As we have seen, at this time the senior officers in the army and the SSD had been incorporated into the ruling power structure of Congress. Not surprisingly, the threat of military intervention came not from the senior officers, but from the militariat, who felt a sense of exclusion. We can argue that this mode of military intervention is the result of the process of political legitimation in Sierra Leone, a process whereby the formal state apparatus has to be bypassed.

By early 1994, the ‘shine had rubbed’ off ‘Strasser the redeemer’ (Zack-Williams & Riley, 1993): there was the scandal of members of the junta being caught in diamond smuggling; Sierra Leoneans were getting tired of the youthful antics of the young officers and their inability to end the war and many saw the transition to civilian rule as a prerequisite for ending the war. The post-1994 period was marked by a much contested debate between, on the one hand, those like the military who argued that it was important for peace to be negotiated before presidential and parliamentary elections. They argued that free and fair elections would not be possible under war conditions. This position was criticised by those who argued that the military was prevaricating on the issue of returning the country to democratic rule. Critics of the military successfully felt that Strasser wanted to do a Jerry Rawlings by making the transition from a military to a civilian president. In January 1996, two months before the planned Presidential and Parliamentary elections, schism emerged within the NPRC which led to Strasser’s removal by his deputy, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. This heightened public concerns about the intention of the junta.

On the other hand, there were those, led by civic organisations such as Women For a Morally Engaged Nation (WOMEN), and donors who argued that a speedy return to democratic pluralism was a sine qua non for peace in the country. In what follows, I want to argue that the May 25 coup should be seen as the consequence of the unfinished business of the transition to democracy, and a vindication of those who argued that peace is a prerequisite for a viable democracy, a lesson which Liberians seemed to have learnt. As the Chief negotiator of the rebel RUF, Mohammed Barrie noted: 'It is up to them (the NPRC leadership) to decide what they want. Whether they want peace or elections'. To take this position, is to condone neither, military interventions nor, justify the wanton violence unleashed upon the people of Sierra Leone by the militariat and their lumpen allies, the RUF and convicts who were set free them. As the editorial to the weekly West Africa, argued:

There is a grave danger, in fact, that stampeding military regimes like those in Nigeria and Sierra Leone into creating a quick-fix transition could lead to the installation of a successor regime which is even more self-protective than the present authorities ... In Sierra Leone Western powers who wish to see a new democratic order in such places should endeavour to take effective action to halt conflict and then exchange such assist-
ance for the power to influence the transition to a new and less anarchic order (27 March - 2 April 1997:454-455).

With the civil war still raging, the transition to democratic rule reached its climax with the elections of March 1997. This was won by the oldest political party in the country, the Sierra Leone Peoples’ Party (SLPP), led by Ahmed Tejan Kabba; who eventually polled 59.5% after the run off vote of the two leading candidates. The veteran politician and leader of the United National Peoples Party (UNPP) John Karefa-Smart was runner-up with 40.5%. In Parliament, the SLPP with 27 seats did not have an outright majority, though its leader could count on the support of the 12 Paramount Chiefs. The Government was faced with three major problems: first, to bring the war to an end and to begin the task of national reconciliation; second, to embark on policies of nation reconstruction, including relocation of the population that had been displaced by war; and finally, to secure discipline within the armed forces. The President in his inaugural speech referred to his task as the three ‘Rs’: reconstruction; reconciliation and rehabilitation.

To achieve these goals, Kabba formed a National Coalition Government to include the major parties in Parliament, as well as a rapprochement with the rebel leader Foday Sankoh. The reaction of the rebel leader initially was to emphasise the point that he was willing to meet with Kabba, not as President of Sierra Leone, but as leader of the SLPP. Sankoh called for power sharing with the new Government: ‘a peoples’ budget’ to include free and compulsory education, affordable housing, clean water, and sewage system in every village. Finally, he demanded the withdrawal of all foreign troops including those of ECOMOG and more significant, the forces of Executive Outcomes from Sierra Leone and the absorption of some of his fighters into the national army. The Government rejected Sankoh’s demands, in particular the demand for power sharing. Instead, the Government set up the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission on the model of the Truth Commission of South Africa, to investigate and identify the causes of conflicts and divisions in society, including causes of injustices against individuals and communities by the government. The Government also emphasised its determination to crack down on corrupt practices among public servants, with the arrest of a number of civil servants following the disappearance of 500 Sierra Leonean passports, including diplomatic passports.

The Government’s immediate concern was for peace with the RUF, as well as finding funds (estimated at $40m) to facilitate the smooth demobilising and rehabilitation into civilian life of soldiers and ex-RUF fighters. The search for peace was now being conducted on two fronts: by the OAU, and the Commonwealth, though the rapprochement with the RUF continued as both sides agreed on a cease-fire, and by the reciprocal release of prisoners. The economy continued to perform poorly, as production remained stagnant, due to the closure of the rutile and bauxite mines in Sherbro and Moyamba respectively, and the security situation in most of the country.

In September 1996, the IMF called for a drastic cut in payment to Executive Outcomes before the country could receive $200 million in foreign funding for post-war reconstruction. The result was a new agreement with Executive Outcomes, and a much reduced fees for their services. In the same month there was an attempted coup, and the Government retired 26 officers and 155 non-commissioned officers from the army. In December, just a month after the conclusion of a peace agreement with Foday Sankoh and the RUF, 18 people were arrested after the revelation of a coup attempt. As part of the cut in public expenditure demanded
by the IFIs, in January 1997 the Government decided to drastically cut the subsidised rice supplies to the army, police, and prison services. In January 1996 rice importation from South Asia alone cost the country some $30 million, and with this being sold in the open market for Le 23,000 a bag, the price of Le 1,000 to military personnel shows the huge subsidy provided towards this group. Heavily subsidised rice, has always been the hallmark of military life since the days of Siaka Stevens. In the same month that these subsidies were cut, there was an attempted coup, and five officers were arrested including Captain Paul Thomas, one of the leaders of the May 25 coup.

The growing indiscipline within the ranks of the army made the Government more dependent on the Kamajors, their ethnic praetorian guards. This was particularly the case after the departure of Executive Outcomes an the failure of the UN to send peace keeping troops to supervise the Peace Agreement. This growing dependence of the Government on the Kamajors for security, worsened the army-Kamajor relations, and this was reflected in the growing number of clashes between the two forces. The Kamajors saw the army as being ineffective, corrupt and unpatriotic, as reflected in the rise of Sobels and their inability to make any impact on the RUF. The army was accused of trying to undermine the first Southern dominated Government in thirty years, and was seen as an offshoot of both the discredited APC and the NPRC. In short, the army was seen as a threat to Sierra Leone’s new democracy.

In the eyes of the army, the Kamajors were a major threat to national unity and a tool in the sectional divide. The militariat in particular (as expressed in Corporal Gborie and Major Johnny Koroma’s maiden radio broadcasts) saw the Kamajors as seeking to challenge the army’s monopoly of the means of violence: their role ‘as custodians of state security and defenders of the constitu-

Some Other Contributory Factors

The unresolved civil war, the Kamajor-Army conflicts, the loss of privileges by the army after March 1996 were all major factors behind the insurgency of May 25. As writers such First have noted the military in the last instance would intervene in politics largely for military reasons (First, 1972). Charges of corruption against the ousted regime is a rationalisation central to most dawn broadcasts following a military take over. In the end the military tends to move to remove a civilian government when its perceived corporate interests are threatened. In the case of Sierra Leone, because of the clientelistic mode of accumulation and political legitimation through the shadow state, junior officers of the armed forces often develop a sense of political and economic marginalisation, a perception which often leads them to exaggerate their support among the public. Bad policies on the part of the ousted regime help to create this illusion of ‘the need for military intervention’. In the case of the Kabba regime in Sierra Leone, there were quite a few incompetent policies, some of which have already been discussed. The first relate to lax internal security. On assuming power, Kabba retired a number of the leading functionaries of the NPRC from the army, including Valentine Strasser Julius Maada Bio, who it was believed did not favour elections before
peace. These ex-officers were allowed to travel in and out of the country as they pleased (West Africa, 2-8 June 1997), without any restrictions on their movements. Similarly, he failed to bring officers accused of plotting to overthrow the government to justice. This helped to give the image of an indecisive and weak leader. Furthermore, to the astonishment of most Sierra Leoneans, he allowed into the country the disgraced ex-President Momoh. The generous terms and conditions offered to Momoh outraged many Sierra Leoneans: a very generous pension of Le 900,000, a house, with servants, car with driver and bodyguard. Momoh's triumphalist manner and speeches helped to whip up anti-Government sentiment. He claimed that he was not allowed to face the people in a general election before he was ousted by the army, and declared his intention to be active in politics.

Second, many Sierra Leoneans were disappointed at Kabba's cabinet and style of Government, with its predominance of discredited individuals from the SLPP and the Congress. Whilst his honesty and sincerity was not questioned, many felt that he 'only paid lip-service to the welfare of the people; phlegmatic and carefree to the security and financial irregularities in Government' (Ibid, 868). Many commentators felt that 'the pluralist politics of democratic exchange had deteriorated to an acrimonious and divisive process of exchanges and division in Parliament' (West Africa, 14-20 July, 1997: 1118). This was characterised by the 'character assassination by Government stalwarts of prominent and influential figures in opposition' (Ibid, 1118) The caustic nature of pluralist politics led to the suspension of John Karefa-Smart, leader of the opposition from Parliament by the Speaker of the House. Kabba is blamed by opposition parties for not doing enough to prevent this suspension.

**Conclusion**

Kabba's tenure as President was not one of total failure: he was able to reduce inflation from 40% to 6%; Gross Domestic Product grew from -10% at the beginning of 1996 to 5.6% in December. Kabba was able to attract western financial support for his five year socio-economic development programme costing $760 million. By the end of March 1997 donors had pledged $640 million or 84% of the fund.

