Africa’s Environmental Crisis: Challenging the Orthodoxyes

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It is almost ten years since the Review focused on Africa’s environment. In 1988 (No. 42) the issues which were examined in particular were drought, toxic waste dumping and the green revolution. The concern was to counter conservationist discourse which ‘framed the problems in terms of population growth surpassing national resources and herds outstripping the land’s carrying capacity’ (No. 42:1). And the concern was to rebuff the policy implications of such a characterisation of Africa’s crisis which focused unsurprisingly on population and animal control. In many respects the neo-Malthusian orthodoxy persists whether in academic, national policy-making, or international financial institution circles. The poor are blamed for land degradation and too many people chasing too few resources are often identified as the cause of environmental crisis.

Articles in this issue challenge these orthodoxies. They do so by specifically questioning the meaning of desertification and the efficacy of scientific explanations for Africa’s environmental crisis. Thomas asks the crucial question whether scientists can be trusted when the principles and modus operandi of science seem to be at odds with the existing needs of policy makers and planners. Cline-Cole provides a detailed critique of forestry policy in Nigeria and explains why it is anti-social and disempowers increased participation despite rhetoric to the contrary. Woodhouse importantly ties together debates regarding dryland degradation and strategies to combat it with discussion of governance and the need for a more informed local environmental management strategies in Africa.

This issue also provides a case study of the way in which the Government of Kenya seems to have manipulated donors into accepting the emergence of a ‘really complex emergency’ between 1992-94. The article by O’Keefe and Kirkby provides considerable insight into the ways in which states can play international agencies off one against the other. It is especially the case when those agencies seldom seem to have a clear picture about what it is that they want to do and how they should address issue of relief and rehabilitation. Their case study begins with a useful clarification of what is meant by complex political emergencies – a term applied to many of Africa’s contemporary crises.

Deborah Potts and Chris Mutambirwa also offer a view about the need for more research in Africa to recognise the importance of ‘voicing out’ by respondents; listening to their needs and perceptions of government strategy in order to better understand the difficulties regarding its implementation. They use the case of land reform in Zimbabwe which they discuss with rural-urban migrants and their perceptions of the country’s land resettlement programme.
Environmental Crises and Naturalistic Fallacies?

It is now time to take stock of what characterisations of Africa's environmental crises have been and the suggested strategies that might be put in place to ameliorate them. We would certainly hope that future issues of this Review will be able to report on the range of options which Africa may have in preventing environmental crisis. One thing seems clear. The Rio Earth Summit in 1992 established a certain orthodoxy with regard to the major global environmental concerns but it still remains unclear how they directly relate to Africa; what policy recommendations can emanate from Africa rather than solely from the international agencies; and where the funding (and political will) for different strategies will come from? Rio established several universal global environmental concerns, namely bio-diversity loss, climate change and dryland degradation. A consequence of this list is that if African countries do not make cases to donors to help ameliorate these particular problems they are unlikely to receive assistance at all. It is also a problem for African NGOs which need increasingly to hitch up to international characterisations of country crises if they are not to be denied donor funds (Leach and Mearns, 1996).

It nevertheless remains unclear what the precise relevance of bio-diversity loss, climate change and dryland degradation are to Africa's environment and how particular African solutions can be promoted without simply accepting the agenda of its environmental crises set for it by the donor community.

Rio was hailed a success because it brought together representatives from 178 governments, more than a 1,000 NGOs which accepted the broad principles of recognising the global dimension to environmental crises; the importance of sustainable development (whatever that means) and coinciding pretty much with the end of the cold war, there was a promise at least that monies spent previously on armaments would be invested in 'ploughshares' and opportunities for the south to develop resource friendly strategies for growth.

Yet beneath the gloss of yet another international forum to discuss environmental issues protracted problems were confirmed at Rio and not resolved. Problems which directly impinge on Africa's ability to shape its own environmental destiny. The first was the mismatch of perception between the representatives of the North and the South. The North refused to address their disproportionately greater use of the world's resources (in fact, President Bush stressed that 'our lifestyles are not up for negotiation'; a position not far removed from Clinton's recent handwringing) while the South made clear that their environmental difficulties related to the underpinning development crises which they could not extricate themselves from. These development crises related to the persistence of unequal trade and aid regimes, the continued dependence upon one or two vulnerable cash crops or natural resources for generating foreign exchange, and poor infrastructural development which reduced flexibility to cope with global economic crises and structural adjustment. And to cap it all for the South, the World Bank followed Rio's concern to institutionalise a Global Environmental Facility by ensuring that it managed the fund and situated itself centre stage in future environmental debate. For the South this was like putting the fox in charge of the chicken run.

The World Bank's record on environmental management has been disastrous (Rich, 1994). An environmental office in the Bank did not emerge until 1970, just before the Stockholm Conference on the Environment in 1972; project lending by the Bank has aggravated rather than ameliorated environmental management, because it has
generally promoted land clearing, ranching, commercial forestry and green revolution technology which was capital intensive and required high levels of chemical inputs. Even by 1980 there were only six environmental workers out of a staff of 6,000 and they were only consulted after a ‘development’ project had been agreed.

By 1990 the World Bank had received fierce criticism from environmental lobby groups and despite the introduction of National Environmental Plans Southern representatives were pessimistic that the Bank could be useful in using its offices constructively. That was partly because since the early 1980s, the Bank’s strategy for structural adjustment lending has encouraged the export-led growth which has contributed to the environmental difficulties of African countries engaging in strategies for ‘sustainable forestry’ and the prevention of dryland degradation.

Rio also had other consequences for Africa and the South. Environmental issues were firmly perceived as issues of global concern. There were indeed collective goods, referred to as the global commons and these included clean air and water. Yet while the US and other Northern countries targeted the worlds rain forests as coming under the umbrella of global commons they were themselves reluctant to help pay for the costs of global warming which resulted from disproportionately greater (notably US) CO$_2$ emissions from the North. If any reminding is necessary, it is salutary to note that in 1996 the US accounted for 25% of the world’s total CO$_2$ emissions and only 4.7% of the world’s total population; Europe accounted for 19.6% of emissions and 9% of the world’s population (including Eastern Europe); China 13.5% of emissions and 21.5% of world population and India 3.5% of emissions and 16.3% of population. No mention is made of an African case in the debate about the ‘planet’s hottest problem’ (The Guardian, 10 October 1996) although there is concern that the Sahel may be moving northwards across the Mediterranean to southern Spain and Italy (and will therefore have a direct impact on Europe) with rising water levels reducing the size of Egypt’s Nile Delta.

US President Bill Clinton’s recent temporising on the issue has managed to alienate both the representatives of US capital, who fear reduction in economic growth, and environmentalists who are dumfounded that the US is to adopt such a conservative set of reductions in CO$_2$ emissions ahead of the December 1997 Kyoto Summit on Global Warming. The US position has already blocked any pre-Summit agreement in Bonn in October 1997 and any hope of salvaging a meaningful agreement in Japan looks weak.

The US and World Bank seem to simultaneously argue for the efficacy of the market to rationalise resource use and reduce the impact of industrial growth on a finite resource base (especially in relation to slowly regenerative fossil fuels) while also arguing for sustained economic growth (IBRD, 1992). The 1992 World Development Report, Development and the Environment, expressed genuine concern with mounting global environmental problems yet it also argued for increased ‘actually existing development’ (Sutcliffe, 1995:248) as the mechanism to reduce them. The US and the Bank remain wedded to a very naturalistic characterisation of what constitutes environmental issues. For while a technocentred view of the planet’s natural limits is acceptable to international capital as it plunders the earth’s riches, it is not helpful in generating a better understanding of the specific environments in different countries. The universalising of global environmental problems does nothing to help our specific understanding of different African crises, or whether they are crises at all.
A problem at the heart of both environmental optimists and pessimists is that there is a failure to grasp that nature itself creates different environments over time. And that to grasp the social production of the environment requires a clearer understanding of the ways in which social relationships produce the environment; what are the cultural forms underpinning particular environments and the political practices and economic institutions which may have generated crises (Benton and Redclift, 1994:1). It is important to try and break away from the dichotomous opposition between nature and culture to better understand the particular social dynamics which underpin environmental crises in Africa. The reification of the international agenda for climate change fails to grasp this: the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for example, which established three workshops on scientific processes, impacts and responses had no social science representation.

There may be a glimmer of hope in sight that at last the previous 20 years of World Bank fundamentalism is wavering. The 1997 World Development Report, for instance, argues for a stronger role of government in facilitating economic growth. It also of course, just in case we are tempted to believe that the IBRD has experienced a Damascus road conversion, declares once more the sanctity of property rights and the importance of private entrepreneurial activity to development. But while there is no apology for the havoc and suffering which the World Bank has inflicted on Africa with its earlier declared goals of erasing the state from economic activity, the limitations of the private sector are now recognised, not least in relation to the provision of environmental assets:

In particular, markets undersupply a range of collective goods – public goods, and private goods that have important spillover benefits for society at large. Generally these are goods that have a significant impact on the quality of life: clean air and safe water, basic literacy and public health, and low-cost transportation and communications. There are also goods whose provision can dramatically affect the welfare and life prospects of the poorest in society (1997:51-52)

Access to safe water and the control of infectious disease are public goods and services with large externalities that will be underprovided, or not provided at all, by the private sector (Ibid, 52).

This change in declared Bank policy will not suddenly alter the way goods and services are delivered in Africa. The Bank may have underestimated the damage which it has done in Africa in rolling back the state and dismantling its activities. It will also have some explaining to do in countries where political leaders have adopted Bank guidelines for reducing state intervention selectively, and sometimes more aggressively, than even the international financial agencies may have wanted. One such case is Egypt where the naturalistic characterisation of its impending environmental crises dominates national debate.

Egypt: Gift of the Nile?

Discussions of environmental crisis in Egypt begin with the crude notion that its cultivable land base is just three per cent of its total land area which needs to feed 60 million people. Moreover the Nile provides 95 per cent of the country's water resources (80 per cent of which enters from Ethiopia). These facts have lead the Government of Egypt (GoE) to promote orthodox policies of land reclamation, resettlement and market pricing to reduce denuding practices of over-use of fertilisers and pesticides.
This orthodoxy has drawn on scientific discourse to support the neo-Malthusian characterisation of Egypt’s crisis and a strategy which is set to promote the political and economic \textit{status quo}. That \textit{status quo} has generated the idea in the first place that there is an environmental crisis and it has been caused by too many poor Egyptian’s in relation to the country’s available resource base (see, \textit{inter alia} Ikram, 1980; cf critique Mitchell, 1995).

Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation officials promote an environmental orthodoxy moreover, which suggests that farmers are the promoters of environmental crises. The implication is that local farming practices need to be changed in order to somehow preserve the environmental base (whatever that is) yet economic reforms are already undermining farming livelihoods.

The reforms being implemented in Egypt stem from the 1991 structural adjustment agreement but also predate it to the mid-1980s when Yusef Wali, Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Prime Minister began a series of measures to liberalise agriculture. Market deregulation has increased farmgate prices, but these have been offset by increased input costs. Since 1 October 1997, the livelihoods of up to 1.6 million tenants have been threatened by the full implementation of Law 96 of 1992. That legislation revokes Nasserist legislation giving tenants land rights in perpetuity and removes any ceiling on land rents. Since 1 October landlords have began charging market rates in land rent which have led to significant farmer opposition. More than 20 Egyptian’s have lost their lives in demonstrations and opposition to Law 96; there has been collusion between landlords and local police who have imprisoned and in some cases tortured protesters and women headed households have especially been dispossessed: landlords have used Law 96 as the vehicle for kicking women off their land because many have been seen as bad debtors.

The World Bank and other international financial agencies in Egypt discovered the mounting environmental costs of economic reform in much the same way as they finally recognised the ‘social costs of adjustment’. The normal model which the Bank applies to adjustment and the environment is that because SAP’s eliminate subsidies, change tariff and quota regimes it will affect the types and quantities of resources used in the production process. This has had an effect in Egypt in terms of a fall in total aggregate fertiliser use. The Bank model also suggests that as export cash crop production becomes more profitable for farmers through higher producer prices, farmers will have an incentive to invest in the management activities which protect and enhance their ‘natural capital’.