Nonetheless, he inherited a political and military situation that was daunting, and as we have seen some of his own actions did not help. First, he did not deal with corrupt officials promptly to convince the public that his was a new order regime. Second, he failed to appreciate the danger in using an organ of civil society, namely the Kamajors 'as the protectors of the nation's sovereignty against the incursions of dissidents' (Barrett, 1997:1134). The rebel coalition of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (as the junta preferred to call itself) and their allies the RUF, having survived the initial onslaught of Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces are now showing a greater determination to hold on to power, not withstanding the spirit of non-cooperation from the Sierra Leone population. Indeed, the junta is aware from earlier skirmishes with ECOMOG that the greater the perceived threat from 'foreign forces', the greater the support it might gain from an otherwise non-supportive population. Given the recent decision by the junta not to hand over power to the civilian administration until the year 2001, it seems that negotiation is not a viable option. The illegal and reactionary regime can only be removed by Nigerian-led ECOMOG, with the fine irony, that General Abacha is prepared to deliver democracy to Sierra Leone, but will not concede the same to Nigerians. A victory for the Kamajors, whose recruitment is based on 'ethnic chauvinism' would raise more problems of governance in Sierra Leone than its victory would solve.
A B Zack-Williams is Reader in Sociology at the University of Central Lancashire.

Bibliography


Social Science Research on AIDS in Africa: Questions of Content, Methodology and Ethics (Recherches dans les Sciences Humaines sur le SIDA en Afrique: Problèmes de Contenu, de Méthodologie et de Déontologie)

Carolyn Baylies & Janet Bujra

Un congrès international sur les sciences humaines et le SIDA en Afrique, qui a eu lieu à Sali Portudal au Sénégal en novembre 1996, a servi de tribune importante, réunissant des chercheurs et des militants dans le domaine du SIDA des mondes anglophone et francophone. Organisée conjointement par le Codesria (Institut pour le développement des recherches en sciences humaines en Afrique), le CNLS (Comité Nationale pour la Prévention du SIDA au Sénégal) et l’Ostrom (l’Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique sur le Développement et la Coopération), cette réunion a traité d’un éventail étendu de sujets faisant appel aux expériences vécues dans différents pays. Depuis le milieu des années quatre-vingts, quand on a admis, pour la première fois, la gravité de l’épidémie du SIDA, un certain nombre de conférences, tant internationales que régionales, ont eu lieu afin de comparer les résultats des recherches et de discuter des dispositifs de prévention et de soins. Avec le temps, la dominance initiale exercée par la médecine et le discours médical dans le domaine du VIH/SIDA a diminué. Le défi que nous présente le VIH/SIDA a de multiples facettes et doit être abordé d’une manière pluridisciplinaire. Une démarche exclusivement médicale ne peut le traiter qu’imparfaitement. Les possibilités de traitement dépendent des ressources existantes et de la richesse de la société aussi bien que de la richesse de l’individu. La prévention doit tenir compte du niveau de connaissance et du comportement social, ce qui est rendu plus complexe par les relations entre les sexes et la pauvreté. Bien que l’on admette, de plus en plus, que l’épidémie est ancrée dans le tissu social des populations atteintes et qu’elle a des conséquences sociales et politiques aussi bien que médicales, néanmoins, il existe toujours un besoin de faire valoir l’importance de la recherche dans les sciences humaines sur la propagation, les effets et la prévention contre le VIH/SIDA. La contribution du congrès de Sali Portudal, à cet égard, s’est montrée exemplaire.
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Social Science Research on AIDS in Africa: Questions of Content, Methodology and Ethics (Recherches dans les Sciences Humaines sur le SIDA en Afrique: Problèmes de Contenu, de Méthodologie et de Déontologie)

Carolyn Baylies & Janet Bujra

Un congrès international sur les sciences humaines et le SIDA en Afrique, qui a eu lieu à Sali Portudal au Sénégal en novembre 1996, a servi de tribune importante, réunissant des chercheurs et des militants dans le domaine du SIDA des mondes anglophone et francophone. Organisée conjointement par le Codesria (Institut pour le développement des recherches en sciences humaines en Afrique), le CNLS (Comité Nationale pour la Prévention du SIDA au Sénégal) et l'Ostrom (l'Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique sur le Développement et la Coopération), cette réunion a traité d'un éventail étendu de sujets faisant appel aux expériences vécues dans différents pays. Depuis le milieu des années quatre-vingts, quand on a admis, pour la première fois, la gravité de l'épidémie du SIDA, un certain nombre de conférences, tant internationales que régionales, ont eu lieu afin de comparer les résultats des recherches et de discuter des dispositifs de prévention et de soins. Avec le temps, la dominance initiale exercée par la médecine et le discours médical dans le domaine du VIH/SIDA a diminué. Le défi que nous présente le VIH/SIDA a de multiples facettes et doit être abordé d'une manière pluridisciplinaire. Une démarche exclusivement médicale ne peut le traiter qu'imparfaitement. Les possibilités de traitement dépendent des ressources existantes et de la richesse de la société aussi bien que de la richesse de l'individu. La prévention doit tenir compte du niveau de connaissance et du comportement social, ce qui est rendu plus complexe par les relations entre les sexes et la pauvreté. Bien que l'on admette, de plus en plus, que l'épidémie est ancrée dans le tissu social des populations atteintes et qu'elle a des conséquences sociales et politiques aussi bien que médicales, néanmoins, il existe toujours un besoin de faire valoir l'importance de la recherche dans les sciences humaines sur la propagation, les effets et la prévention contre le VIH/SIDA. La contribution du congrès de Sali Portudal, à cet égard, s'est montrée exemplaire.
An international symposium on the ‘Social Sciences and AIDS in Africa’, held in Sali Portudal, Senegal, in November 1996, served as an important forum for bringing together English and French speaking researchers and AIDS activists. Jointly organised by Codesria (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), CNLS (the National Committee for the Prevention of AIDS in Senegal) and Ostrom (The French Institute of Scientific Research for Development and Cooperation), it covered a wide range of topics, with reference to a broad spectrum of individual country experience.

Since the mid-1980s, when the severity of the AIDS epidemic was first acknowledged, there have been a number of international as well as regional conferences devoted to the exchange of research findings and discussion of prevention and care initiatives. An initial dominance by medicine and medical discourse in relation to HIV/AIDS has gradually lessened over time. HIV/AIDS presents challenges as a multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral problem, which can be dealt with only imperfectly through an exclusively medical approach. Treatment possibilities are fundamentally affected by existing resources and societal as well as individual wealth. Prevention must take account of knowledge and social behaviour, complicated by gender relations and poverty. While there has been increasing appreciation that the epidemic is embedded in the social fabric of affected populations and that its ramifications are as much economic and political as medical, the need for asserting the importance of social science research into the spread, impact and means of protection of HIV/AIDS remains a pressing one. The Sali Portudal symposium made an effective contribution in this regard.

HIV/AIDS is a health and social problem of international dimensions and a phenomenon peculiarly of our age. Its spread to all parts of the world epitomises processes of globalisation and the impact of modern technology, particularly as regards contemporary forms of transportation and communication. Yet at the same time its impact is particularly severe in some of the poorest societies of the world, especially those on the African continent. Close to two-thirds of those currently living with HIV/AIDS are estimated to be in sub-Saharan Africa. Overall prevalence in this region, estimated at 5.6%, is far higher than elsewhere, contrasting with 1.7% in the Caribbean, .6% in South and South East Asia and .3% in North America, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand (http://gpawww.who.ch; 16 July 97). Given a predominant pattern of heterosexual transmission in sub-Saharan Africa, the number of infected men and women is broadly equivalent; recently, however, women have accounted for over half of all new infections, reflecting greater physiological and social vulnerability. Mother to child transmission has resulted in a large number of paediatric cases of HIV infection. Increasingly, communities are also having to cope with a growing number of AIDS orphans who, even when absorbed within extended family networks, often suffer deprivation and disadvantage, with the psychological damage which they incur barely acknowledged and even less frequently addressed.

The spread of HIV is associated with high levels of geographical mobility (and – for some – multiple sexual partners), and its incidence may be particularly high among migrants, urban dwellers and those with higher levels of education and income. These may be among the most highly skilled and highly productive members of society, in the prime of their lives. But AIDS is also a disease of poverty, with vulnerability increased by virtue of poor nutrition and inadequate shelter. The problems of coping with AIDS are also exacerbated by national poverty and the limited and inadequate social services
and overstretched and under-resourced health facilities which characterise low income and indebted countries. Care in the home or the community is increasingly advocated, in part because of the limited ability – as well as restricted capacity, given resource constraints – of health institutions to offer more than palliative care. But this places increasing burdens on some of those least able to cope.

Most African nations where HIV/AIDS has had serious impact have national AIDS offices which coordinate efforts, initiate new programmes, and promote care and prevention. Most have been assisted by the Global Programme on AIDS (now reorganised under UNAIDS) and thus operate under and promote a similar set of guidelines. A number of NGOs in the AIDS field – such as the Society for Women and AIDS – have attempted to share experience across national boundaries. Even so, the problem of limited resources means that this transnational sharing of knowledge and experience is less common than many would desire and than the gravity of the situation would dictate. This was evident in our own research on gender aspects of the AIDS epidemic (ESRC R00235221), carried out with colleagues in Zambia and Tanzania. A workshop held in Dar es Salaam in August 1996, at the end of the research period, brought home the realisation of how little activists in the AIDS field in Tanzania knew of what their counterparts in Zambia were doing. A concern to bridge this relative gap in cross national communication had been a defining feature of our own work. A similar concern, although on a grander scale, characterised the planning of the International Symposium on the Social Sciences and AIDS in Africa. If resource difficulties impede the sharing of knowledge and experience between Zambia and Tanzania, these are all the more apparent as between English and French speaking African nations. Hence the Sali Portugal Symposium was an event of some importance.

Given organisational arrangements for the symposium, most papers were in French and related to Francophone Africa. However, a contingent from Anglophone Africa as well as English speaking researchers from the North were also present. The symposium was organised around a number of key themes: 1) social, political and cultural constructs relating to AIDS, 2) models and projections relating to the spread of AIDS, 3) issues of prevention in relationship to social practices, living conditions and vulnerable groups, 4) differing modes of assistance: actors and institutions, and 5) AIDS, medicine and the social sciences: scientific justification and ethical issues. In addition round table discussions were conducted on AIDS in distressed situations; assistance and associations of HIV infected people and institutional and non-institutional actors in national HIV control programmes. Stretching over five days, including both plenary sessions and additional workshops, opportunity was afforded for airing a wide range of issues.

This account can touch only briefly on some of the issues raised in the symposium. It will highlight several of the more prominent and recurrent themes, including 1) the need for social science research into AIDS to reconsider and re-evaluate its methodologies and its role in relation to intervention, 2) the variety of discourses through which AIDS is articulated and understood and 3) ethical questions relating to confidentiality and disclosure and following from international disparities in income and access to resources.

Need for More and Better Social Science Research on HIV/AIDS

An emphasis both on the need for more social science research in the field of AIDS in the African context and for critical evaluation of that research carried
out to date, with a view to strengthening its impact and usefulness, underlay and informed the proceedings of the conference. A paper in an early plenary session (Brunet-Jailly) noted the impact of reports by the World Bank and the WHO on thinking about medical interventions in the broad area of public health, which are typically couched in an analysis of relative costs and benefits. While acknowledging the increasing sophistication of economic models and the need to be imaginative in their application to African settings, caution was also expressed about the limits of their utility. The question crying out for further analysis, it was suggested, concerns not so much further refinement of these models, but, rather, identification of the sorts of interventions which can effect behavioural change. Even in terms of questions of economic costs and 'efficiency', knowledge is still lacking as regards whether it is more efficient, for example, to focus on some groups in the population more than others.

Suggesting a broad framework for social science research on AIDS in the African context, another paper (Painter) focused on a range of needs: 1) getting the right message to the right people in the right situations (that is, ensuring sensitivity to the social relations which affect vulnerability and possibilities for change and to the discourses which are meaningful to particular groups), 2) ensuring a much stronger link between research and action, with particular attention to the need for transnational approaches, given the movement of people across borders, 3) working more effectively with community based organisations and 4) looking at the socio-economic context within which high risk behaviour occurs and consequent implications for effective intervention. Our own research, having aspired to address some of these, has convinced us of the particular importance of linking research to action through methodologies which engage those at community level and are receptive to the specificities of particular communities (Baylies and Bujra).

The range of papers presented at the symposium suggested that policy, action and intervention are best grounded in research and that social science research is crucial and can play a significant part in transforming the suffering of those with HIV/AIDS. For Dedy, whose paper was on the Ivory Coast, the researcher can be an advocate. For Seidel, writing on research conducted in South Africa, the emphasis was on creating a space for dialogue ‘in which the researcher does not disappear’.

Attention needs to be given not just to the position of the researcher and the way research may inform policy by bringing forward voices otherwise silent or weak, but also to the methodology employed. A range of methods were drawn on in the research reported on at the symposium, from conventional survey methodology and archival research through life history work, the interviewing of key informants and focus groups to an innovative use of story telling. What was sometimes missing, however, was critical reflection on the relationship between the kind of methods used and the role of the data collected in addressing the issue of AIDS, most specifically as regards what needs to be done. For example, a survey questionnaire is primarily a device for recording the views and accounts of a set of individuals. But typically it does not make provision for the challenging of those views or juxtaposing them against the accounts of other individuals – except at another time and place, by the researcher. A focus group, by contrast, serves simultaneously as a means of collecting data and of bringing people together, allowing them collectively to learn from or argue with one another. Sometimes it can constitute a form of collective counselling or awareness raising. The challenging and the calling to account is done by people themselves. No methodology is above criticism, and a
sustained process of reflection is needed to improve and refine research methodology. But what needs to be recognised is that the choice of research methods is relevant to addressing the practical issues presented by AIDS as well as to data collection.

Discourses on AIDS

A number of papers focused on the variety of discourses through which HIV/AIDS is understood, whether by practitioners, those infected or the general public. Among these discourses are religious explanations for the suffering caused by AIDS, including explanations emanating from orthodox Christianity, from evangelistic sectors, from Islam or from indigenous belief systems: witchcraft, voodoo, traditional medicine, etc. In some cases (Gruenais and Tonda), scepticism was expressed about the contribution which actors who mobilise these belief systems can make to the struggle against AIDS, although the frequency with which religious beliefs are drawn into dealing with AIDS was also acknowledged, given that it defies simple bio-medical solutions. On the other hand, two papers dealing with the absence or collapse of family or community support for women with AIDS, respectively in the Ivory Coast and Rwanda (Hassoun and Muhongayire), pointed to the positive role which churches can play as a refuge where disclosure meets with compassion and spiritual comfort, allowing women to come to terms with their illness and meet others similarly afflicted.

Another way of looking at this same kind of material was illustrated by papers on the Ivory Coast (Vidal) and Saint Martin in the Caribbean (Benoit), where beliefs and practices were perceived to offer choices to individuals caught up in the tragic events of AIDS infection. Individuals may negotiate the experience through creatively drawing on a repertoire of possible diagnoses and courses of action in order to arrive at a perception which serves their own interests, allows them to live with their knowledge, to lay blame rather than accept blame and to avoid stigma. Appropriating the diagnosis of witchcraft is one example of such a strategy, and in this sense it has to be seen in a more positive light than AIDS work usually allots to it.

Compared to the discourse of social science, what is characteristic of all these knowledge claims is the 'moral diagnosis' of AIDS, which is variously embodied in religious precepts, in the language of traditionalism, or in social constructions of those with AIDS as the 'other'. In every case, AIDS is seen as deserved punishment for transgression of one kind or another. The tragedy is that in order to avoid this moral stigma, many will deny themselves the possibility of treatment, care, human comfort or community support. Where medical personnel draw on this same repertoire of moral assumptions, they may transmit or reinforce moral messages in the course of delivering test results – or in refraining from confirming diagnosis.

Questions of Ethics & Social Research

Moving from public opinion or religious discourse to medical practice and public policy raises questions of human rights and ethical considerations. The organisers of the symposium created space for consideration of ethical issues, but participants pressed for its expansion and, more informally, discussion turned repeatedly in this direction, with reference to the Dakar Declaration, produced in 1994 by the African Network on Ethics, Law and HIV, and consideration of the need for a universal ethics and global criteria of social justice in respect of AIDS.

One central question concerned confidentiality/disclosure. Protocols in many countries specify the principle of confidentiality as a means of respecting the
rights of the individual. Yet the possibility of transmission to trusting partners, complicated by asymmetries of power inherent in gender relations, and the psychological cost of disclosure make for pronounced ethical dilemmas in the case of AIDS. Will respect for confidentiality mean that ‘innocents’ are put at risk? Does disclosure mean that some will be ostracized, disowned and discarded? Should confidentiality always be seen in terms of the individual, or might this usage involve the imposition of ‘western’ notions on cultures based on rather different ethical assumptions. The notion of shared confidentiality was introduced into the discussion, but accompanied by the cautionary statement that its advocacy should not imply that it is the doctor who has the right to decide when and with whom confidentiality should be shared, but, rather, the infected individual. Moreover, it was emphasised that for shared confidentiality to have a chance of ‘success’ there must also be support from carers and counsellors through an enabling and non-judgmental environment.

It was evident from discussion of reported research and ongoing programmes of medical care, however, that doctors do involve themselves in decisions about disclosure. This was illustrated by a paper (Mselatti) describing a project in which women attending ante natal clinics were offered HIV tests, with a view to providing a medical regime (AZT) capable of reducing the probability of transmission of the virus from mother to child where women were found to be positive. Among ethical questions emerging here was to whom should be routine disclosure, should tests be positive. In this case the decision taken was that there should be no disclosure by doctors to a woman’s husband or male partner. An apparent judgment that the risk to the welfare of women (and to their unborn and living children) following from such disclosure should have primacy over the risk of transmission to partners was based on the view that the context of disclosure is itself gendered and may thus have different ramifications for women than for men. Indeed in this project screening was offered free of charge, because it was felt that a fee might entail a woman having to ask her husband for cash, at the very outset jeopardising confidentiality. Reference was made by another panel member (Soyinka) to the findings of a study on the feasibility of partner identification, which indicated that although a high proportion of males wanted to know whether their spouse was positive, a similar proportion did not wish their spouse to know if they were infected. He commented that in his own experience as a medical doctor in Nigeria he had not come across a single male who had agreed to tell his spouse of his positive status – even after counselling. Further ethical issues follow not so much from differential power relations between sexual partners as from differential availability of care and treatment resources in different parts of the world. Drug treatments for those with HIV infection and AIDS are undergoing constant refinement and in the most recent phase of medical research experimentation with a cocktail of drugs has excited considerable, if still cautious, optimism.

A watershed of sorts was marked by the announcement at the 11th International Conference on AIDS, in Vancouver, in the summer of 1996, of research results with a combination of three drugs, sometimes referred to as triple therapy which appeared to promise much greater longevity of those who are infected, alleviating symptoms by reducing the presence of the virus within the body, so that in some cases it is scarcely detectable. Such treatments have the capacity to transform AIDS from an automatic death sentence to something closer akin to a chronic illness. If not constituting a cure, they offer hope and more years of relative health to those infected. In some quarters this has led to a transformation in the way
AIDS is understood and experienced, leading some within the gay community of the north to speak of the end of ‘plague’ and of a ‘seige mentality’ (Sullivan, 1997). But, replicating differentials in opportunity and quality of life along other dimensions, access to new treatments is highly inequitable across nations and among groups within nations. The point was raised early on during the symposium in a paper which detailed the estimated costs for medical treatment in developing countries associated with different conditions, such as TB, polio or HIV/AIDS. The estimated cost per individual per year for triple therapy has been put at $20,000, far, far higher than that of treating tetanus, or polio or river blindness, and considerably more than treatment with AZT alone, which is itself seldom available in developing countries. The analysis of comparative cost of medical treatment for different conditions, combined with evaluation about relative benefits in productive years gained, leads some to conclusions about the impracticality and impossibility of offering costly treatments to the ordinary citizens of poor countries who have the misfortune to suffer infection.

Discourse about HIV/AIDS in the north has ceased to be framed in terms of panic or crisis or even urgency. Increasingly AIDS has come to be treated as a chronic illness and redefined as a conventional medical problem (Berridge, 1996); increasingly its treatment has been routinised. When fears that it would spread to the heterosexual population were quelled and the view entrenched that its impact would remain largely confined to ‘marginal’ groups, government funds and attention gradually diminished. Thus the quality which once characterised AIDS of demonstrating a commonality of interests on a global basis, with potentially devastating impact across both rich and poor countries alike, has receded. Whereas WHO’s initial hesitancy to mount a global campaign around AIDS was based on the mistaken
view that it was essentially a problem for the richer nations, which had the resources to cope with it, the possibility of a concerted campaign is now frustrated by the emergence of treatment regimes which dull the panic about AIDS in the North, because affordable there, while elsewhere the suffering continues to increase. Although still global, the burden of AIDS is increasingly and disproportionately being borne by poor nations and particularly by African populations, and the prospect looms that they may be increasingly left to themselves to deal with the social, economic, psychological, demographic and political dimensions of its impact.