There are a number of problems with this model. Foremost are linkages between policy and outcome and that relationships are viewed as causal and linear and implicitly measurable: the emphasis is on allocative efficiency and on marginal change assuming a basically stable structure of farming system. The model argues that the causes of environmental degradation are market or government failure, a characterisation that has generated a very limited view of environmental degradation. For example, if we look at fertiliser use in Egypt since liberalisation there has been a decline in its overall demand – its price in many cases rose by 400%. Yet what we do not know is how that fall in demand has been distributed across land holders. We also know little about whether the change in fertiliser use has actually affected optimal levels of application. And we generally know little about non-price factors which shape the way farmers make decisions and which relate to uneven access to resources.
The GoE now argues that Egypt’s ‘population and resource variables are set on a collision course and dictates a development strategy based on a more efficient use of limited natural resources’ (GoE, 1992:15). The GoE’s response to its own characterisation of environmental crisis is to link scarcity of cultivated area with water availability. The GoE suggests that limited water has become polluted because of excessive and improper use. ‘Poor water management’ leads ‘... to the salinization of good agricultural land, reducing its productivity and requiring large investments for rehabilitation’ (Ibid, 15). Better resource management of scarce resources should now, it is argued by the IFIs and the GoE, be structured around incentives for conservation and better utilisation as well as the ‘progressive introduction of an appropriate mix of charges for cost recovery and water user charges’ (Ibid, 16).

In much the same way that there is an academic and institutional consensus which characterises Egypt’s agricultural crisis, there is also a dominant group which stresses the nature of the country’s environmental crisis (Faris and Hasan Khan, 1993; EEAA, 1995; USAID, 1990, 1995; compare, Onyeji and Fischer, 1994; Galal Amin (nd); Kiskh, 1994). It is an environmental crisis moreover, which in rural Egypt is identified as resulting from decades of state intervention. Specifically, it has been argued that years of state subsidies on fertilisers and the absence of enforced private property rights, including cost recovery and water user charges, have led to inefficient resource use.

Three laws and two recent government documents at least on the surface, appear to indicate GoE seriousness about environmental policy making. The three acts of legislation are Law 48 of 1982 which deals with the protection of the Nile, Law 38 which deals with solid waste disposal, and Law 4 of 1994 which signalled for many the first legislation to promote a unified environmental policy. Law 4 is meant to have confirmed the importance of the GoE environmental action plan and give teeth to the newly established Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (GoE, 1992; GoE, 1995).

Yet in a bureaucratic state structure, where the politics of spoils and corruption seem endemic, it is not surprising that environmental concerns have been dogged by the failure to enforce even limited mechanisms to restrict a range of environmental crises: soil erosion, water logging, salination, agricultural land encroachment by brick making, lead emissions and so on. There has been some success in establishing a policy framework for controlling airborne pollution. Cairo is now recorded as having the highest rates of lead concentration – more than three times the level in Bangkok and Mexico City (although accuracy of the data collection is questionable) – and USAID has been at the fore in assisting the GoE in setting new targets for emissions, phasing out petrol subsidies in the hope of reducing demand and establishing a regulatory authority to police these measures.

Yet there is little optimism, despite the rhetoric and the institution building to the contrary, that the GoE will in the near future be successful in winning its fight against environmental crisis in the urban centres let alone in the crucial rural sectors. For it remains the case that even in the urban areas, business and Governorate authorities seem to continue to collude in refusing to enforce environmental controls. As was recently noted: ‘The environment is not their [GoE] first priority, what politicians need or require comes first, then comes the environment’ (Al Ahram Weekly, 15-21 February 1996).

There is nevertheless, evidence that a link is made by the IFIs and the GoE, between environmental regulation (especially the strategy to price environmental assets like water and promote the privatisation of land), and the general economic reform
strategy. While remaining critical of this position, a leading GoE adviser has noted that the linkages being made by the state are the result of considerable IFI pressure, regarding the efficacy of the economic reform process and the need for a supply side formula to ameliorate Egypt’s perceived environmental crisis (interview, May, 1994). Some advisers remain unconvinced by IFI conventional orthodox strategy to restrict environmental entitlements to those who can pay. Their criticism goes unheard except when the GoE periodically demonstrates its public posturing against an IFI driven programme of reform.

Egypt’s recognition of environmental issues since 1990 has thus been driven by a number of pressures including the IFI agenda for reform. An additional pressure has come from within the Egyptian polity itself. That has resulted from increased national recognition of struggles over local resources, levels of water logging and salination of arable land; one estimate is that more than 2.4 million feddans of irrigated land suffers from salinisation aggravated by insufficient salt balance control due to difficulties in water management. Linked to this is the mounting demand in the region on the Nile water supply following the cessation of conflict in the Horn of Africa. The Nile provides Egypt with an internationally agreed yearly amount of 55.5 billion cubic metres while groundwater sources account for just 2.5 billion cubic metres. The projection is that Egypt will increase its demand of Nile water by the year 2000 and will therefore need to increase usage of drain water (the quality of which will have to improve dramatically) and stem the rivers' flow into the sea (GoE, 1992:26-7).

A further pressure which has put environmental concerns on Egypt’s national political agenda has been the international debate about global environmental change. Egypt’s Framework of National Action Plan for dealing with Global Warming (1995) notes the obvious alarm at the impact which global warming may have on Egyptians, especially those living in the delta. One projection for climate change by the year 2000 projects a 4 degree Celsius increase in temperature for Cairo. Another report, carried out by scientists at Cairo University, argues that there will be a dramatic reduction in the flow of the Nile into lower Egypt by up to 77% in a doubled carbon dioxide scenario (GoE, 1995:4; see also Delft Hydraulics, 1990). A parallel study of the impact of rising tide levels of 0.5 metres on lower Egypt suggests that millions of Egyptians will be displaced at a cost of US$2.5 billion. That is in addition to the loss of valued food producing land.

Despite the obvious amount of research and activity which the GoE has promoted relating to environmental pressures, and especially the possible impact of global environmental change, there are many shortcomings in the way its representatives formulate the problems confronting Egypt and the proffered strategies to ameliorate them. The first point to make is the obvious reluctance that the GoE has had in coming to terms with environmental issues. Despite legislation empowering Governorate officials to fine offenders of airborne pollution and the energy with which USAID, amongst other donors, have driven home the message about environmental crisis, IFI and GoE thinking is rooted in the preoccupation with supply side formula and particularly price incentives as the mechanism for transforming people’s perceptions and actions to manage the environment. Moreover, most of the Environment Action Plan of 1992 is simply a shopping list for donors and are particularly concerned with urban issues of clean water and sewage disposal. For the World Bank, ‘increased awareness of environmental problems and their consequences can motivate people to take action and increase their willingness to pay for environmental services’ (1994:iv). In a further summary document, and with clear parallels with the way in which policy
is driven in Egypt, the Bank argues that the forging of a partnership for environmental action will be driven by the private sector and involves the state reduction of subsidies, increases in the pricing of tariffs on energy, water and sanitation and the provision of land tenure to increase security for peasants (IBRD, 1994). This strategy is mirrored by the GoE whose declared policy is to provide 'incentives for proper management of the environment through appropriate pricing of inputs to encourage conservation and recovery/recycling'. It seems too early to note whether Washington’s changed line on environmental assets will alter the debate about pricing Egypt’s environmental assets.

Egypt’s conversion to environmental management is underway; and while considerable progress has been made in raising public awareness, although only in urban centres and with limited number of social groups (Hopkins and Mehanna, 1996), and promoting policy reforms through price incentives, the state’s programme is limited by a shortage of funds.

There has also been a preoccupation with seeing the Nile as the sole lifeblood of Egypt. This in many ways has been an environmentally determinist characterisation of Egypt’s political economy for decades. It has also been the source of much recent popularist writing on Egypt (Kaplan, 1996, compare Ikram, 1980 and Waterbury, 1979; contrast the exemplary critique by Mitchell, 1995). The GoE has colluded in the view that it is the Nile and very little besides which maintains Egypt. This view helps to sustain the historical magic of Egypt as an hydraulic society and the continued need therefore, for a powerful omnipotent Pharaonic President. This view was spelt out in early 1997 in the debate about the construction of a 500 mile Toskha canal in upper Egypt. The project led one commentator to note,

"Moving to the desert is a must. There is no better way to inspire people than through a dramatic announcement. The president knows his people [sic]. Egyptians tend to join hands when they are inspired by an urgent national project" (Beshai, quoted in The Financial Times, 13 May 1997).

Although the new scheme is seen by its supporters to offer the outlet for Egypt’s growing population and environmental relief for the valley either side of the Nile where so many Egyptians live, the scheme also promises to bring with it many new hazards rather than reduce pressure on the Nile waters. The plan threatens to pump water from the Toskha reservoir using a pumping station to irrigate 500,000 feddans of land. Yet this scheme, personally embraced and promoted by the President depends for its success on three crucial things. The first is availability of water. In 1996/97 the Toskha reservoir was exceptionally filled by water from an overspill from Lake Nasser. That had only been possible because of unusually heavy rains in Ethiopia. The Toskha project is dependent upon the diversion of one-tenth of the 55.5 billion cubic metres of water which Egypt receives under the 1959 Nile waters agreement with Sudan and Ethiopia. And as peace settlements emerged in a hitherto war ravaged greater Horn of Africa, the demand for increased shares of the Nile water seem probable. Indeed in February 1997, Cairo hosted a major conference, attended by all 10 states with access to the Nile (Rwanda, Burundi, D.R. of Congo, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan). The conference debated plans for securing access to Nile waters into the next millenium. As an adviser to the Canadian International Development Agency noted,

"There are 250 million people living in the Nile basin and this will become one billion by 2050. But the amount of water is exactly the same. More people will die very soon if they don't start..."
The difficulty for the GoE and its obvious concern is that any new Nile waters agreement may adversely affect Egypt’s development initiatives. The 1959 agreement was not based on equity and with Ethiopia hitherto denied access to Nile waters, any development plans in Addis will affect access for other signatories to the agreement. This concern underpinned the Cairo conference concern to raise £62 million in aid to secure greater access to the 6,750km river’s water and to devise an equitable distribution of it. Yet if Egypt goes ahead with the scheme, it is possible that water take off to the New Valley will reduce the level of the Nile to less than the necessary 1.5 metres required for draught of river boats.

The second reason why the Toskha project is untenable is that there is no proper estimate of what its financial cost will be. Quoted figures have varied between US$1 billion for the entire canal of 500 miles to Farafra to US$1.9 billion for simply the first stage of 300 miles to Dakhla. This first stage will take an estimated 10 years to build and already the plans for the first phase have been changed two months after they had supposedly been agreed (The Financial Times, 13 May 1997). If this project goes ahead, and it is likely given the personal investment to the canal made by the GoE not dissimilar to Nasser’s commitment to the Aswan High Dam, then it will suck in most available domestic income and donor assistance. The World Bank, for example has already committed a US$200 million credit to the Agricultural Development Bank for reclamation in the New Valley and Mubarak’s close friend, Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi after whom the northern canal is named, has reportedly invested US$12 million.

At a time of economic restructuring and the continued underdevelopment of resources and people in upper Egypt, the investment in what many see as a white elephant, not least because of its vulnerability to low Nile flows which will make it redundant, seems incredible. Yet policy makers need to think about the connections between environmental issues and social and infrastructural investments which also impact on peoples environmental assets. This is something policy makers repeatedly fail to do. It is easier to separate environmental issues as those things which are related to the ‘natural world’ than to problematise the idea of the environment and see how it is shaped by a range of social and institutional actions. The value added of US$1 billion (an amount equal to almost a third of Egypt’s total net official development assistance in 1993), invested elsewhere in the productive economy, other than Toskha, for example in health and education for the forthcoming generations of Egyptian’s, would seem a far more valuable investment. Total GoE investment in education in 1992 was about US$1.5 billion (5 per cent of GDP) and in health in 1990 just 1 per cent of GDP – an estimated US$330 million (UNDP, 1996; World Bank, 1994a).