Conclusion

The shift in perception and understanding about the significance of AIDS, with its implications for the weakening of a former sense of common purpose, makes conferences such as that reported on here all the more important. The sharing of knowledge and the expression of mutual support among scholars and activists across boundaries of African nations, as well as between the North and South, is crucial for maintaining the struggle against AIDS. Equally, it is important for social scientists to critically review both their findings and their methodologies to ensure that limited resources are used most effectively. If exposing challenges, not least the need for reflexivity about the research which done, the way it is conducted and the probability and nature of its impact, the symposium also served to legitimize the importance of this work and the need for its continuation and support.

Carolyn Baylies is at the University of Leeds and Janet Bujra is at the University of Bradford, UK.

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AIDS Drugs Cut to ‘Guinea Pigs’

Lucy Johnston and Ruaridh Nicoll

The following Briefing & Comment are reprinted with permission from the *Observer*, 8 June 1997.

Poor people in the third world are having AIDS treatment withdrawn after taking part in trials that have proved the success of a new ‘wonder drugs’. Multinational drug companies – which conduct the trials and allow their patients to return to risk imminent death – have been condemned as ‘unethical’ by the World Health Organisation.

In many countries there are no proper ethical standards and companies are exploiting this loophole (Dr Joseph Saba, WHO’s United Nations Programme).

Yesterday, Dr Saba called for the practice to be stopped. Almost 95% of AIDS victims live in the developing world and are not receiving treatment because of drug costs. The new anti-AIDS cocktails, tested in the third world but mainly used in the West, cost up to £19,000 a year per patient and earn millions for the pharmaceutical industry.

An *Observer* investigation discovered that in South Africa, where 2.4 million people are HIV positive, AIDS patients wanted for trials must first agree that they can be taken off the costly drugs when the tests are completed. Doctors say many patients cannot read or understand the forms they sign. Eddie Graham is one. Last Christmas, his immune system had collapsed and he was put forward for the trials for the drug Neviripine, made by the German firm Boehringer Ingelheim. ‘I was told I would only receive treatment for two years’, Mr Graham said. ‘I signed what I was told to sign because I was so sick’. After five months on a cocktail of Lamivudine, Neviripine and an AZT substitute, Mr Graham’s condition improved. He will receive treatment for another 19 months. Then he will again face the prospect of death.

Charles de Wet, medical director of Boehringer Ingelheim, was not available for comment. But in a report by the development group Panos, he is quoted as saying that ‘providing extended free drugs would be very expensive and impractical’.

In another South African trial, 160 patients were given the drug Sequinivir, made by Hoffman La Roche. After 80 weeks the patients, part of a global group of 3,500 guinea pigs, discovered that the treatment was about to be stopped. An ethical committee at the University of Witwatersrand, which co-operated with the project, protested. Professor Peter Cleaton-Jones, head of the committee said: ‘Companies from abroad come to this country to circumvent ethics.’ The university’s senior physician, Dr David Spencer, said: ‘many patients who were doing very well on combination therapy became very sick when the drugs were withdrawn. In rich countries, combination therapy is usually available through the public health system, but in poor countries there is nothing.’ Roche South Africa’s Dr Mike Brown, said, ‘this wasn’t an issue [at the beginning] as far as I was concerned, [the ethics committee] saw the protocol and they approved it.’ Roche has now agreed to supply drugs while negotiations continue. The revelations have upset South Africa’s medical establishment. ‘People claim these trials benefit the global fight against AIDS, but they
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argued about the Auschwitz experiments,' said professor Cleaton-Jones.

Campaigners in other countries are also angry. 'This is a very big problem here', said Christina Silva of the Grupo Pela Vidda, an HIV/AIDS group in Rio de Janeiro. 'Once the companies finish they simply abandon their patients.' Robin Gorna of the Terrence Higgins Trust said: 'It is unacceptable to treat people in the third world as guinea pigs in this way.' International agreements, such as the Helsinki Declaration of Human Rights, have set guidelines for ethical conduct of medical research, but there is no global mechanism enforcing them.

Doctors conducting the trials also have a dilemma. 'There are many patients who may not survive the next two years without intervention – so at least I can offer them something', said Dr Johnson, who first put Eddie Graham forward for drug trials.' But this was contested by the WHO's Dr Saba, who said, 'There is no point doing clinical trials in a country where the drugs will not be available. Illiterate victims are, in effect signing up for courses of a drug they can never complete, acting as human laboratories until the drugs are deemed safe enough to sell in the West. Such behaviour raises ugly questions about the West's valuation on life. If South Africans are given a drug just to see if it can help Western patients and companies, then they should, at least, receive it for as long as they need it.

The West must get its priorities right about AIDS in the third world. It is easy to say specialist treatments are too expensive and, therefore, that nothing can be done. AIDS in Africa is a result of the oppression of women, prostitution, ignorance and economic stagnation. Literacy programmes would make advice on contraception and safe sex easier to convey. The cancelling of debt would allow growth, education, health promotion and a way out of the hopeless poverty in which disease breeds. We must cease to exploit.

Comment: AIDS, Africans and the Side-effects of Poverty

There is a global market in sickness as in everything else. As we report today, drug companies have used Africans as guinea pigs for the new cocktails of AIDS drugs whose success at inhibiting the virus is being proclaimed in the West as a public health triumph. The advantages of testing drugs in Africa, with its lax medical standards and desperate patients are obvious. The drug companies' targets, too poor to afford treatment, probably welcome the chance of help. But once the trials have gone on for long enough for possible side effects to be ruled out, the drugs can be withdrawn. Illiterate victims are, in effect signing up for courses of a drug they can never complete, acting as human laboratories until the drugs are deemed safe enough to sell in the West. Such behaviour raises ugly questions about the West's valuation on life. If South Africans are given a drug just to see if it can help Western patients and companies, then they should, at least, receive it for as long as they need it.

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‘Exporting Apartheid’ to Sub-Saharan Africa

Michel Chossudovsky

The right wing Afrikaner Freedom Front (FF) headed by General Constand Viljoen plans to develop a 'food corridor' extending across the southern part of the continent from Angola to Mozambique. Afrikaner agribusiness is to extend its grip into neighbouring countries with large-scale investments in commercial farming, food processing and eco-
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The right wing Afrikaner Freedom Front (FF) headed by General Constand Viljoen plans to develop a 'food corridor' extending across the southern part of the continent from Angola to Mozambique. Afrikaner agribusiness is to extend its grip into neighbouring countries with large-scale investments in commercial farming, food processing and eco-
argued about the Auschwitz experiments.' said professor Cleaton-Jones.

Campaigners in other countries are also angry. 'This is a very big problem here', said Christina Silva of the Grupo Pela Vidda, an HIV/AIDS group in Rio de Janeiro. 'Once the companies finish they simply abandon their patients.' Robin Gorna of the Terrence Higgins Trust said: 'It is unacceptable to treat people in the third world as guinea pigs in this way.' International agreements, such as the Helsinki Declaration of Human Rights, have set guidelines for ethical conduct of medical research, but there is no global mechanism enforcing them.

Doctors conducting the trials also have a dilemma. 'There are many patients who may not survive the next two years without intervention - so at least I can offer them something', said Dr Johnson, who first put Eddie Graham forward for drug trials.' But this was contested by the WHO's Dr Saba, who said, 'There is no point doing clinical trials in a country where the drugs will not be available. Illiterate victims are, in effect signing up for courses of a drug they can never complete, acting as human laboratories until the drugs are deemed safe enough to sell in the West. Such behaviour raises ugly questions about the West's valuation on life. If South Africans are given a drug just to see if it can help Western patients and companies, then they should, at least, receive it for as long as they need it.

The West must get its priorities right about AIDS in the third world. It is easy to say specialist treatments are too expensive and, therefore, that nothing can be done. AIDS in Africa is a result of the oppression of women, prostitution, ignorance and economic stagnation. Literacy programmes would make advice on contraception and safe sex easier to convey. The cancelling of debt would allow growth, education, health promotion and a way out of the hopeless poverty in which disease breeds. We must cease to exploit.

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Comment: AIDS, Africans and the Side-effects of Poverty

There is a global market in sickness as in everything else. As we report today, drug companies have used Africans as guinea pigs for the new cocktails of AIDS drugs whose success at inhibiting the virus is being proclaimed in the West as a public health triumph. The advantages of testing drugs in Africa, with its lax medical standards and desperate patients are obvious.

The drug companies' targets, too poor to afford treatment, probably welcome the chance of help. But once the trials have gone on for long enough for possible side effects to be ruled out, the drugs can be withdrawn. Illiterate victims are, in effect signing up for courses of a drug they can never complete, acting as human laboratories until the drugs are deemed safe enough to sell in the West. Such behaviour raises ugly questions about the West's valuation on life. If South Africans are given a drug just to see if it can help Western patients and companies, then they should, at least, receive it for as long as they need it.

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The right wing Afrikaner Freedom Front (FF) headed by General Constand Viljoen plans to develop a 'food corridor' extending across the southern part of the continent from Angola to Mozambique. Afrikaner agribusiness is to extend its grip into neighbouring countries with large-scale investments in commercial farming, food processing and eco-
tourism. The Afrikaner unions of the Orange Free State and Eastern Transvaal are partners; the objective is to set up white-owned farms beyond South Africa’s borders.

The ‘food corridor’, however, does not mean ‘food for the local people’. On the contrary, under the scheme the peasants will lose their land; small-holders will become farm labourers or tenants on large-scale plantations owned by the Boers. Moreover, the South African Chamber for Agricultural Development (SACADA) which acts as an umbrella organisation is integrated by several right-wing organisations including the Freedom Front (FF) led by Viljoen and the secret Afrikaner Broederbond. As South African Defence Force (SADF) Commander in Chief during the apartheid regime, General Viljoen had personally ordered the attacks on so-called ‘African National Congress targets’ including blowing up of suspected anti-apartheid activists and critics. As revealed by former spy Craig Williamson from classified State Security Council documents, Viljoen was also responsible for Stratcom (Strategic Communications), a covert organisation involved in frame-ups, political assassinations, bombings, torture, covert propaganda and ‘dirty tricks campaigns’ (Stefaan Brummer, ‘The Web of Stratcoms’, Weekly Mail and Guardian, 24 February 1995).