The Politics of the Environment

Concern with global warming and other international (northern) politiking with managing the global environment has undermined considerations of justice, equality and redistribution of the planet’s resources. Even 10-15 years ago it was seldom the case that environmental concerns were reported so loudly by the world’s media but as the millenium draws to a close we are daily informed about impending gloom. Such gloom has always accompanied crises in capitalist (industrial) development. Whether
in the 1780s, late nineteenth century, 1930s or 1970s, concern with resource use, or 'the limits to growth' have displaced concerns with the social consequences of capitalist growth: inequality, poverty, social differentiation, uneven and combined international development. Such has been the impact too in the 1990s. Industrialists concerned with sustaining profit margins and environmentalists concerned with the demise of the planet have tended to fail to address the underpinning consequences of late capitalist development and underdevelopment: global inequality and the South's attempt to catch up with a western prescribed model of (post-) industrial society. While it is time to now address the resource implications for continued industrial growth, it must also be time to consider redistribution of global assets to offset strategies for catch up in the South which have tended to have harsher environmental consequences than might be durable.

This is not a suggestion for complacency; neither is it a suggestion for curtailing development in the South. On the contrary, 'green imperialism' has taken on a significance for many in the South who resist instruction from the North about how quickly or in what direction their development should take. It is an agenda for environmental action which is rooted in the development needs of the world's most needy, not the consumer demands of the US or Europe. It suggests the need to address the simultaneous agenda of global warming as well as the equally important demand for addressing the crisis facing 40 per cent of Africa's population suffering from chronic undernutrition. And it also means that the South's more powerful states like Brazil and India need to look beyond solely defending their sovereign rights. Alongside Brazil's defence of Amazonia (now conveniently for the North characterised as part of the global commons) or industrialisation strategies, these countries must provide a platform for other Southern countries to debate the nature of underdevelopment, global poverty and human suffering - issues which need to be part of the environmental agenda with Northern donors.

There cannot be a meaningful challenge to the world's global environmental problems unless the wealthier nations grasp the nettle of reform, temporarily slowing their own growth. This would enable the South to establish an agenda which might (with enough political pressure) generate not only economic growth but simultaneously promote livelihood strategies embraced by the poor. The mistake in Egypt on the eve of the millenium is that at such a turning point, the regime is rushing to disempower and alienate rather than incorporate and legitimate strategies for rural and urban growth. Egypt will always be held as a special case, not least because of the patience with which the US has shown to a geo-strategic ally. Yet as the World Bank now seems, in Washington at least, to encourage the state to provide a facilitating infrastructure for the provision and safeguarding of environmental 'assets', the Cairo regime has confirmed a rural strategy which will promote an absentee landowning class. There has been a wonderful opportunity to generate rural growth on the basis of land reform, which could limit land holdings to about five acres and which would promote a real redistribution of income favouring 80 per cent of Egypt's farmers - and which would consequently have a very positive impact on levels of rural poverty. Any talk of such a land reform again might seem utopian to any observer of the Egyptian scene. Yet political transformation is necessary if the economic hardships from Egypt's real environmental problems are to be redressed rather than brushed under the Government's large carpet.
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Promoting (Anti-)Social Forestry in Northern Nigeria?

Reginald Cline-Cole

Across Nigeria, there exists a need for a comprehensive inventory of natural resources, including forestry resources, and for the identification and promotion of ecologically sound development practice. This is of particular relevance in the drylands of the extreme north which depend overwhelmingly on biomass energy, and where the dominant form of land use change is the expansion of agriculture into woodland, shrubland and grassland. Here, vast expanses of land are reportedly affected by processes of degradation culminating in 'desertification'. In order to facilitate both the formulation of an energy policy and the design of a long-term strategy which accorded proper priority to environmental protection and conservation within this agro-ecological region, Silviconsult Ltd., an international consultancy firm, was contracted to conduct a detailed study of its fuelwood demand and supply situation.

This article assesses those aspects of Silviconsult's policy, programme and project recommendations which are based on the widespread current preference within natural resources management (NRM) circles for increasing interaction between the State, private sector and local communities. In particular, it focuses on recommended initiatives which are premised on the existence or creation of an enabling legal/tenure/institutional framework founded on notions of, decentralised, or participatory, forestry resource management. The main aim is to emphasise that in their failure to problematise notions such as 'community, and participation', these recommendations contribute (possibly inadvertently) to safeguarding the hegemony of dominant forestry discourses and practices, even while they employ a language evocative of reformist intent and suffused with more than a hint of subversiveness.

Environmental deterioration associated with petroleum production in the coastal deltas, particularly the much-publicised Ogoni(land) case, represents Nigeria's most important national environment-development issue. Yet despite its value as a catalyst for the 'greening' of both state and locality politics (Watts, 1996), the Ogoni case is unrepresentative of environmental concerns outside the oil-producing areas. It does not address the full range of national preoccupations reflected in the Environmental Protection Decree, the National Resource Conservation Decree or the National Conservation Strategy.
Nigeria needs a comprehensive inventory of natural resources, including forestry resources. In the interim, it needs to expand an ecologically sound development practice with the aim of conserving genetic resources (NEST, 1991). Indeed, this is reflected in initiatives as diverse as attempts to achieve conservation-with-development in the Cross River National Park in the coastal forest zone, or the detailed study of nutrient dynamics in intensively cultivated areas of the northern savannas (Harris, 1996; Ite, 1997).

These issues are of particular relevance in the drylands occupying the northernmost third of the country. That area supports some of the densest populations in West Africa (Snrech, 1995) where the dominant form of land use change is the expansion of agriculture into woodland, shrubland and grassland (Silviconsult, 1991). It is also an area which is reportedly affected by processes of degradation culminating in ‘desertification’ (FDFALR, 1989; NEST, 1991). The draft National Conservation Strategy’s policy statement issued in 1988 referred to the need for increased forestry research, protection and conservation. It resonates with such preoccupations, as does a national forestry policy statement issued in 1988.

That statement identified ten objectives including strong support for greater protection of the existing forest estate; the latter’s consolidation and expansion, to include the establishment of non-timber (NTFP) reserves geared towards local needs; and the sustainable management and use of forestry resources involving, where possible, private participation and investment. Significantly, too, the statement advocated the wider use of alternatives to woodfuel, and greater efficiency in the use of available wood energy supplies (FDFALR, 1988). Estimates which suggest that large areas of dryland forests are cleared each year to meet regional fuelwood and charcoal needs serve to keep these considerations as the focus of policy concerns (Osemeobo, 1990).

The theme of woodfuel use and supply is also taken up in the Federal Government’s energy policy. That recognises the need for forestry resources to be exploited in a ‘rational’ manner, if they are to continue to make (in)direct contributions to subsistence, trade, exchange and environmental protection (FMST, 1987). But although there is explicit policy recognition of the need to diversify household energy use away from wood fuel, the fiscal rigours associated with structural adjustment dictate that this will have to be done within a context where ‘the prices of energy types should reflect their opportunity costs [and] energy prices should closely relate to market forces without substantial burdens of subsidies’ (Lukman, 1988:10). Unfortunately, the gradual removal of energy subsidies which this implies, increases the competitiveness of woodfuel while undermining the status of petroleum-based fuels as potential household energy substitutes.

In order to facilitate both the formulation of an energy policy with particular reference to the drylands, and the design of a long-term regional strategy which accorded proper priority to environmental protection and conservation within the region, the international consultancy firm, Silviconsult Ltd., was contracted to conduct a detailed study of the fuelwood demand and supply situation (Endnote 1). The company was required to suggest policies for meeting future regional woodfuel demand, as well as for reducing adverse environmental impacts linked to the satisfaction of this demand. It was hoped that Silviconsult’s project report would serve to guide federal and state authorities, as well as donors, in planning fuelwood-related projects. In particular, expectations were high that Silviconsult findings would provide direct input into the
multi-million dollar World Bank supported Afforestation II project, which had started in 1987, and which had an impressive array of wide-ranging objectives (Endnote 2).

This article highlights Silviconsult’s main policy recommendations. I detail elsewhere problems relating to the sharp contrast between the narrowly-circumscribed nature of Silviconsult’s terms of reference and the broad sweep of concerns of Afforestation II (see Cline-Cole, forthcoming). Silviconsult’s recommendations were based on the widespread current preference within natural resources management (NRM) for increasing interaction between the State, private sector and local communities. I focus on recommended initiatives which are premised on the existence or creation of an enabling legal/tenure/institutional framework founded on notions of decentralised or ‘participatory’ forestry resource management. I highlight that in their failure to problematise notions such as ‘community’ and ‘participation’ they contribute to safeguarding the hegemony of dominant forestry discourses and practices. They do that even while employing a reformist language suffused with more than a hint of subversiveness. The article starts by summarising Silviconsult’s (1991) findings in relation to regional fuel use, acquisition and supply/availability.

**Energy Use and Consumption**

Tables 1 and 2 highlight the vital role of woodfuels in meeting dryland household and non-household energy needs. Taking household and non-household uses combined, some 13.9 to 17.4 million tonnes of wood; 1.7 to 2.2 million tonnes of *kara* (sorghum stalk) and about 112,000 tonnes of charcoal are consumed in the drylands each year. Most of this consumption takes place in the rural areas where the bulk of the regional population lives in households that are slightly larger than both their urban counterparts and the regional average household (11.3, 9.3 and 10.8 people per household, respectively). Although 1,312 households out of a total sample of some 2,350 urban and rural households had tried alternatives to wood at some time in the past, only 202 reported that they did not use any firewood at the time of the survey (Endnote 3). Household charcoal consumption was insignificant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Aggregate Biomass Consumption (000t/yr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fuel Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charcoal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Kara:* sorghum stalk; *ns:* not significant; *Institutions:* schools, colleges, universities, prisons, hospitals; *Food Industries:* bakeries, restaurants, roadside food sellers, brewers.
On a heat equivalent basis wood generates 87.3% of the household sector's gross energy needs; kerosene and gas, the most popular alternatives to fuelwood in the household sector, provide 4.7% and 1.1% as much energy as wood. Wood also provides 47.2% of the gross calorific value in the non-household sector, where its use is greatest among roadside cooked food sellers and blacksmiths. However, kara and charcoal are much more important here than in the household sector: they provide 21.7% and 31.1% of energy consumed, or somewhere between about half and two-thirds, respectively, of that supplied by wood. Kara accounts for 7.7% of all household energy consumed; while charcoal, whose main domestic function is for heating during the cold months of the year, makes an insignificant contribution. Some 85% of households use more wood during the cold season.

### Table 2: Gross Energy Values of Aggregate Fuel Consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>% of wood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 t</td>
<td>13,582</td>
<td>15,064</td>
<td>17,162</td>
<td></td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cal/kg</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bn k/cal</td>
<td>47,537</td>
<td>2,724</td>
<td>60,705</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kara</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 t</td>
<td>1,203</td>
<td>1,341</td>
<td>1,527</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cal/kg</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bn k/cal</td>
<td>4,228</td>
<td>4,693</td>
<td>5,344</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerosene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>million 1</td>
<td>272.4</td>
<td>302.1</td>
<td>344.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cal/1</td>
<td>8,300</td>
<td>8,300</td>
<td>8,300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bn k/cal</td>
<td>2,261</td>
<td>2,507</td>
<td>2,858</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 t</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cal/kg</td>
<td>11,700</td>
<td>11,700</td>
<td>11,700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bn k/cal</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>660</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total bn k/cal</td>
<td>54,548</td>
<td>60,503</td>
<td>69,567</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| non-household |      |      |       |            |           |
| wood          |      |      |       |            |           |
| 1,000 t       | 292   |       |       |            |           |
| cal/kg        | 3,500 |       |       |            |           |
| bn k/cal      | 1,022 |       |       | 47.2       |           |
| Kara          |      |      |       |            |           |
| 1,000 t       | 134   |       |       |            |           |
| cal/kg        | 3,500 |       |       |            |           |
| bn k/cal      | 469   |       |       | 21.7       | 45.9      |
| Charcoal      |      |      |       |            |           |
| 1,000 t       | 112   |       |       |            |           |
| cal/kg        | 6,000 |       |       |            |           |
| bn k/cal      | 672   |       |       | 31.1       | 65.7      |
| Total Bn k/cal | 2,163 |       |       | 100.0      |           |

*Note: energy is measured in calories (cal) and kilocalories (k/cal) throughout*
Fuel Acquisition

The food industries buy the greater proportion (96-100%) of their fuelwood requirements, mostly from depots: 78% of brewers, 90% of roadside cooked food sellers, 95% of restaurants and 96% of bakeries. Most buy daily, with this being more prevalent among roadside food sellers than restaurants, brewers and bakeries. Over half of all craft industries collect little or none of the fuelwood they use; about a fifth buy almost all their fuelwood requirements. Like household consumption, the more rural the location of the activity, the smaller the proportion of overall fuel needs which is purchased. Nonetheless, more than 80% of potters and 50% of blacksmiths buy fuelwood at least once a week, although many (70% of potters and 47% of blacksmiths) also collect fuelwood, frequently from live branches and trees. Yet while potters obtain almost all their fuelwood requirements from their own land, blacksmiths also collect wood on village land or land belonging to friends and relatives, as well as on state land and land whose owners are unknown. Consequently, potters do not normally travel more than 4 to 6km to collect fuelwood, whereas more than a third of blacksmiths travel distances of 7km or further.

Prices paid by food industry users range from N0.19/kg. (bakeries) and N0.24/kg (restaurants), with these being highest in the rainy season and lowest in the hot dry season. Few institutions report any significant changes in wood procurement practices.

As the largest individual consumers of wood in the food industry sector, bakeries buy more fuelwood from outside their immediate neighbourhood than restaurants, roadside food sellers and brewers. Bakeries are the least dependent on self-collection while brewers are the most heavily dependent. Bakeries also stockpile more wood than the other food industries, and maintain these stocks for far longer than any of the other uses. On the other hand roadside food sellers make daily wood purchases; along with bakeries, restaurants and brewers report longer intervals between successive purchases.

Urban households are less likely to collect wood than rural households and it is rare for large stockpiles of wood to be maintained. The tendency is for the purchase of small quantities of wood at frequent intervals, often on a daily basis. Door-to-door sellers are the main suppliers, although many people (also) buy from stationary neighbourhood depots. A significant number of consumers report that they acquire supplies from out-of-town sources, usually along intercity roads.

Nearly half of all respondents who collect wood do so throughout the year. For others it is a seasonal activity undertaken during the dry season, when agricultural labour demands are low. Collecting wood is an overwhelmingly male task in the drylands, although women and children also participate. Collectors exploit live branches (55%) and cut down living trees (27%), in addition to collecting deadwood. Nearly two-thirds of households which collect fuelwood do so from their own land. Indeed, on densely settled farms, this may be the principal source of fuelwood. Nonetheless, about half of all collecting households use more than one source, with about a third of these using open access forest; nearly a quarter each using the land of friends or relatives and common access village land; while 15% and 11%, respectively, exploit state land and land whose owners are unknown, presumably illegally. Overall, private land represents the primary source of fuel for two-thirds of all collecting households, but 'other' land is used by two-thirds of those households who exploit more than a single source. More than half of collecting households travel no further
than 2km in their search for fuel. Distance travelled does not significantly affect the proportion of overall fuelwood needs obtained through collection. Nearly a third of household users reported no change in recent procurement practices. Of those who did, three times as many rural as urban households claim to travel further than in the past to collect wood, while twice as many urban as rural households are currently devoting more money to buying wood than previously.

Fuelwood Transport and Exchange

The fuelwood trade largely operates outside any form of state regulation. The trade can be divided loosely into production/supply, transportation and distribution sub-sectors, although there exist clear overlaps between them. A recent description of the woodfuel trade in Senegal applies to our study area. Wood traders

*are often urban-based entrepreneurs who hire woodcutters, rent or own means of transport, and sell woodfuels to [wholesale and] retail outlets in the major cities. Transporters ... sometimes act as woodfuel merchants themselves and at other times sell their services as transporters to a merchant or a woodcutter* (Ribot, 1995:10).

The summary which follows is based on the returns of questionnaires administered to a sample of 122 transporters and 221 sellers/traders. Two-thirds of the traders interviewed were small-scale traders in sub-depos; door-to-door sellers and traders in major depots make up the rest of the sample in roughly equal numbers. The analysis concentrates on rural-urban fuelwood flows and the urban fuelwood trade.

About three-quarters of all wood being transported at the time of the Silviconsult survey came from distances of between 51km and 200km; less than 10% of shipments had been transported over distances of more than 200km. About 79% of Bauchi’s total supplies, and somewhat more than 90% of supplies encountered in Sokoto and Zaria travel over distances of between 51km and 200km. More than 80% of supplies transported to Katsina Town and Maiduguri come from distances of between 16km and 200km. Some 40% of metropolitan Kano’s imports come from distances greater than 200km, which emphasizes the powerful pull of its market. Possibly 5% to 10% of regional fuelwood supplies are imported into the drylands from wetter and better wooded/forested areas to the south. Bauchi, Kaduna, Sokoto and Plateau are the most important exporting states.

The ‘farmgate’ price of wood varies with the seasons. Fuelwood is at its most expensive during the rainy season, and is cheapest during the dry, hot season. However, delivery frequencies are least during the short, hot season rather than the rainy season. This suggests that rainy season price increases are only partly caused by actual physical supply shortages. Not only does bad weather seem to interrupt wood collection and transport, but labour for collection is also diverted to farm work. That is because the average wage for tree cutting is about N5 per day which is less than the agricultural wage or *kivadago*. The reported wholesale price of wood is N0.17/kg.

Transporters are mostly self-employed men who either transport wood which they acquire themselves with the express intention of selling on at a profit in one of the regional urban markets, or which they are being paid to transport by somebody else. Transporters claim that although they trade in wood they are rarely involved in its collection/production, preferring instead to acquire wood ‘second hand’ from producers at the ‘top’ end of the commodity chain. The urban firewood trade is rigidly hierarchical, with a large number of small sellers, who handle only small daily
quantities of wood, and a few large dealers, who report huge daily sales (Cline-Cole et al. 1990). Household consumers represent the single largest group of clients. About a third of dealers also cater to industrial users (restaurants, bakeries, hotels). Institutional consumers (almost negligible in number when compared with total household numbers) only patronise a small number of dealers, usually the bigger ones, but absorb a much greater proportion of total market volume than their numbers suggest. While the majority of door-to-door sellers function as mobile outlets of stationary operators (who supply them with cart and wood on trust) and consider them ‘client-employees’, some buy supplies from these and other big(ger) dealers and operate on their own account.

Firewood catchment areas of state capitals overlap widely. Bauchi and Jos import more than half of their supplies, with Bauchi imports coming from Borno, Kaduna, Katsina, Plateau and Kano; and imports into Jos from Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Kaduna. Kano Town which has the widest supply radius of any settlement in northern Nigeria, with fuelwood from sources in every single state in the study area being sold in its markets, although this does not prevent rural Kano from exporting small quantities to Kaduna, Bauchi and Katsina States. In contrast, Sokoto, Maiduguri and Zaria do not import wood from outside the boundaries of their respective parent states.

Both in Kano and elsewhere, Anogeissus leiocarpus is by far the most frequently cited species stocked by urban sellers. It is the most important source of firewood in all northern Nigeria. Other firewood trees stocked by sellers are Acacia albida, Balanites aegyptiaca, Combretum micranthum, Guiera senegalensis, Isoberlinia doka, Pterocarpus erinaceous and Afzelia africana. Close to 50 fuelwood species are stocked by urban dealers.

Retail prices tend to be lower in Zaria, Jos and Sokoto than in Maiduguri and Katsina, while wholesale prices are highest in Maiduguri and Katsina. Kano fuelwood prices demonstrate the widest spread in the region, with households reporting both the lowest (N0.15/kg or less) and the highest (over N0.50/kg) recorded unit prices. Across the drylands as a whole, a bundle of firewood costs N2.00 on average, although major consumers/buyers (usually non-domestic users) reportedly pay the slightly lower price of N1.80; slightly less than half of the sample of dealers claim to offer concessionary rates of up to 10% less to such consumers.

**Fuelwood Production and Tree Planting**

Farmland occupies about a third of the drylands and, next to woodland, contains more standing wood volume than any other regional land-use category. Much of this is due to the activities of rural households whose members, as well as protecting volunteer trees from grazing animals and other hazards, also plant tree seedlings; only 7% report that they have planted no trees (compared to 35% of urban households), and significantly less than 10% that no trees grow on their farms. Indeed, given that the modal number of trees per farm is ten, and that most households have reportedly planted between one and ten trees each, it would appear that a significant proportion of regional farm trees have actually been planted. About a third of households who have not planted trees cite a lack of land as the main reason. Overall, people who ‘borrow’ or hire land appear to collect less (and buy more) of their wood requirements than those who own land.
In addition to its role in satisfying rural demand/consumption (even densely populated areas such as those near Kano are self-sufficient in fuelwood even though natural woodland and shrubland have nearly disappeared locally), farm fuelwood accounts for about 30% and 5%, respectively, of the supplies handled by rural-urban transporters and urban dealers. Nonetheless, the dominant reason householders give for planting trees is fruit and food production; shade provision emerges as a second reason. Only as third choice reasons do erosion control and fuelwood provision emerge as more important than the others. This is reflected in the choice of farm trees: the five most common dryland farm trees are Parkia biglobosa, Azadirachta indica, Adansonia digitata, Acacia albida and Mangifera indica. Anogeissus leiocarpus, the regional fuel tree par excellence, is only the sixth most plentiful tree.

While a large proportion of wood users plant trees, only an insignificant few (1% of roadside food sellers and 7% of brewers) get any fuelwood from such trees. The most important reasons for planting trees are for shade or beauty, for fruit, and as protection for soil against erosion. A negligible number water, fence or prune the trees. Protection from grazing animals is the only significant form of management reported. Urban woodsellers who planted trees did so mainly for shade or beauty, to reduce soil erosion, and for fruit and food production. Significantly, firewood production was just one consideration, and not a very important one at that, in the decision to plant trees.

State and parastatal forestry institutions/establishments also plant trees, mostly in the form of plantations. These were originally justified in terms of fuelwood production but are now used primarily for the more profitable production of polewood rather than fuelwood. There are an estimated 40,000ha of plantations, some 4,000ha to 15,000ha of small woodlots (complete records do not exist) and about 1,500km of shelterbelt currently in existence (if not under proper management) in the region; these are stocked for the most part with Neem (Azadirachta indica), Eucalypts and Acacias.

Despite the fact that woodlot establishment has recently received a boost in places like Katsina, regional planting/management programmes have not generally been sustained, largely because of the continued (if inadequate) funding of regional shelterbelt establishment/management, and an enduring fascination with other kinds of plantation work. To varying degrees, a lack of seedlings, problems of land tenure, and a shortage of skilled personnel have all played a part in ensuring that public sector reforestation activities have remained limited in scope and impact, at least in fuelwood terms. Such plantings occupy only 0.17% of the drylands and produce a negligible 0.4% of an estimated total regional consumption of some 15 million m³/yr.

That lack of progress has led to the emergence of initiatives based on popularising farm tree planting, both as a possible response to the problem of deforestation and as an indirect way of supplementing fuelwood supplies. Farm trees are thus the primary focus of several regional initiatives, several of which have been funded by the World Bank and European Union. These promote the local propagation of millions of tree seedlings and their eventual distribution to individuals, groups and institutions, as well as the provision of forestry extension services to promote the adoption of ‘environmentally beneficial’ tree planting practices/techniques among these rural producers. Although forest tree species have been promoted in farm trees programmes, it is fruit trees (citrus, guava, mango, cashew nuts, and date palm) which have attracted the greatest interest from farmers.
More than four-fifths of all firewood carried by transporters is reportedly bought rather than collected free, and more commonly from tree owners and wood producers, rather than other dealers. This is in marked contrast to the situation which obtains in urban markets, where supplies come mostly (75.9% of cases) from other (larger) sellers. Drivers estimate that livewood is exploited by less than 40% of their suppliers who, for fully 55% of all supplies being transported during the Silviconsult study, were producers who collect wood from communal and open access land, as well as unprotected sections of the regional forest estate (often without permission or payment). Similarly, 15% of wood on sale in urban markets had been obtained, according to dealers, from rural producers who collect (dead)wood from communal village lands and free access forest/woodland/wasteland.