The Freedom Front, although ‘moderate’ in comparison to Eugene Terre’ Blanche’s far-right Afrikaner Weerstands beweging (AWB), is a racist political movement committed to the Afrikaner Volksstaat. The SACADA-Freedom Front initiative has nonetheless the political backing of the African National Congress as well as the personal blessing of President Nelson Mandela who has delegated Mpumalanga Premier Matthews Phosa to the SACADA Board of Governors. All the other governors are members of the Freedom Front.

Premier Phosa, a distinguished ANC politician and among the most prosperous black businessmen in Mpumalanga province (East Transvaal), is the architect of a proposed ‘regional economic block’ between Eastern Transvaal, Mozambique and Swaziland. Premier Phosa is not only firmly behind the SACADA-Freedom Front initiative, he has also contributed to laying the political ground work for the expansion of white Afrikaner business interests into neighbouring countries. Phosa informed the provincial legislature in 1995 that ‘he is communicating with Afrikaner leader General Constand Viljoen to ensure that their separate initiatives are complementary’.

In discussions with President Mandela, General Viljoen had argued that ‘settling Afrikaner farmers would stimulate the economies of neighbouring states, would provide food and employment for locals, and that this would stem the flow of illegal immigrants into South Africa’ (see ‘EU Backs Boers Trek to Mozambique’, Weekly Mail and Guardian, 1 December 1995). Viljoen has also held high level meetings on Afrikaner agricultural investments with representatives of the European Union, the United Nations and other donor agencies.

In turn, Pretoria is negotiating with several African governments on behalf of SACADA and the Freedom Front. The ANC government is anxious to facilitate the expansion of corporate agribusiness into neighbouring countries. ‘Mandela has asked the Tanzanian government to accept Afrikaner farmers to help develop the agricultural sector’; SACADA has approached some 12 African countries ‘interested in white South African farmers’. In a venture set up in 1994 under the South African Development Corporation (SADEVCO), the government of the Congo had granted to the Boers 99 year leases on agricultural land. President Mandela endorsed the scheme calling on African nations ‘to accept the migrants as a kind of foreign aid’.
An earlier trek of white farmers to Zambia and the Congo in the early 1990s met with mixed results. Rather than tied to the interests of corporate agribusiness (as in the case of SACADA), the impetus was based on the resettlement of individual (often bankrupt) Afrikaner farmers without political backing, financial support and the legitimacy of the New South Africa. The African host countries have on the whole welcomed the inflow of Afrikaner investments. With regard to regulatory policies, however, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (rather than national governments) call the shots, invariably requiring (indebted) countries to accept 'a wide open door to foreign capital'. In this context, the liberalisation of trade and investment under donor supervision, tends to support the extension of Afrikaner business interests throughout the region. Moreover, in the sleazy environment shaped by transnational corporations and international creditors, corrupt politicians and senior bureaucrats are often co-opted or invited to become the 'business partners' of South African and other foreign investors.

**Expropriation of Peasant Lands**

The 'food corridor' will displace a pre-existing agricultural system: it not only appropriates the land, it takes over the host country's economic and social infrastructure which in turn increases levels of poverty in the countryside. It will most likely provide a fatal blow to subsistence agriculture as well as to the peasant cash crop economy; it displaces local level agricultural markets and aggravates the conditions of endemic famine prevailing in the region. Jen Kelenga, a spokesman for a pro-democracy group in Zaire, sees the Boers 'in search of new territories to apply their racist way of living'.

The 'food corridor' – if carried through – could potentially alter the rural landscape of the southern African region, requiring the uprooting and displacement of small farmers over an extensive territory. Under the proposed scheme, millions of hectares of the best farmland are to be handed over to South African agribusiness. The Boers will manage large-scale commercial farms using the rural people both as 'labour tenants' as well as seasonal agricultural workers. While the project is meant to 'bring development' and 'transfer much needed agricultural expertise', the initiative is largely intent upon 'exporting apartheid' to neighbouring countries. The latter objective is in turn supported by the gamut of IMF-World Bank-sponsored economic reforms.

Afrikaner investments in agriculture go hand in hand with the World Bank-sponsored Land Law. The expropriation of peasant lands is often demanded by creditors as a condition for the rescheduling of Paris Club debts. Peasant lands (which formally belonged to the state) are sold (at very low prices) or leased out to international agri-business (for example, on a 50-99 year concession). The meagre proceeds of the land sales will be used to service the external debt. The World Bank has put forth land legislation in sub-Saharan Africa which abrogates the right to land of millions of small-holders. Identical land legislation is enforced throughout the region, the national level land laws (drafted under technical advice from World Bank Legal Department) are, with some variations, 'exact carbon copies of each other':

*The constitution [in Mozambique] says that the land is the property of the State and cannot be sold or mortgaged. There has been strong pressure particularly from the United States and the World Bank for land to be privatised and to allow mortgages (Joseph Hanlon, ‘Supporting Peasants in their Fight for Land’, Christian Aid, London, November 1995).*

South African companies and banks are also participating in the country-level...
privatisation programmes (under the structural adjustment programme) acquiring at rock bottom prices the ownership of state assets in mining, public utilities and agriculture. With regard to the latter, experimental farms, government research stations, state-owned plantations, seed producing facilities, etc. have been put on the auction block. With the deregulation of agricultural markets under World Bank advice, the state marketing system is either closed down or taken over by private investors.

**Derogating Customary Land Rights**

Under the proposed land legislation, both SACADA and the World Bank nonetheless tout the protection of traditional land rights. The small peasantry is to be ‘protected’ through the establishment of ‘customary land reserves’ established in the immediate vicinity of the white commercial farms. In practice, under the new land legislation, the majority of the rural people will be caged into small territorial enclaves (‘communal lands’) while the bulk of the best agricultural land will be sold or leased to private investors. This also means that peasant communities which practice shifting cultivation over a large land area as well as pastoralists, will henceforth be prosecuted for encroaching on lands earmarked for commercial farming, often without their prior knowledge. Impoverished by the macro-economic reforms, with no access to credit and modern farm inputs, these customary enclaves will constitute ‘labour reserves’ for large scale agribusiness.

**Afrikaner Farms in Mozambique**

SACADA has plans to invest in Mozambique, Zaire, Zambia and Angola, ‘with Mozambique being the test case’. President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique and President Nelson Mandela signed an inter-governmental agreement in May 1996 which grants rights to Afrikaner agribusiness to develop investments in at least six provinces encompassing territorial concessions of some eight million hectares. According to one South African official (interviewed in Maputo, July 1996):

> Mozambique needs the technical expertise and the money, and we have the people ... We favour an area which is not heavily populated because it is an Achilles heel if there are too many people on the land ... For the Boers, Land is next to God and the Bible.

In SACADA’s concessionary areas in Mozambique, the ‘socialist’ Frelimo government will ensure that there is no encroachment; rural small-holders and subsistence farmers (who invariably do not possess legal land titles) will either be expelled or transferred into marginal lands (see the documents of the Land Conference, Conferencia Nacional de terras, documento de trabajo, Maputo, July 1996). In turn, according to Hanlon (1995) members of the military and government ministers who seek to become ‘business partners’ of international agribusiness have already been granted concessions over millions of hectares of land which is already occupied by the peasantry. The World Bank together with bilateral donors has proposed on behalf of potential foreign investors, a system of land registration including the extensive mapping of land areas through aerial photography in view of generating digitised maps (Hanlon, 1995). In Mozambique’s Niassa province, the best agricultural land will be leased in concession to the Afrikaners for 50 years. ‘There are just so many beautiful, fertile places to choose from’, said Egbert Hiemstra ‘who owns two farms in Lydenburg and wants a third in Mozambique’. At the token price of some $0.15 per hectare per annum, the land lease is a give-away. Through the establishment of Mosagríus (a joint venture company), SACADA is now firmly established in the fertile valley of the Lugenda river. But the Boers also have their eyes on agricultural areas
along the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers as well as on the road and railway facilities linking Lichinga, Niassa’s capital to the deep see port of Nagala. The railway line is being rehabilitated and modernised (by a French contractor) with development aid provided by France. In the initial stage of the agreement, concessionary areas in Niassa province were handed over to SACADA in 1996 to be settled by some 500 white Afrikaner farmers (Agreement on Basic Principles and Understanding, concerning the Mosagrius Development Project, Maputo, May 1996). These lands are earmarked for commercial farming in both temperate highveld and sub-tropical lowfeld.

Our intention is to develop the highveld areas in maize, wheat and beef cattle linked up with agro-processing and the export market. In the lowvelds we will plant a variety of tropical fruit trees as well as establish modern juice factories. Our agricultural institutes will establish research stations in the area with a view to supporting SACADA’s initiative ... Eventually we would also like to get into the cotton areas of Nampulo and Cabo Delgado provinces (interview with Mosagrius project liaison officer, South African High Commission, Maputo).

The available infrastructure including several state buildings and enterprises will be handed over; several state-owned farms in Niassa will be transferred to Mosagrius, the Technical College in Lichinga has been transferred to the Boers. The Agricultural Research Station is also to be taken over: ‘They want out’, they are seeking Afrikaner investment to keep the Research Station afloat. Eventually Afrikaner agro-business is intent on taking over the government’s seed producing facilities (SEMOC) in Niassa. In the Mosagrius project,

The main thrust will come from the successful farmers in South Africa who are now seeking for new lands, and who are able to mobilise considerable financial resources (Ibid.).

They will operate their new farms as part of their business undertakings in South Africa, dispatching white Afrikaner managers and supervisors to Mozambique. ‘Family farms with a good track record but without funding capabilities are also eligible. They will rely on SACADA for funding’ (Ibid). No provision is made, however, to help Afrikaner farmers driven into bankruptcy as a result of Pretoria’s economic liberalisation programme. These farmers may, nonetheless, be hired to work as managers in Mozambique. In turn, the Boers will bring their black right-hand men, their tractor operators, their technicians. In the words of the Mosagrius liaison officer at the South African High Commission in Maputo: ‘Each and every Afrikaner farmer will bring his tame Kaffirs’ (Ibid) who will be used to supervise the local workers. The number of white settlers in the concessionary areas in Niassa is likely to be small. SACADA has carefully mapped out the designated areas by helicopter, South Africa’s agricultural research institutes have surveyed the area, providing an assessment of prevailing environmental, climatic and social conditions. Agricultural scientists have not limited their focus to the analysis of soil samples, human settlements in the area have been studied; South African demographers have been called in as consultants to evaluate the implications of displacing the rural people.

Creating ‘Rural Townships’
Under the SACADA scheme, the rural communities in Niassa which occupy the Afrikaner concessionary areas are to be regrouped into ‘rural townships’ similar to those of the apartheid regime:

What you do is to develop villages along the roadside close to the [white] farms. These villages have been planned very carefully [by SACADA] in proximity to
the fields so that farm workers can go back and forth; you give the villages some infrastructure and a plot of land for each household so that the farm labourers can set up their food gardens (Ibid).

Unless token customary land rights are entrenched within or in areas contiguous to the concessions, the peasants will become landless farm labourers or 'labour tenants'. Under the latter system applied by the Boers in South Africa since the 19th century, black peasant households perform labour services (corvée) in exchange for the right to farm a small parcel of land. Formally outlawed in South Africa in 1960 by the Nationalist government, 'labour tenancy' remains in existence in many parts of South Africa including East Transvaal and Kwa-Zulu Natal. It has evolved towards the payment of a (very low) nominal wage largely to disguise the (outlawed) feudal relationship.

Since 1995, it has been the target of the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Bill of Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom. The rural townships established in the concessions will constitute 'reserves' of cheap labour for the white commercial farms. Wages are substantially lower than in South Africa. For seasonal workers, the wage has been set at the statutory minimum wage, a meagre $18 a month which the IMF Representative Sergio Leite, considered in his statement to a donors' meeting in 1995, to be 'excessive' by international standards. He also pointed to the inflationary pressures resulting from wage demands. The derogation of workers rights as well as the deregulation of the labour market under IMF advice, enables the Boers not only to pay their Mozambican workers excessively low wages but also to escape the demands of black agricultural workers in South Africa. It also allows corporate agribusiness investing in neighbouring countries to more effectively lobby the ANC government against land reform and 'affirmative action' programmes within South Africa. Moreover, under the Mosagrius Agreement the Mozambican government will be fully responsible in dealing with land disputes and ensuring the expropriation of peasant lands 'without prejudice or loss that may occur from such claims to SDM [Mosagrius] and other Mosagrius participants' (clause 42 of Mosagrius Agreement).

**Foreign Aid Supports the Establishment of White Farms**

South Africa's major commercial banks, the World Bank and the European Union have firmly backed the project. 'The Food Corridor' has become an integral part of the IMF-World Bank sponsored structural adjustment programme. In the words of SACADA Secretary Willie Jordaan: 'SACADA had endeavoured to bring its policies in line with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and claimed that it was set to become an international development agency' with a mandate to contract with donor institutions and carry out 'foreign aid programmes' on their behalf.

While the West endorsed ANC's struggle against the apartheid regime, in a somewhat unusual twist it is now providing financial support to a racist Afrikaner development organisation. Under the disguise of 'foreign aid', Western donors are in fact contributing to the extension of the apartheid system into neighbouring countries. The European Union has provided money to SACADA out of a development package explicitly earmarked by Brussels for South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme. According to an EU spokesman, the project 'was the best noise out of Africa in 30 years'. The EU Ambassador to South Africa met General Viljoen to discuss the project. The ambassador confirmed that if all goes well, further EU money could be made available to cover the costs of 'settling Afrikaner farmers in South Africa's neighbouring countries' ('EU Backs Boers Trek to Mozambique', Weekly Mail and Guard-
Briefing: 'Exporting Apartheid' to Sub-Saharan Africa

The initiative is categorised by the donor community as a bona fide development project which will benefit the peasantry in the host country as well as contribute to South Africa's reconstruction. The fact that the scheme deroga the land rights of small-holders and replicates the system of 'labour tenancy' prevalent in South Africa under apartheid is not a matter for discussion.

Moreover, national investment priorities set by the donors in the host countries (under the World Bank-sponsored Public Investment Programme), are increasingly tuned to meeting the needs of South African business interests. In Mozambique, for instance, so-called 'targeted investments' are undertaken with a view to rehabilitating port facilities, roads, water resources, river and lake transport, etc. largely to the benefit of South African investors including SACADA.

Under the Mosagrius Agreement, Afrikaner investors 'shall be allowed a right of first refusal' in privatisation tenders in concessionary areas under their jurisdiction (clause 15f, section c, of the Mosagrius Agreement). In turn, the country's investment legislation (drafted with the technical assistance of the World Bank) will provide for the free remittance of corporate profits and the repatriation of capital back to South Africa. The SACADA scheme is also likely to suck up a portion of the State's meagre health and education budget. In Mozambique, under the terms of the Agreement, the authorities are also to support the provision of Western-style health services as well as create a 'sanitary environment' for the white Afrikaners settling in the territory (clauses 38 and 39 of the Mosagrius Agreement). Part of the money provided by donors and international organisations for social programmes will also be channelled towards the concessionary areas.

Fostering Eco-tourism

Most of Mozambique's coastline on lake Niassa - including a 160 km. stretch in the Rif Valley from Meponda to Mapangula extending further North to Ilha sobre o Lago close to the Tanzanian border - has been designated 'for tourism and other complementary and subsidiary activities [which are] ecologically sustainable' (clause 38 and 39 of Mosagrius Agreement). The latter also include designated areas for South African investments in fishing and aquaculture on lake Niassa displacing the local fishing industry (see addendum 1, art. 1d of the Mosagrius Agreement). In turn, the Agreement hands over to Mosagrius, the development and operation rights over the Niassa Game Reserve on the Tanzanian border. The Reserve includes an extensive area of some 20,000 hectares earmarked for a so-called 'ecologically sustainable eco-tourism'. SACADA is to fence the entire area and establish up-market tourist lodges on the periphery of the game park; hunting of wild game is also envisaged for wealthy individuals 'in strictly controlled areas'. According to the Mosagrius liaison officer, 'fauna restocking of the Reserve may, however, be required to ensure that tourists see the real thing'. A specialist from South Africa's Department of Nature Conservation is assisting SACADA in the planning the venture as well as securing financial resources. International funding of the lodges and the Game Reserve is in the process of being secured from a number of wealthy private investors.'

In a much larger undertaking, James Ulysses Blanchard III, the right-wing Texan tycoon, has been granted a concession over a vast territory which includes the Maputo Elephant Reserve and the adjoining Machangula peninsula. During the Mozambican civil war, Blanchard provided financial backing to Renamo, the rebel organisation directly supported by the apartheid regime and trained by the South African Defence Force (SADF).
'But it now seems that the man who once
bankrolled a rebel army to wage a war of
incredible destruction and brutality (the
US State Department once described
Renamo atrocities as worse than those of
the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia) is likely
to be rewarded with control over a huge
chunk of Mozambique's richest province'
(Eddie Koch, 'The Texan who Plans a
Dream Park Just Here', Weekly Mail and
intends to create an Indian Ocean Dream
Park with a floating hotel, deluxe tourist
lodges at $600-800 a night and a casino.
Large parcels of land in Manchangula
have also been allocated to agricultural
investors from Eastern Transvaal. Local
communities in Blanchard's concession-
ary area will be expropriated; in the
words of his general manager, John
Perrot:

We gonna come here and say [to the local
villagers] 'Okay, now you're in a na-
tional park. Your village can either get
fenced or you can have them wild
animals walking right through your
main street' (Eddie Koch, 1996).

In this scramble for territory, the
Mozambican government agreed to hand
over several million hectares of so-called
'unused land' to a religious organisation,
the Dutch based Maharashi Heaven on
Earth Company. President Chissano is a
devotee of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi,
founder of the Natural Law Party. Since
the signing of the agreement in July 1993,
however, the government seems to have
backtracked on the deal stating that the
Maharashi Church would 'be treated like
any other foreign investor, no more, no
less'.

The 'decentralisation' scheme is predi-
cated on fiscal austerity under the struc-
tural adjustment programme leading to a
weakening of both the central and re-
gional governments. The decline of the
Mozambican State apparatus as well the
fragmentation of the national economy
favours the transformation of entire re-
gions of the country (for example, Niassa
province) into concessionary areas or
'corridors' under the political custody of
donors, non-governmental organisations
and foreign investors. The latter consti-
tute a de facto 'parallel government' which
increasingly bypasses the State system.
Moreover, in several areas in Northern
Mozambique, the former pro-apartheid
rebel group Renamo (which has also
established its links to the donors) is
formally in command of local govern-
ment. In the war's aftermath, several
Renamo leaders have become 'business

Carving Up the National Territory

An autonomous territory, 'a State within
a State' is being developed initially in
Niassa province; Mosagrius (overriding
the national and provincial governments)
is the sole authority concerning the utili-
sation rights of land in its concessionary
areas (clause 34); similarly the territory is
defined as a free trade zone allowing for
the unimpeded movement of goods, capi-
tal and people (meaning white South
Africans). All investments in the conces-
sionary areas 'will be free from customs
duties, or other fiscal impositions' (Clause
35.2 of the Mosagrius Agreement). In turn
with concessions granted to foreign in-
vestors in various parts of the country,
the national territory is once again being
carved up into a number of separate
'corridors' reminiscent of the colonial
period. This system of territorial conces-
sions – with each of the corridors inte-
grated separately into the world market –
tends to favour the demise of the national
economy. In turn, the donors have re-
quired (in the name of 'governance'), the
down-sizing of the central State and the
'decentralisation' of decision-making to
the provincial and district levels. Rather
than providing added powers and re-
sources to regional and local communi-
ties, State revenues will be channelled
towards servicing Mozambique's exter-
nal debt.
partners’ of South African companies investing in Mozambique, including SACADA-sponsored investments:

It would appear that there is a secret understanding as part of the [1992] Peace Agreement that Renamo and its backers will get land (Hanlon, 1996).

Land Reform in South Africa

The ANC has championed (without serious debate or discussion) the granting of ‘Land to the Boers’ in neighbouring countries as a means of relieving land pressures within South Africa. The policy is said to facilitate the ANC’s land redistribution programme in favour of black farmers led by the controversial Minister of Land Affairs Derek Hanekom. Despite its merits, the Land Reform Programme is unlikely to succeed. Its implementation has been undermined from the outset by the post-apartheid government’s sweeping macro-economic reforms under the neo-liberal policy agenda. The ANC government’s proposed ‘economic medicine’ is outlined in a Ministry of Finance June 1996 document entitled: ‘Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macro-Economic Framework’. In addition to the standard therapies (budget deficit reduction, devaluation of the Rand, privatisation of State assets) the task force (integrated by two economists on loan from the World Bank), called for ‘reduced minimum wage schedules for young trainees, reducing indirect wage costs and increasing the incentives for more job sharing and greater employment flexibility; and a social agreement to facilitate wage and price moderation …’

The policy document (which has been adopted by the ANC government) insists upon a ‘regulated flexibility in managing the labour market’ which translates into ‘creating employment’ by breaking down wage agreements and collective bargaining. Despite the ANC’s pledge to build the new South Africa based on racial and social equality, the macro-economic framework largely serves to reinforce the structures of apartheid. In rural South Africa, the removal of agricultural subsidies, the deregulation of credit and trade liberalisation (which is part of the macro-economic framework) have not only contributed to the further impoverishment of black small-holders and tenant farmers, the measures have also pushed numerous white Afrikaner family farms into bankruptcy. Pretoria’s structural adjustment programme thereby favours an even greater concentration of farmland than during the apartheid regime as well as the consolidation of corporate agriculture both within and beyond South Africa’s borders.