None of this is truly surprising, as fuelwood stocks are most abundant in natural woodlands which are remote from concentrations of human population, and which can supply urban fuelwood markets more efficiently than peri-urban farmlands whose owners, as we have already seen, are more interested in the non-fuel uses of their trees. As forest services lack adequate resources to bring the sections of these woodlands under their jurisdiction under systematic management, they are under greatest threat from woodcutting teams working for (usually urban-based) entrepreneurs who, in exchange for payment of nominal fees to LGAs, preside over the ‘stripping’ or ‘mining’ of such areas for fuelwood. In addition, cultivation is expanding rapidly into such areas, large parts of which are being cleared to make way for farms, sometimes using mechanical means (Mortimore et al. 1990). Sustainable fuelwood production from such areas is estimated at 6.7 million m$^3$/yr, compared with about 0.06 million m$^3$/yr from plantations, woodlots and shelterbelts. For the drylands as a whole, sustainable production is thought to be exceeded by present day demand, with excess annual offtake amounting possibly to between 3.8% and 5.4% of regional growing stock. In reality, however, wood imports from outside the area reduce the size of this deficit.

Silviconsult’s Woodfuel and Forestry Future

On the basis of these findings, Silviconsult identified several policy priorities, options and instruments for consideration by relevant state and other institutions. These contain a fairly large number of specific recommendations designed to improve both national energy and state fuelwood policy design, formulation and its implementation. They also discuss the process of targeting project interventions, while promoting policy-relevant research. With reference to national energy policy Silviconsult recommends that government accord higher priority to household concerns in overall energy planning and market regulation (through minimising price differentials between wood and alternative energies like kerosene/electricity in favour of the latter); and target urban populations in policies and supporting research designed to accelerate a transition to non-wood household energies (for example, in programmes of research and development of alternative and improved cooking technologies). It suggests, furthermore, that monitoring the impact of both structural adjustment measures on energy use, as well as the rapid growth of commercial fuelwood production on the environment, would help generate policy instruments which reflected specific fuelwood relations in the drylands.

Table 3 shows, with particular reference to fuelwood and forestry, that suggested initiatives aim to inform a strategy with the two-fold objective of stimulating increased production of wood for fuel, while encouraging greater efficiency in the use
of existing vegetation resources. Not surprisingly, therefore, questions of sustainability and concerns over economic and social marginalisation are prominent. There are references to the need to determine levels of 'sustainable offtake' to ensure that exploitation is kept within these; the imperative for planting more wood to meet a growing demand; and the desirability of limiting growth in demand through encouraging, not only the diversification of energy use away from wood whenever possible and practicable, but also the wider adoption and use of 'improved' wood cooking stoves. Reminiscent of concerns of the latter type is the strong case advanced for more adequate funding of forestry research, administration and management (and thereby its improved status in relation to agriculture); the emphasis on developing new forms of control/management of natural woodland/forest, including reserve forests, which include a greater role for local communities; and caution against further investment in fuelwood plantations which have, historically, produced little or no fuelwood.

These recommendations appear to represent quite pointed assaults on some of the more basic tenets of Nigerian dryland forestry. The call for new forms of community control consistent with the perceived needs/desires of rural populations and the explicit recognition of a central role for farmland in fuelwood production at the expense of plantation forestry stand out in this regard. Yet the lessons from Silviconsult were destined to be used as much for providing insights about existing programmes for improving the quality and responsiveness of their service delivery, as for fine-tuning the processes of attracting and directing new donor funding. Research recommendations focus overwhelmingly on technical questions. And Silviconsult itself notes that recommended project interventions merely reinforce priorities which had already been identified by federal and state government agencies, in conjunction with the management of regional World Bank and European Union funded projects. There has been neither any fundamental questioning of the assumed 'authority' of scientific forestry, even the relatively enlightened kind advocated by Silviconsult, to diagnose forestry ills and prescribe cures for such perceived problems. Nor is there any serious reflection on the nature of the 'power' modern forestry exercises, even as it 'extends' its activities and influence to dryland inhabitants and communities via its community and extension programmes and projects. These conditions reinforce the hegemony of scientific forestry discourse and practice. In failing to problematise several of the key constructs of its 'progressive' vision, Silviconsult contributes, perhaps unwittingly, to this discursive process. In what follows I illustrate the complexities and contradictions inherent in this.

'Community Participation' and Natural Forest Management: Rights With(out) Responsibilities? (Endnote 4)

Silviconsult identifies regional natural woodland/forest as the areas under greatest threat of being deforested: reserved areas are not effectively protected under existing arrangements, and areas of natural vegetation outside forest reserves are subject to degradation through overcutting (Table 3). This appears to be the outcome of a complex combination of factors and circumstances. First, the report notes, the forestry sector is starved of funds and staff expertise. In part, this is because income from license and exploitation fees collected by state forestry services go into either national/federal accounts or local government (LGC) coffers. This acts as a disincentive, Silviconsult argues, to state institutions and personnel, both to police the forest estate and raise the cost of exploitation fees to the economic optimum.
With little revenue from government sources as alternative income, Forest Departments are starved of revenues to accomplish existing replanting goals, which are far below the levels needed to ensure a steady stream of future supply. In turn, LGCs in need of money, and for whom wood cutting fees may represent one of only a few sources of revenue, frequently allow overcutting of wood resources to maintain current levels of income. Silviconsult concludes that in reality, overcutting and an inadequate rate of replacement planting in the regional forest estate are the real threats to the long-term sustainability of regional fuelwood supplies.

Silviconsult also recognises that even if problems of revenue allocation/distribution were to be solved, there would still be a major problem of low levels of revenue generation. First, investments in forestry take a relatively long time before they yield returns. Second, and arguably more importantly, dryland forestry generates very little in the way of income, either for itself or for government. In reality, fees charged for cutting fuelwood from forest/fuel reserves or other locations under the jurisdiction of state forestry services or LGCs are far too low to reflect either the opportunity cost or the replacement cost of such wood. And while the ostensible reason for the low level of license fees is to provide social benefits to the regional population (by keeping consumer fuelwood prices low) it appears to be the traders and transporters who make large profits from dealing in fuelwood, rather than consumers, who derive maximum benefit from such low fees.

As Silviconsult notes, the incentive structure for fuelwood supply from the public sector needs to be examined as a matter of urgency. That is because the existing structure of rights and responsibilities leads to overcutting of fuelwood beyond the maximum sustainable yield. One way to expand tree planting, it is suggested, would be to use the revenues obtained from increasing the fees for cutting trees on public lands to cover the full replacement costs of such exploitation, and to earmark the lion’s share of such increased revenue for funding the replanting programmes of state forest departments. At the same time, and given that LGCs have many other diverse responsibilities, are more subject to local political pressures, and are inadequately staffed, primary responsibility for public sector reforestation should rest with institutions operating at the state level, which should then be guaranteed adequate expertise and labour to enable them to undertake this task effectively.

Silviconsult recognises that it may be politically difficult to alter this incentive structure unless there is a guarantee that LGCs will at least maintain current levels of income from license fee sales. A guarantee could be possible if the fees for cutting wood are raised, and only the increase in the fees above the current amount transferred to state forestry services. Silviconsult believes that forestry services could be made more self-supporting if wood prices and cutting fees in the public sector were more realistic.

Two of Silviconsult’s main recommendations, the diversion of responsibility for natural resources management away from institutions of local government/administration to State forestry institutions; and the pursuit by these institutions of economic/financial self-sufficiency sit uneasily with its focus on increasing community participation in natural forest management which is more consistent with the needs of the rural population than privatisation oriented to the needs of the urban fuelwood market. Because this is a key element of Silviconsult’s recommendations we might reasonably have expected an indication of the sorts of rights and responsibilities which would accompany the proposed ‘decentralisation’ of forest management to the community level.
Table 3: Silvaconsult Policy, Programme & Project Recommendations

National Energy Policy

1) Within the context of long term forest planning, proper priority to be accorded to:

(a) Farmland as a major and growing source of domestic fuelwood for rural households, and the realisation that individual security of tenure is essential for access to and control over the wood supplies they contain; (b) Woodland as a diminishing fuelwood resource which is generally under ineffective control, and the necessity for developing new forms of community control which are more consistent with the needs of the rural population than privatisation oriented to the needs of the urban fuelwood market; (c) A growing urban fuelwood market which poses the greatest threat to sustainable wood production, and means for diverting urban demand to alternative fuels; (d) Identifying popular fuelwood species and designing appropriate policies to ensure their sustainable exploitation, and research to promote their wider propagation; and (e) Promoting a more active/meaningful role for small-scale farmers (who actively farm about one-third of the land and control much more) in environmental and conservation forestry initiatives.

State Fuelwood Policy

2) As reserved areas are not effectively protected under existing arrangements, and areas of natural vegetation outside forest reserves are subject to degradation through overcutting, state natural resources management institutions should:

(a) Find ways of involving local communities in the running of crest reserves; (b) strengthen community management of natural woodland at the village level; and (c) Evaluate the experience of countries like Senegal in these areas.

3) Commercial woodcutting should be brought under an effective regulatory and pricing regime under the supervision of state forestry services, with:

(a) Access to areas of natural vegetation being subject to stronger local community control; (b) Cutting fees charged by LGCs and Forest Departments being increased to reflect the replacement cost of wood; (c) Forest inventory techniques and coupe allocation procedures in public sector woodland being subject to detailed review; and (d) The wood trade to be brought under self-regulation by urban transporters, associations, which should operate under the supervision of state forest departments on a mandate which includes sustainable offtake.

4) Government should:

(a) Find ways of improving reliability of supply of petroleum-based fuels and induce public sector institutional users like educational institutions, hospitals and prisons to transfer permanently to such non-biomass energy sources; (b) Promote increased use of alternative energy by commercial wood consumers like restaurants and bakeries, for whom they offer real advantages (such as economies of scale, speed of cooking); and (c) In conjunction with Forest Departments, review the production, consumption and importation of charcoal by heavy non-household users like blacksmiths, etc.

5) In view of the desirability of increasing 'popular participation' in wood production and conservation, state forest departments should review the nature and basis of their relations with local communities, in particular:

(a) The relevance/adequacy of current professional training/instruction for coping with the peculiar demands of farm forestry programmes; (b) Preparedness for providing adequate levels of technical and administrative support to communities which might assume greater powers over local forest management; and (c) Their public image as conservation police, rather than a technical extension service capable of playing a socially supportive role.
Table 3: Silvaconsult Policy, Programme & Project Recommendation (cont.)

Project Interventions

6) If existing programmes of farm and social forestry oriented explicitly to the multi-purpose objectives of smallholders are to be consolidated and, where appropriate, extended/expanded:

(a) Extension messages should accord full priority to fruit, food, shade and other indigenous agro-forestry objectives (in addition to fuelwood production and environmental protection); (b) Fuelwood species preferences should be taken into account in promoting tree planting; (c) Existing fuelwood cutting regimes (coppicing, pollarding, branchwood and deadwood collection) should be incorporated into farm forestry recommendations on a sustainable basis; (d) In view of the evidence that farmers plant and protect trees as a normal activity, and that centralised seedling distribution has in the past tended to run into funding and other difficulties, state governments and projects should attempt to decentralise seedling production to the community and farm level; and (e) The long term continuity of farm forestry support infrastructure and extension should be assured, and tree planting monitored.

7) Woodlot programmes in Kano (the oldest) and Katsina (the newest and most dynamic) should be evaluated/reviewed with a view to replicating them elsewhere, with priority attention being given to.

(a) Improving woodlot management; (b) Assuring security of land and tree tenure; and (c) insuring appropriate choice of species.

8) Because fuelwood plantations provide an insignificant proportion of regional fuelwood needs at considerable public expense and involve prohibitively expensive land acquisition costs, the diversion of more resources into fuelwood plantations is not recommended.

9) Given that fuelwood production from shelterbelts is subsidiary to environmental and farming systems objectives, shelterbelt programme managers should consider promoting more research into:

(a) The economic (as opposed to technical) evaluation of shelterbelts, including the benefits to both crop and wood production; and (b) The viability/feasibility of small(er) scale shelterbelt designs which minimise land acquisition costs and improve integration of such on-farm forestry into agriculture.

10) With reference to the sustainable contribution of forest reserves to regional fuelwood needs, state forest departments should consider:

(a) Actively promoting increased participation by local communities in the management of forest reserves, and inculcating a sense of 'ownership' of such reserves among individuals and communities; and (b) Designing joint state-community schemes for fuelwood harvesting which are consistent with conservation objectives.

Research

11) As estimates/projections of fuelwood demand and availability over the medium- to long-term are based on a series of carefully-considered but far from infallible assumptions, and in order to provide a basis for revising these estimates further detailed research in the following critical areas is highly recommended:

(a) Construction of volume tables for the common species found in savanna woodland; (b) Rates of mean annual increment for natural vegetation by ecozone and land use stratum; (c) Extent of overcutting (wood removal in excess of current annual increments) in natural woodlands, and impact of fuelwood preference patterns on the regenerative status of key species and communities; (d) Fuelwood price behaviour over time and in space, and price relationships with alternative energies; (e) Rates and implications for fuelwood supply, of land use change, especially the extension of the area under cultivation; (f) Actual and potential biomass fuel yields from farmland, including crop residues, in relation to the growth of the farming population; and (g) Role of shrubland in fuelwood supply.
Furthermore, given the worsening of dryland forestry’s traditional funding crisis by the fiscal rigours of economic reform and liberalisation, Silviconsult should perhaps have demonstrated some awareness of the possibility that ‘communal forest management’ possessed a real potential for becoming little more than a means of coping with reduced funding. For as the Sahelian experience suggests, ‘participatory’ initiatives do not necessarily result in the transfer of access controls to local communities. They can frequently be little more than convenient tools for coping with the effects of a shortage of development funds associated with structural adjustment (Ribot and Cline-Cole, forthcoming; Schroeder, forthcoming).

It is also rather disingenuous to argue that forestry services should be recommended to have ultimate responsibility of supervising a powerful, hugely profitable, and urban-based commercial wood trade (something they have only ever dreamed of). It is even more so to expect them to inculcate a sense of ‘ownership’ of reserved forests/woodlands among rural individuals and communities, except in the carefully circumscribed sense of encouraging the latter’s ‘participation’ in programmes and projects which have been designed for them, and on terms which have been defined for them. Either consciously or unconsciously, Silviconsult advocates both decentralisation and concentration. Concepts like ‘local’, ‘community’ and ‘participation’ raise crucial questions for proponents of ‘participatory forest management’ or ‘community forest management’ (Ribot, 1995; Schroeder, forthcoming). These are in particular:

- Who will make decisions over the disposition of commercial resources under the new dispensation?
- Who or what will assume responsibility for access rules/regulations or resource control decisions?
- Who or what will control access to the benefits of ‘management’?
- Who or what will ensure that costs are not borne disproportionately by any single group?
- Will this person/body be local?
- Will s/he or it be elected or appointed?
- What will be its/their powers and jurisdiction?
- What will be its relation to state and customary authorities?
- What sort of mechanisms will/should be put in place to ensure that an increased share of benefits is retained in rural areas by and for local people?

There is little in the history of dryland forestry intervention which suggest adequate preparation to tackle questions of this kind and the challenges they pose (Cline-Cole, forthcoming). It is thus right for Silviconsult to highlight issues of technical training and professional competence of forestry personnel, and the public image of the forestry services as a whole (Recommendation 5, Table 3). But is a serious shortcoming in their recommendations that these questions are not openly raised. And while Silviconsult identifies the importance of comparative experience of community forest management the lessons elsewhere actually serve to emphasise the scale of the omission.
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An essential first step in either strengthening community management of natural woodland/forest or involving local communities in the running of forest reserves would be a thorough review of existing management institutions and practices, as well as the nature, direction and pace of change they are currently undergoing. Frequently, of course, the regional fuelwood trade is heavily implicated in such change. Silviconsult should, for this if for no other reason, have devoted at least as much time and effort to understanding these dynamics as it does to the analysis of institutional politics within relevant arms of the state machinery.

Farm Forestry: Programme/Project Responsiveness or Knowledge Appropriation?

Recommendations 6 and 7 in Table 3 place farm and social forestry at the heart of Silviconsult's forestry future for the drylands. I have argued elsewhere, based on insights from Rocheleau and Ross (1995), that programmes and projects of the kind referred to extend the influence of modern forestry beyond the boundaries of reserved and protected areas, not only on to private land, but also into the everyday lives of dryland inhabitants (Cline-Cole, forthcoming). Questions of scheme 'ownership' are thus of primary importance. Programme and project managers therefore stress that participation is voluntary; and, in the case of the Katsina project, that

farmers are themselves responsible for the planting and subsequent maintenance of the trees with advice and assistance being provided by extension workers, since the trees themselves and forest produce derived from them are the property of the individual farmers (Anon., 1990:17).

By suggesting, therefore, that farm forestry project gains can be consolidated, maybe even expanded, through orienting activities and delivery explicitly toward the objectives of (potential) beneficiaries, Silviconsult underscores the importance of 'ownership', but only in the restricted sense of management responsiveness in product and service delivery. This has several important consequences.

Silviconsult fails to make enough of the fact that extension/community/farm forestry is, in practice, frequently little more than scaled-down, plantation-type forestry, which only offers limited opportunities for 'beneficiary' populations to influence either programme or project design and management.

Participants in the Katsina scheme, for instance, are offered a choice of three different planting models [150 meter long windbreaks of 100 trees planted at 3m x 3m spacing; 0.1ha woodlots of 400 trees planted 1.5m x 1.5m spacing; and farm tree 'units' of unspecified configuration] so that they may decide which is most appropriate for their own farm (Anon 1990:6-17). Glossy, colourful publicity posters of model agro-forestry designs produced by another programme elicited howls of derision from a group of Kano producers I showed them to. One person wanted to know whether the straight lines of regularly-spaced farm trees which were common to all the designs were soldiers on parade. In several regional programmes, species promoted as suitable for farm tree planting were considered unacceptable by target populations. Indeed, in one Kano case, project management 'originally assumed that local people would plant multipurpose seedlings, such as acacia and neem, in their fields' only to find out that 'people [we]re more interested in fruit and shade trees for their compounds' (Cook and Grut, 1989:32). Project 'beneficiaries' then found themselves being forced to accept undesirable Acacia and Neem seedlings as a condition for obtaining the seedlings they preferred. It is thus significant that data from the
Silviconsult survey presented earlier suggested that there is still some way to go in matching project/programme species supplies with consumer species preferences, even if the situation has improved markedly since the late 1980s. In response to this situation, rural dryland producers plant and protect trees as a normal activity, and suggests that their farm tree management practices should be incorporated into ‘formal’ schemes. But Silviconsult could have gone much further. After all, not only was sufficient empirical knowledge evident to nineteenth century European and non-European travellers in the region, it has been repeatedly remarked upon in a variety of contexts in the years since (Barth, 1857; Cline-Cole et al. 1990; Morel, 1968; Mortimore et al. 1990; Pullan, 1974; Wallace, 1897; Fergusson, 1973). Indeed, it has always been possible to encounter dryland inhabitants who are knowledgeable, not only about propagation by direct sowing of seeds, and the planting of suckers and cuttings, but also about levels of tolerance of individual species to practices like coppicing, pruning and pollarding, both during droughts and in years of normal rainfall. Similarly, it has long been possible to relate this knowledge to the creation and management of agro-silvi-pastoral landscapes.

Why and how such knowledge has been silenced and the outcomes of such silencing, ought to have been of some interest to Silviconsult. For it bears directly on the question of ‘ownership’ of agro-forestry projects/programmes, and the ideas which go into their realisation and maintenance. In particular, they are relevant to the question of the precise nature and extent of ‘popular participation’ in such schemes, notably at the design stage, given that these appear to reflect so little recognition of the complexity, flexibility/adaptability and dynamism of regional natural resource management systems, institutions and practices.

In this connection, it is worth emphasising that the creation and subsequent consolidation of the image of an all-knowing regional scientific forestry, a process which has continued to the present, is central to the silencing of such particularist knowledge. Frederick Lugard, first High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria and architect of the regional forestry service, drew selectively on prevailing elements of imperial environmental and economic concern to justify forestry intervention. His entire forestry project was underpinned by the clearly-expressed beliefs that, only the colonial state was capable of appreciating the full extent and significance of the indirect benefits of forests, and of planning effectively for their sustained management. Second he believed, that local populations were both ignorant of, and apathetic towards environmentally-sustainable forestry practices (Cline-Cole, forthcoming).

Constant references in contemporary programme documents to policy and project aims and goals organised around notions of ‘instructing’, ‘educating’, ‘enlightening’, and ‘advising’ dryland individuals and groups bear testimony to the longevity of this self-image. Furthermore, as Figure 2 (pp. 532-33), taken from a recent Katsina Afforestation Project publication shows, juxtaposing this with a caricature of an uninformed land manager who is untutored in the ways of modern forestry makes for great propaganda which, as in the past, turns on a privileging of ‘scientific’ knowledge and a disqualification of non-Western knowledge. Thus Dahiru’s father is not only unaware of the changing status of vegetation cover on a farm which is integral to his (and, presumably, his household’s) livelihood, and the workings of local tenurial access rules/practices, but also appears to lack the skill/knowledge required to ‘raise, plant and care for’ the indigenous farm trees which he has only just discovered he needs and suddenly wants to obtain desperately.
Figure 2 is interesting for another reason; it illustrates a frequently overlooked aspect of the silencing process: a tendency to (re-)appropriate disqualified or silenced knowledges (in this case propagation of indigenous tree seedlings, their planting in a variety of land use configurations, and their subsequent care/protection) and convert them into scientific 'knowledge' associated with modern forestry forms (specified 'regimented' planting models; pot-grown seedlings) and relations of power (observable in the 'normalising' of ways of 'seeing' and 'doing' forestry learned at school or demonstrated/promoted by a representative of an international land management project, cf. Sivaramakrishnan, 1996).

Silviconsult admonishes programme/project managers to sufficiently fine-tune their activities, to reflect both regional socio-ecological diversity, and a responsiveness to perceived consumer demands yet in doing so they contribute to this process by which practices once dismissed pejoratively as 'native' or assumed to be 'environmentally unfriendly' become 'standard' features of modern scientific forestry.

I do not want to suggest that it is possible, or even desirable, to separate these different knowledges which contribute in 'interactive and contextualised' ways to the (re)production of dryland forestry (Sivaramakrishnan, 1996). After all, several of the species considered desirable for planting by dryland producers are, exotic species which have been introduced this century. Moreover several of the cultural practices now used routinely by (para-)statal forestry managers/technicians are either straightforward borrowings from, or refinements of practices which predated the introduction of modern forestry. I want instead to highlight a widespread failure to systematically acknowledge precisely the interactive nature of the process of 'producing' modern forestry in the drylands, and the generally unacknowledged but frequently critical role played by local knowledges.

Consider the following. Acacia holosericea is listed as a successfully introduced exotic by both the Kano State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority's Agro-forestry Programme (KNARDA) and the Katsina Afforestation Project (KAP), whose personnel have made much of its propagation via their institutional channels (Anon, 1990; KNARDA, nd). Yet the species was, according to some accounts, initially introduced from the Niger Republic via informal channels into Kano, where its rapid growth and prolific seed production quickly alerted staff of the local forestry service to its enormous potential as an agro-forestry species, and prompted its use in experimental shelterbelt and woodlot plantings, and its subsequent diffusion to neighbouring states (Cline-Cole, 1990). However, in their separate tellings of the Acacia holosericea story, neither KNARDA nor KAP mentions this possible contribution from non-modern forestry.