Concluding Remarks

The Boers ‘Second Great Trek’ to neighbouring countries does not contribute to facilitating land reform within South Africa. In fact, the policy accomplishes exactly the opposite results: it maintains black farmers in marginal lands under the old system of segregation; it reinforces corporate control over the best farmland while also providing a political avenue to Afrikaner agribusiness for ‘exporting apartheid’ to the entire Southern African region. Moreover, the transfer of nominal political power by the apartheid regime in 1994 rather than restraining the white dominated economic system, has in fact created the preconditions for its advancement both within South Africa and the region.

In the new South Africa, the ‘export of apartheid’ is now tagged as ‘foreign aid’. The ANC’s political motivations in this regard are unclear. The dominant ANC viewpoint, reflected by Nelson Mandela’s statements, is that by diverting the Boers from the domestic arena, the post-apartheid government will gain time and space for carrying out major social transformations within South Africa. In our opinion, this position is largely mistaken. The application of ‘strong economic medicine’ (that is, devaluation, job lay-offs,
market deregulation, austerity measures, etc.) under the neo-liberal agenda, has gone hand-in-hand with the de facto reinforcement of apartheid as an economic system. In other words, the plight of the black majority has worsened largely as a result of the post-apartheid economic reforms. South Africa’s dominant economic and financial interests allied with international corporate capital are firmly behind these economic reforms. Moreover, the latter could not have been carried out during the apartheid era with the same coherence, political legitimacy and international support. While apartheid is officially defunct, its economic structures live on, now fused and blended into the structural adjustment programme. The international community has supported this process; the IMF and the World Bank which supported the government of Frederick de Klerk is now directly involved in advising the ANC government on macro-economic reform:

From exile, the ANC condemned the IMF for propping up apartheid. The IMF then assisted the regime with its increasingly neo-liberal economic policies during the late 1980s, and designed South Africa’s Value Added Tax during the early 1990s, leading to mass popular protest. In 1993 the IMF granted a large loan which included secret ‘condition- alities’ that ensured that a democratic South Africa would not waver from inherited undemocratic economic policies, as well as informal conditions that the new government retain the National Party Finance Minister and Reserve Bank governor (statement by the Campaign Against Neo-liberalism in South Africa (Cansa), on the South African visit by IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus, 16 October 1996.

'Democratisation' and 'economic liberalisation' seem to go hand in hand. Despite the ANC’s commitment to social transformation, the government’s reforms under the neo-liberal policy agenda, are serving the economic interests of those who most actively supported the apartheid regime as well as members of the Afrikaner political establishment who were directly involved in apartheid’s 'dirty war'.


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Correction: In the last issue of ROAPE (No. 72), the correct title of the TWIN publication referred to in the ‘Debate’ article by Michael Barratt Brown should have read, Fair Trade: Rough Guide for Business, 1995. Apologies to Michael Barratt Brown for the error.
Book Notes


This is the first full length scholarly study of the long and violent political conflict that gave birth in 1993 to the youngest African state. There is no shortage of writings on this subject, written mostly for purposes of advocacy on both sides of the conflict. Being both an Eritrean and a political scientist, Ruth Iyob mixes empathy with the precision required of a social scientist. While sympathetic to the Eritrean cause, her work is devoted to analysis, not advocacy. It is an attempt, she says, ‘to explain why Eritrean resistance endured in the face of Ethiopia’s diplomatic, military and political prowess’ (p.5). She begins by citing a different sort of resistance, that of various scholarly commentators who till the very end, and for a variety of proffered reasons, dismissed Eritrean nationalism with expert certainty. She also regards the colonial thesis advanced by the leading nationalist movement, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF), and accepted by academic supporters of that movement, as misguided, because it clashed with the principle of territorial integrity in the post-colonial era and failed to gain acceptance by any state in Africa.

Ruth Iyob’s analytical perspective is based on the concept of regional hegemony. It serves to explain both the conditions that gave rise to the nationalist movement in Eritrea, Ethiopia’s ability to repress it for four decades, and its eventual triumph. ‘Regional hegemony refers to the dominant position of specific states by virtue of their military, diplomatic, economic, and/or geostrategic capabilities’ (p.23). Ethiopia’s hegemony in the Horn of Africa was consolidated in the aftermath of World War Two. ‘Established historical legitimacy, a strong modernized military, and an effective diplomacy using the newly established norms and symbols (in international affairs) served to override any claims that countered Ethiopian interests’ (p.25). Ethiopia was able to mobilize an African and international consensus to support its dominant position in Eritrea, and it was this domination that gave rise to Eritrean nationalism. Changes in the regional and international scene in the late 1980s weakened Ethiopia’s position and eased the birth of the new state.

Devoting one third of the book’s pages to the elaboration of the regional hegemony model, the author provides a neatly drawn paradigm within which the course of the Eritrean revolution is traced. There is no room in this paradigm for ideology, either as a force in itself or as legitimation of other forces. There is no discussion of nationalism or of marxism, two ideologies that figured prominently in earlier academic and political discourse on the nature of the Eritrean revolution. Since that discourse produced more smoke than fire, one cannot blame the author for staying clear of it. On the other hand, if one were to go by the book’s subtitle, nationalism simply appears to be the result of resistance to domination of one state by another. This may be an adequate formulation in international relations theory, but not in political science.

Some seventy-seven pages are devoted to a crisp account of the twists and turns of the struggle for the independence of Eritrea over four decades. It is a succinct,
well written account that will inform and please the general reader. Ruth Iyob gives fair treatment to the older nationalist organizations, the Eritrean Liberation Movement and the Eritrean Liberation Front, which launched the struggle but fell prey to factionalism of all sorts and were eventually displaced by the EPLF after years of violent internecine strife. Given the limited space devoted to it, the account is sparse and focuses on the Obviously, the author is well placed to fill in many gaps in the story and to provide fascinating detail. Eritrea watchers will be disappointed she does not do this in the present work and hope she will in the future.

This section gives brief notes of books recently received which may be of interest to our readers; some may be reviewed in depth at a later date. If you would like to review books for ROAPE, please get in touch with the book reviews editors Roy Love (at the ROAPE office) or Ray Bush and Morris Szeftel (Politics Department, University of Leeds). Compiled by Roy Love.

From Colonisation to Democracy: A New Historical Geography of South Africa by Alan Lester (1996), London: I B Tauris.

In a fourteen page introduction the author provides a useful overview of recent South African historiography, including references to Said and Spivak, before proceeding, somewhat ironically, in chapter one to discuss 'The Foundation of a Society' starting with the Dutch settlement of 1652. The remainder of the book proceeds to examine colonial expansion, 'the germination of a system', the formulation, adaptation and re-formulation of 'a structure', policy and reality, and the changing South African state. Each of these forms the basis of a chapter which takes us through the period mainly from the mid-19th century to the early 1990s. Although the book is referred to as a 'historical geography' it contains comparatively little spatial analysis to distinguish it from other political and economic accounts of the period. The index, for instance contains three references to Venda, one to QwaQwa, and four to Bophuthatswana. It does, however, provide an excellent summary, in only 250 pages, of the formation, perpetuation and ultimate collapse of white political domination in South Africa.

The principal title of this book is misleading. It is essentially about the nature and history of industrialisation in South Africa since the inter-war (European) period. The section specifically on this is preceded, however, by four preliminary chapters: one on lessons for South Africa in the 'Asian miracles', and one each on the state, on defining the MEC (Minerals-Energy Complex), and on corporate structure. Chapter 9 reviews the literature and the history of debates on industrialisation, examining the relevance of the import substitution, regulation theory and neo-liberal approaches to an understanding of industrial development in South Africa. The book is the product of a major research exercise by the Centre for Economic Policy for South Africa at the University of London and is accordingly well researched, detailed and thorough in its arguments, and, in a scholarly sense, valuable. As already indicated, however, it is an oddly balanced book in its chapter contents and their arrangement, a book more for the specialist to dip into than for the general reader to look for an overview or a discussion of the broad picture.

The author’s aim: ‘to explore the relationship between human agency and the structural factors that inhibit or enable action in the context of the growth of the informal economy’ is unremarkable but the outcome is an interesting study of the feelings, views and survival strategies of street traders and others engaged in the informal economy of two areas of Dar es Salaam, Manzese and Buguruni. She also focuses on the interrelationship between the informal economy and the state (including the activities of state employees) picking particularly on issues of non-compliance and disengagement. In the course of assessing the meaning of the ‘informal economy’ and in reviewing the politics of economic reform in Tanzania, especially since the early 1980s, the author adds the results of what the publishers accurately term ‘an impressive field survey conducted at the household and microenterprise sector’. The result is a volume interesting in its academic discussion and conclusions which is rendered highly readable on account of the innumerable vignettes of individual lives of struggle which intersperse her arguments.


The title of this book, though eye-catching, is misleading. It is mainly concerned with the history of recent economic performance in the Sudan, referring particularly to the Darfur region. The author is a development economist who is bringing his work with the World Bank and other international agencies to bear on an extensive analysis of the economic problems of this part of Africa. The book is well informed, the economics not overbearing and presents a reasoned analysis by a practitioner economist who has been given the time to step back and consider issues at a more fundamental level than is normally possible in his trade. His conclusion is that it has not been a failure of policy that led Sudan from a state of relative prosperity in the post-war years to abject poverty in the late 1980s, but a failure of administration and management, applying as much to the liberalising reforms of structural adjustment as to earlier projects in industry and agriculture. In the course of reaching this conclusion there is extensive and detailed analysis of production and yields in Darfur, of markets, land tenure and aid programmes, all preceded by a more general overview of a number of recent debates in development thinking. It is an informed and thoughtful analysis, though based largely on 1980s data and with little reference to more recent wider political issues concerning the war in the South and the significance of Islam.