This represents a very selective reading of 'popular participation' and, once again, raises vital questions about notions of 'ownership' – not just of project goods and services, but also of the ideas which go into project design, implementation and management. Clearly, in this as in other areas, dryland inhabitants are, in Silviconsult's ironically apt (albeit unintended) phrasing, 'brought into' projects, ostensibly on the basis of their expressed interest in, and willingness to contribute labour resources to project activities. In reality, however, such 'bringing in' tends to be based on terms which are as closely circumscribed as the remit which guided Silviconsult's own deliberations. The politics of this 'bringing in' needed desperately to be 'outed'.
Dahiru: ensure that before leaving the house, you collect some fodder for the animals from the farm. There are some Baobab trees there, cut some of the branches.

Daddy, there is no single tree on that farm now. Every tree has been removed.

Then go to my Neighbours' farm and get some.

Sorry Daddy, I can't do it. That is stealing, because my friend was seriously beaten yesterday when he was caught cutting tree branches of Baobab from somebody's farm.

Do you mean cutting a branch of a friend's tree is an offence now.

So Daddy, at this age, you do not know that?

No my Son. It is not that I do not know, I thought it is easy to come-by.

Ah! Now fodder trees are very scarce. So the remaining ones are much valued and protected by the owners. But yesterday I saw Mallam Salisu, the EEC/FGA Extension Worker distributing assorted tree seedlings to the farmers to be planted on their farms as fodder trees, border-line trees, fuel-wood and for the enrichment of the soil fertility.
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How much did the Extension Worker charge per tree?

Nothing, everything is given free. But the farmers will do the planting themselves, according to specifications by the Extension Worker.

Okay Dahiru, if I collect the seedlings, can you plant them for me?

Yes! I have been taught at the school during the Young Foresters Club Meetings on how to raise, plant and care for trees. And we have been doing a lot of tree planting in our school. Don’t you see how our school is now surrounded with trees?

But how can I get Mallam Salisu because I am interested in planting Kuka, Dorowa, Madaci, Kaya, Kadayan, Zogaleon my farm.

Thank you my Son. I will see him and collect some trees from him and I am sure you can plant them for me.

Daddy, I will call Mallam Salisu for you. I am sure he will come immediately.

Really Daddy, I have acquired both the knowledge and the skill at school as a member of the Young Foresters Club.
Conclusion

Regionally, the configuration of planted or protected trees, shrubs and vegetation communities; similarities and differences between species choice for planting, protection and suppression; sources and types of planting material; responsibility for tree and woodland management; and the evaluation of potential planting stock and techniques, all vary widely over time and across space, both within and between populations of producers. Questions of fuelwood (and other biomass energy) availability and use acquire any real meaning only within this wider context.

The Silviconsult survey reviewed here, falls short of capturing all, or even most, of this complexity and variability. This is hardly surprising. Silviconsult was commissioned to provide concise, policy-relevant and programme/project-friendly responses to precise queries about regional patterns and levels of (wood)fuel consumption, distribution, production and availability. Its contractual remit ensured that this, rather than an exegesis on ‘people-centred’ or ‘participatory’ approaches to NRM in northern Nigeria, would remain its main focus.

Nonetheless, in fulfilling its contractual obligations, Silviconsult does contribute to processes by which ‘local conditions interact with national and international processes in both space and time’ (McGee, 1995:205). In the case under review, these processes appear to coalesce in reinforcing a historical mindset, which turns on the belief that dryland agro-forestry and natural woodland/forest management can only be achieved under the direct and close supervision of (para-)statal forestry institutions and their agents.

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Endnotes

1. The Silviconsult survey was based on a 0.2% household sample of an estimated regional population of some 23 million people. The sample was stratified into urban (25%) and rural (75%) components, and further into agro-ecological zones based on rainfall and vegetation distribution. The urban sample was restricted, with the exception of Zaria, to state capitals. Non-household users were also sampled, as were the various categories of participants in commercial fuelwood production, transportation and trade. As part of the survey, Resource Inventory and Management Ltd. (RIM) was sub-contracted to assess the extent and nature of regional vegetation cover and potential firewood availability. I would like to thank FORMECU, the commissioning institution, and Francis Odum and Mike Mortimore who directed the project, for permission to use information from the study. I worked on the project as a member of the survey team.

2. These included strengthening the strategic base of the forestry sector; stabilizing soil conditions in threatened areas and improving the supply of fuelwood, poles, and fodder by supporting farm forestry and shelterbelt activities; and increasing the supply of industrial wood by improving the management of existing high priority plantations and establishing new plantations.

3. Of these, almost two-thirds have tried kara; about a quarter have used kerosene; while much smaller numbers have used gas (6%) and charcoal (2%).

4. I owe the second part of this title to Jesse Ribot.
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Governance & Local Environmental Management in Africa

Philip Woodhouse

Current policy prescriptions for environmental management in Africa emphasise devolution of resource management to local non-government and community organisations. They challenge the long-standing orthodoxy of environmental conservation based on land privatisation, and instead favour local institutions managing resources as common property. This challenge has been reinforced by arguments from a reappraisal of dryland ecology in Africa, and by empirical and economic theoretical research on common property management. Implicit within much of current policy is the assumption that devolution of natural resource management will be socially redistributive as well as environmentally benign. Evidence from Maasai group ranches in southern Kenya suggests this assumption may be misplaced, and that, to address equality goals, policy must take more explicit account of the social dynamics underlying local power relations, and the way these are conditioned by the non-local political environment.

Introduction

Continuing international concern about an environmental crisis in Africa is manifest in the frequent use of the powerfully emotive term ‘desertification’ to describe the condition of African drylands. The Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) states that:

*desertification means land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities.*

Desertification is therefore equivalent to ‘dryland degradation’. In line with much of the Agenda 21 declarations approved by the UNCED in 1992, signatories of the Convention to combat Desertification commit themselves to National Action Programmes (NAPs) which emphasise local initiatives, with non-government organisations and local communities taking a central role in preparing, implementing, and evaluating actions under the NAPs. This is associated with suggestions under the Convention that NAPs envisage devolution of power to local communities, and changes in legislation (especially relating to land tenure) in order to provide resource users with more secure rights (Toulmin, 1995). This emphasis on government devolution in the Convention is typical of many current proposals for environmental rehabilitation and carries an implicit redistributive social agenda. Thus NAPs will
emphasise integrated local development programmes – based on participatory mechanisms and on integration of strategies for poverty eradication into efforts to combat desertification – (CCD, 1995:45).

These proposals incorporate a number of recent developments in the way African drylands are conceptualised from both ecological and social perspectives which challenge environmental orthodoxies that have held sway since colonial administration. This paper reviews these developments and traces their links with current devolutionary proposals for ‘governance’ of dryland resources. The article then draws on preliminary findings from a study of local resource management (in Kajiado district, Kenya) to question some assumptions about civil society in rural Africa which appear implicit in these proposals.

Ecological Sustainability and a ‘New Paradigm’

Sahelian studies indicate that under customary resource tenure (Moorhead, 1989; Diemer and van der Laan, 1987) local authorities typically regulated seasonal access to resources for different users. Such access rights were thus non-exclusive and often overlapped geographically. Colonial, and most post-independence administrations in Africa regarded these arrangements as disorganised, leaving resources open to overexploitation and a ‘tragedy of the commons’, resulting in environmental decline through deforestation, reduction in grass cover, and soil erosion. This view has been responsible for policies which have sought to establish exclusive use rights (privatisation) through permanent occupancy and fencing of land typified in the ‘ranch’ model. This is not to say that colonial authorities always encouraged the development of individual freehold tenure among African farmers (Hill, 1963; Bundy, 1979), but that they considered that transfer from common property to private property was a requirement for environmental conservation, and that the ‘environmental crisis’ in post-independence Africa is similarly regarded as a consequence of the failure to make such a transfer.

This orthodoxy has been challenged as a result of historical and anthropological studies (for example, Swift, 1991; Moorehead, 1989) which have argued that disorganised ‘open access’ is often the result of local customary control of land use being undermined by the colonial and post-independence state. By declaring land ‘national’ property, or creating state-managed ‘reserves’, governments commonly ignored locally-determined tenure rights (especially the ‘transient’ rights of pastoralists). Government regulation tended to interfere with local resource use, especially through restricting movement necessary to exploit seasonal grazing or fishing, or was so lax that an influx of outsiders resulted in overuse of the resource.

The ‘ranch model’ of environmental conservation has been further challenged by work on rangeland ecology over the past decade which has raised doubts about how much degradation is actually occurring in common-property rangelands (Abel and Blaikie, 1990). Instead, it is argued that ‘overgrazing’ is often an illusion: in the conditions of extreme rainfall variability of many pastoral areas, the ecology is not in ‘equilibrium’, and fluctuations in vegetation cover are caused more by rainfall than by livestock (Behnke et al. 1993). These studies conclude that, where productivity is determined by total livestock biomass (as against commercial criteria of beef quality), ‘opportunistic’ or ‘tracking’ strategies used by many African pastoralists are more productive than ranching.
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These arguments have been developed to mount a challenge to land privatisation policies in arid and semi-arid Africa (Scoones, 1994) on efficiency and sustainability grounds. These join long-standing arguments against privatisation on equity grounds: that pastoralists have been marginalised and discriminated against politically and have become impoverished as a result of exclusion from resources to which they historically had access. Consequently they have become more vulnerable to destitution by drought. As an alternative to land privatisation and ranching, it is proposed (Swift, 1994) that resource management systems must be:

- local, following the principle of subsidiarity and shaped by local knowledge and local interests;
- flexible, to allow contingent or opportunistic management of fluctuating environmental factors;
- non-exclusive, to permit overlapping access rights, which do not penalise the mobility of pastoralists.

It is further argued that such systems are necessarily communal or collective, and should seek to build on traditional tenure systems, where feasible.

Institutions in Environmental Management

Proposals for communal tenure have a lot more credibility in the 1990s than in earlier decades as a result of the research on common property management published during the 1980s, particularly the early empirical work (Ostrom, 1990; Wade, 1988) which showed that local systems of managing common property could be sustained over the long term. More recent work (Bromley, 1992; Keohane and Ostrom, 1995) has developed an economic theoretical framework to analyse the mechanisms of negotiation, conflict, and cooperation involved in the management of shared resources. This has emphasised the distinction between 'common-pool' goods and 'public' goods on the grounds of subtractability and, for the former, between 'open access' resources and 'controlled access' resources: control of access being a precondition for effective collective management.

More importantly, this body of work argues that incentives to collective, rather than individualised, management strategies are consistent with economic rationality if collective strategies successfully reduce the 'transaction' costs incurred by an individual in order to secure benefit from using the resource in question. Since risk and unpredictability in the physical or social environment is identified as a major source of high transaction costs, cooperation, through making the behaviour of other users of a shared resource more predictable (establishing trust) can reduce transaction costs. As the perceived ratio (under cooperative arrangements) of (private) benefits to (transaction) costs increases, so the likelihood of collective action increases.

The means of establishing predictability of behaviour is through the agreement and enforcement of sets of rules or constraints. These are 'institutions', defined variously as 'Complexes of norms and behaviours that persist over time by serving collectively valued purposes' (Uphoff, 1993:566); 'Humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction ... whether political, social, or economic ...' (North, 1990:3) 'regularised patterns of behaviour that emerge from underlying structures or sets of "rules-in-use"' (Leach et al. 1997:26). These definitions distinguish 'institutions' from 'organisations', which are defined as: 'structures of recognised and accepted roles'
(Uphoff, 1993) and where ‘groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives’ (North, 1990:5).