This book is very much concerned with the practical side of internal and external response to crisis in Sudan and Somalia, based upon the author’s consultancy experience in the area between 1992 and 1995. Though short (172 pages) it contains a wealth of detail on the recent history of conflict in the two countries and of the problems faced by NGOs in getting assistance to those most affected and the most vulnerable. The dilemmas of appearing to take sides, or of allowing governments to divert resources to military activities are addressed. The final chapter, on ‘Lessons from Crisis Re-
Response in the Horn of Africa' provides a useful, critical resume of the varied impact of crisis response and of the importance of encouraging and restoring local and regional initiatives.


Writing in an area prone to partisanship the author manages dispassionately to add insight to the period 1941-62 by drawing principally on the documented observations of British diplomatic personnel present in Asmara during the period 1952 and 1962 when the Federation between Eritrea and Ethiopia was steadily dissolving. This source has previously been untapped and when combined with other material from the Archivio Storico dell'Africa Italiana (ASMAI) in Rome has helped to produce a valuable scholarly analysis of this important period which will be somewhat more interest to the historian than to the general reader. The author does, nonetheless with two chapters on 'The Long Road to Independence' and 'Future Challenges' which provide a more contemporary link.


Yet another edited collection from a conference, but one with a coherent and critical message that merits wide distribution. The theme concerns the formation of conventional scientific wisdom on African environments and how that then pervades policy making in virtually unassailable terms. An introductory chapter by the editors on the 'origins and persistence of received wisdom' discuss the European sources of scientific theory, scientific method and its incorporation into public policy and implications for development discourse. This is followed by a number of case studies covering range management, soil erosion in Southern Africa; desertification; the Mkomazi Game Reserve in Tanzania; forest-savannah debates in West Africa; erosion and famine in Marakwet, Kenya; and the cultural construction of environmental policy in Ethiopia. A connecting thread is the consistent failure of policy makers, planners, and implementing agencies to really understand and take into account the knowledge, views and actions of farmers and pastoralists themselves - despite the oft-repeated statements of intention to do so. The problem lies with the difficulty of breaking out of their own pre-conceptions, of which they are usually unaware and which also frequently serve their personal and institutional interests, quite apart from external political influences. This book is not therefore simply pointing out where the 'development' industry' has got it wrong, but attempts to understand why, at a deeper level, by probing individual cases.


In spite of the fact that this book has been rather a long time in the making, stemming originally from a workshop at the University of Natal in January 1988, the result is a valuable collection of papers covering the period from before 1840 to the early 1990s which, being brought together in a single volume, allows us to
grasp the importance of the past to contemporary events, even up to the present. Interspersed with the factual historical analysis is an awareness and assessment of ethnicity in the region, of its fluctuating boundaries and social construction for various ends. Although seven chapters by different authors, covering such a long time period (and in a relatively short book), is bound to be compartmental and selective, a sense of continuity comes across, assisted by the editor’s preface and an introduction by Irina Filatova. The periodisation of the chapters is before 1840, 1840-1890, 1890-1920, 1920-1950, 1949-1972 and 1972-1985 (all with short headings that are rather interchangeable!). Rural and urban aspects, European and Indian, labour disputes and the ICU, and the rise of Inkatha are all covered. The book concludes with a chapter by Bill Freund on ‘the violence in Natal’ written in 1991 which is a valuable summary of thought to that date. There are ample bibliographies to each chapter and a good index.

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Africa Resource Guide

This WorldViews AFRICA Guide includes information on international nongovernmental organizations whose primary concerns are the nations and people of the African continent. For information on organizations for whom this region is just one among many areas of concern, see WorldViews: A Quarterly Review of Resources for Education and Action (ISSN 1085-7559) and other resource directories and guides compiled and published by WorldViews. This guide is divided into four regional sections: Africa (general), North and West Africa, East and Central Africa, and Southern Africa. Organizations are grouped under these headings according to their location or their regional focus. This is a working directory that is compiled and published as a public service for the benefit of the international NGO community. WorldViews would appreciate notices of updates, corrections, and recommended additions for future editions of this list. Please send all correspondence to WorldViews, 464 19th Street, Oakland, CA 94612-2297, USA. Tel: 1-510-451-1742. Fax: 1-510-835-3017. E-mail: worldviews@igc.org. Web site: http://www.igc.org/worldviews/wvafr.html.

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Africa Policy Information Center, 110 Maryland Ave., NE, Ste. 112, Washington, DC 20002, USA. Tel: (202) 546-7961. Fax: (202) 546-1545. E-mail: apic@igc.apc.org.
Africa Recovery Programme, UN Department of Public Information, United Nations, Rm. S-331, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: (212) 963-6557. Fax: (212) 963-4556.
Africa Relief Committee in Canada, P.O. Box 826, S. Ota, ON, Canada. Tel: (905) 555-1234. Fax: (905) 555-1234. E-mail: africarelief@cspc.org.
African American Images, 38 W. 95 St., Chicago, IL 60643, USA.
African and Caribbean Imprint Library Services, 236 Main St., Falmouth, MA 02540, USA. Tel: (508) 540-5378. Fax: (508) 540-8801.
African Association for Development, B.P. 1107 CD Annexe, Dakar, Senegal.
African Association for Human and People's Rights in Development, c/o Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Botswana, P.O. 0022, Gaborone, Botswana.
African Bar Association, P.O. Box 3451, 29 La Tébu St., East Cantonments, Accra, Ghana.
African Books Collective, The Jam Factory, 27 Park End St., Oxford OX1 1HU, England. Tel: (0) 1865 726688. Fax: (0) 1865 793298. ABC Newsline.
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African Commission on Human and People's Rights, Kairaba Ave., P.O. Box 673, Banjul, Gambia. Tel: (220) 392-962. Fax: (220) 390-764.
African Human Rights Committee, P.O. Box 909, Arlington, VA 22210, USA.
African Institute of Human Rights, 43 Boulevard Pinet Laprade, P.O. Box 1921, Dakar, Senegal. Tel: 21.56.46.
African International Council, 201-190 Somerset St. West, Ottawa, ON K2P 0J4, Canada. Tel: (613) 238-7362. Fax: (613) 238-2137.
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African Society, 5, Ahmed Hishmat St., Zamalek, Cairo, Egypt. Tel: 20-2 60-76-58.
African World, 60 Platinum Circle, Northampton, MA 01060-3587, USA.
African-American Institute, 833 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017-3509, USA. Tel: (212) 949-5666. Fax: (212) 682-6174.
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ROAPE Publications, Ltd., P.O. Box 678, Sheffield S1 8F, England. Tel: (0)1226 741660. Fax: (0)1226 741661. E-mail: roape@mcrl@poptel.org.uk. Review of African Political Economy.
SACTU Solidarity Committee, 861 Broadway Ave., Toronto, ON M4K 2P9, Canada.
TransAfrica, 1744 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009, USA. Tel: (202) 797-2301. Fax: (202) 797-2382. TransAfrica Forum Journal/TransAfrica Issue Newsletter.

Action for Development, P.O. Box 16728 Wandeyea, Kampala, Uganda. Tel: (25-641) 532-311. Fax: (25-641) 532311.
African Association for Literacy and Adult Education, P.O. Box 50768, Finance House, Loita St., 6th floor, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (254-2) 223391. Fax: (254-2) 340649.
African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, P.O. Box 71420, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (254-2) 726-794. Fax: (254-2) 721-999.
African Network of Indigenous Environment and Development NGOs, P.O. Box 53844, Nairobi, Kenya.

Democratic Forces, P.O. Box 21307, Washington, DC 20009, USA. Tel: (202) 332-5458. Fax: (202) 332-5461.
Environment Liaison Centre International, P.O. Box 72461, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (254-2) 562015. Fax: (254-2) 562175. E-mail: ecli@gn.apc.org. Ecorforum.
Eritrean Information & Advice Service, Unit 13, Eurolink Business Centre, 49 Elfa Rd, London SW2 1BR, UK. Tel: (0)171 501-9605.
Eritrean Relief Association, BCM Box 858, London WC1V 6XN, England.
Eritrean Relief Association, International Coordination Office, Hohenstaufenring 39, 5000 Köln 1, Germany. Eritrea Information / Eritrea in Relief.
Eritrean Relief Committee, 325 15 St., NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA. Tel: (202) 387-5001. Fax: (202) 387-5006.
Ethiopian Community Development Council, 1039 S. Highland St., Arlington, VA 22204, USA. Tel: (703) 685-0510. Fax: (703) 685-0529.
Federation of African Women Media, P.O. Box 50795, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (254-2) 330-557.
Forum for African Women Educationalists, c/o Eddah Gachukia, P.O. Box 21389, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (254-2) 566-113. Fax: (254-2) 568-278. Fund for Peace, Horn of Africa Program, 345 E. 46 St., Rm. 717, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: (212) 661-5900. Fax: (212) 661-5904.
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Maendele Ya Wanawake Organisation, P.O. Box 44412, Nairobi, Kenya.
Mazingira Institute, P.O. Box 14550, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (254-2) 443-219. Fax: (254-2) 444-643.
National Council of Women of Kenya, c/o Wangari Maathai, P.O. Box 43741, Nairobi, Kenya.
New People Media Centre, P.O. Box 21681, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (20) 567229. Fax: (20) 567230. E-mail: Npeople@clci.gn.apc.org.
Pan African Women Trade Unionists, P.O. Box 61068, Nairobi, Kenya.
Research and Information Centre on Eritrea, Via della Dogana Vecchia 5, 00166 Rome, Italy. Tel: 794.6137. Eritrea Information.
Shoga Women’s Group, P.O. Box 7393, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
Somali Studies International Association, Secretariat of Research and Documentation, c/o Folklore Institute, Indiana University, 506 N. Fess St., Bloomington, IN 47401-3122, USA. Tel: (812) 855-1027. Fax: (812) 855-4008.
Southern Networks for Environment and Development, Africa Region, P.O. Box 14205, Nairobi, Kenya.
Sudan Democratic Gazette, P.O. Box 2235, London W14 0ND, England.
Sudan Human Rights Organization, BM Box 8238, London WC1 N3XX, England. Fax: (071) 378-8029.
Sudan Studies Association, 1005 Shelter Lane, Lansing, MI 48912, USA. Tel: (517) 332-4518. Fax: (517) 336-2736.
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