A considerable literature now exists (see Bromley, 1992; Keohane and Ostrom, 1995) on the development of institutions by users of shared resources, which identifies, among other things, the factors that appear important in determining whether different users (‘stakeholders’) will be able to agree on a set of rules (institutions) to govern the use of the resource. These include:

- clear boundaries of membership to the resource users group;
- clear boundaries to the resource in question;
- transparency/effective monitoring: homogeneity of information between different stakeholders;
- homogeneity/small number of stakeholders;
- homogeneity in stakeholders’ endowments (for example, wealth, assets);
- homogeneity in stakeholders’ preferences (‘end-choices’).

The importance of different kinds of heterogeneity in forming barriers to cooperation among stakeholders is subject of considerable debate and research at present (Keohane and Ostrom, 1995). This work is clearly relevant to understanding the nature of ‘governance’ in environmental management, here understood to mean: the structures and processes of power and authority, cooperation and conflict, that govern decision-making and dispute resolution concerning resource allocation and use, through the interaction of organisations and social institutions (government and non-government, formal and non-formal). Moreover, the framework has found application in guidelines for ‘institutional analysis and design’ for local management of forest and pasture resources in Africa (ARD, 1992).

There are limitations in this ‘institutional design’ approach, not least because an understanding of ‘institutions’ needs to identify not only ‘the rules’ but also the (re)interpretation of rules in individuals’ practice (Berry, 1993). An awareness of this dynamic aspect to institutions is evident where the literature on common property management warns of the danger of interpreting the process by which successful cooperation arrangements were achieved from their present structure, and the need for institutional design to be treated as a learning process: ‘successful institutional design implicitly involves experimentation and learning as solutions are implemented and then modified in the face of results’ (Snidal, 1995:68). In other words, process (causality) cannot be retrospectively interpreted from existing institutional structure. This is reflected in arguments for a participatory ‘learning-process’ approach to implementing tenure reform (Scoones, 1994), explicitly called for by the Convention to Combat Desertification (Toulmin, 1995).

However, what remains only implicit in this open, unrestricted, view of how institutions for environmental management may emerge from a reform process, is a political expectation of a redistributive outcome which will benefit the disadvantaged. This can be illustrated by the following:

Pastoralists are unlikely to be able to assert rights to communal lands in the context of the push for privatisation that is well under way throughout Africa today. Unless there is a shift in
power relations between local land users and the state, between recipients and donors, between wealthy and poor members of pastoral society, then the status quo can be expected to persist. Devolution of power to the periphery is unlikely to occur without concerted pressure from below. Rangeland users have to be empowered if they are to compete on equal terms with other land users, provide a challenge to the top-down approach and begin influencing land policies in their favour (Lane and Moorhead, 1994:132).

The authors demonstrate elsewhere the importance of not making assumptions about power relations and wealth differentiation within pastoral societies, yet it is easy to see how such statements can be interpreted as advocating ‘rolling back the (central) state’ in favour of local users, equated with pastoralists, in turn equated with the poor. A simple counterposing of the ‘state’ against the interests of the ‘poor’ follows the strong and enduring perspective of agrarian populism (Bernstein, 1990), which encounters contradictions in specific agrarian contexts of the kind described below. However, in terms of analysing governance there is a particular risk in ignoring the role of the state in underwriting (or undermining) the social legitimacy for any system of resource tenure.

Further, the conflation of the ‘state’ with central government effectively confuses institutional and organisational aspects of governance. It seems more useful, and accurate, to specify a need to reduce the role of government in local resource management, redefining the state. This allows for greater control and decision making by local non-government organisations within a framework of rules (for example, devolved responsibility) within the state (as institution), enforced by (central) government. This formulation may not accord so well with anti-state stance of development policy of the past 15 years, but acknowledges Ostrom’s argument that ‘governments may be able to provide rules and procedures that facilitate cooperation by appropriators: the design of a successful micro-constitution can create community where community did not previously exist’ (Keohane and Ostrom, 1995:11). As such, it may be an approximation to the ‘enabling state’.

Bringing the state back into the frame of resource management raises questions about the respective responsibilities of government and of ‘local land users’: the enabling state should be enabling what? Important dimensions to this question are the rights of individuals as opposed to groups, and the roles of market and non-market mechanisms in governing access to resources. In order to consider this further, in the context of African drylands, I shall briefly review some preliminary findings of a study of dryland resource use in Kenya.

Management of a Key Resource ‘Wetland in Dryland’

The case study undertaken in Kajiado District, Kenya, is one of four being undertaken in different African dryland areas as part of the ESRC’s Global Environmental Change initiative. The studies focus on ‘wetlands in drylands’: relatively small-scale water resources (swamps, valley bottoms, small dams, rivers) in predominantly dry landscapes. These are regarded as ‘key resources’ over which competition for access can be expected to be acute. As a result, decisions over such resources can be expected to be particularly illuminating about ‘governance’. The following brief account is summarised from Southgate and Hulme (1996a, b).

The case study is located in Loitokitok division in south-east Kajiado, where the Amboseli plains form an arid area between the foothills of Kilimanjaro, in the south, and the Chyulu Hills in the north and east. Annual rainfall in these surrounding
uplands is in the region of 800mm (at Loitokitok town), while on the plain average recorded rainfall may be as little as 200mm (at Kimana town, 25km north of Loitokitok). Historically, this dryland area has been used by Maasai pastoralists for wet season grazing. In the dry season, herds were moved to the surrounding uplands or to graze in a series of small swamps in the plain, fed by perennial springs at the base of the Kilimanjaro foothills.

Comparison of historical estimates of cattle population in the district indicate oscillations in response to rainfall between peaks of 600,000 to 700,000 (in 1919, 1960, 1982, 1988) and troughs of about 200,000 following drought (in 1912, 1929, 1962, 1984). Cattle population in 1992 was estimated at 846,000 but, following drought in 1994, Maasai herds were reported to have suffered losses of 70 per cent, implying an estimated 250,000 head surviving. While these figures indicate cattle numbers have not increased markedly over the past 80 years, human population in Kajiado district has increased from an estimated 15,000 in 1927 to over a quarter of a million in 1989. In recent decades immigration from districts to the north has contributed markedly to this increase: in 1948, of a total district population of 28,234, 91 per cent were Maasai. By 1989, of a population of 258,659, only 57 per cent were recorded as Maasai, and between 1979 and 1989 the non-Maasai (mainly Kikuyu and Kamba) population was increasing relatively twice as fast as the Maasai.

This immigration has accompanied an expansion of crop cultivation, accelerating the trend of decline in grazing resources available to pastoralists which began when the colonial administration restricted the Maasai to the Southern Game Reserve at the turn of the century. Creation of four wildlife reserves, including Amboseli, in the early 1950s further reduced Maasai access to water and pasture. However, present patterns of resource access were laid down after independence, with the adjudication of land titles in the 1970s. Individual titles were adjudicated for the 'high potential' foothills of Kilimanjaro, while group titles were adjudicated as 'group ranches' for pastoralist groups on the plain. This study focusses on the Kimana group ranch of about 25,000 hectares, established in 1971 with 173 members and, within it, the wetland resource constituted by Kimana swamp and the Kimana and Tikondo streams which feed it. The Group ranch is bounded to the west by Amboseli national park, to the north and east by Mbirikani and Kuku group ranches respectively, and to the south by private (individual title) farms and ranches.

The group ranches, established to encourage better pasture management and more commercial output from Maasai herds, failed to provide an adequate resource base to cope with rainfall variation, and grazing management essentially followed the previous transhumant pattern with herds moving between group ranches to reach seasonal pastures, under reciprocal agreements. More important, shortly after the establishment of the Group ranch, land bordering the Kimana and Tikondo streams was allocated by the Group ranch committee as private plots of 50 acres to Maasai who wanted to cultivate. A few Maasai had irrigated crops from these watercourses from the 1930s, but private land allocations in the 1970s were followed by subdivision and sale of plots to Kikuyu and Chagga immigrants. These irrigators formed groups to build, maintain, and operate distribution furrows gravity-fed by weirs on the streams. There are now nine furrows, each with its own irrigation group, on the private land area adjacent the watercourses. Some 560 farmers, the vast majority (93%) landowners, and a majority of these immigrants, irrigate 198 ha for commercial horticulture, mainly tomatoes and onions for sale in Mombasa and Nairobi. With the exception of government advice on furrow design in the 1970s and some continuing bilateral aid funding for canal lining, this irrigation is farmer-initiated, and farmer-
run. Establishment of furrow-irrigation on the private plots was followed quickly by development of similar irrigation on some 341 ha of group ranch land adjacent other watercourses, presently farmed by 760 individuals. About two-thirds of these have leased their land from individual (Maasai) group ranch members to whom land was allocated by the group ranch committee.

Commercial vegetable production has proved lucrative. Pressure on producers’ profit margins due to control of the Kenyan market by urban-based traders has prompted a number of farmers to diversify to supply export markets (for okra, and other ‘Asian vegetables’ in Europe). The more successful producers have been able to finance vehicles, small businesses in the expanding local trading centres and, in the case of the Maasai, large herds (300-500 head) of cattle. However, only about half the group ranch membership (recently expanded to nearly 900) have access to irrigated land. For those that do not, transhumant pastoralism requires travelling increasing distances to secure dry season grazing, as the upland or swampland resources have become progressively enclosed for private use. The vulnerability of this group is indicated by the request by the chief of Kimana location for emergency famine relief
for half of the 18,000 population during the 1994 drought year. Women are entirely excluded (except widows) from group ranch membership, and have had to set up an effectively separate organisation of women's groups to gain access to horticulture, cattle fattening, or land purchase ('plot construction').

The success of cultivation and faltering pastoralism has resulted in moves to subdivide the group ranch land into individual holdings for each member. This has been the source of conflict between age-sets, since original membership was associated with a particular age-group, now the 'junior elders', and recently-expanded membership remains substantially appropriated by that age-group. The younger (Ilmurran) age-set, less well represented in the group ranch membership, seems more identified with the maintenance of group tenure and the establishment of a wildlife sanctuary on the group ranch. This would allow the group ranch to earn income directly from the most important economic activity in the district: wildlife tourism. Most of the income from tourism goes to central government (receipts from Amboseli national park) or to commercial owners of campsites and lodges. The group ranch wetland resources are essential for the tourist industry, both because they provide key seasonal forage and water for the National Park wildlife population, and they provide good wildlife viewing locations favoured by campsite operators. Payments from both Kenya Wildlife Service and commercial tourist interests for these services are the largest source of Group Ranch income.

Despite major changes in resource use, there is little evidence of 'land degradation' in either cultivated or grazing areas of Kimana. What is clear is that mounting intensity of water use for irrigation (estimated at 70 per cent in the case of Isinet spring) has resulted in desiccation of the swamps. This has encouraged encroachment and clearing of Kimana swamp for cultivation, although the soils are sodic and unproductive when cultivated, and the creation of a barrier of cropland for wildlife and livestock trying to reach forage and water. Apart from damage to crops, this results in the concentration of large wildlife such as elephants in smaller areas at the swamp periphery where they devastate vegetation. The interests of the tourist industry thus come directly in conflict with those of cultivators.

Swamps downstream from Kimana, in the neighbouring Kuku Group Ranch have suffered even more desiccation, further undermining the resources for pastoralism and generating conflict between group ranches.

In relation to 'governance' in this context of changing dryland resource use, the following points emerge: The intervention of government organisations in direct management of natural resources, while extensive in principle, is in practice quite limited. This is due, first, to budget constraints on regulatory bodies, for example the district water bailiffs responsible for issuing water abstraction permits, and government services like extension. Second, some government regulatory bodies, such as the Land Control Board, restrict themselves to recording outcomes of changes in land ownership, rather than intervening in those outcomes. Third, some parts of the government machinery are completely absent (for example, the locational development committee) or function only nominally (for example, the divisional development committee). The most active agencies of government intervention in resource management are the locational chief, appointed by the Office of the President, and the Kenya Wildlife Service (a parastatal).

In contrast, important decisions about resource allocation and management are made by local membership organisations, such as Group Ranches, Irrigation Groups, and
women's groups. Perhaps as a consequence of their key role, management of these organisations is frequently riven by factionalism between Maasai and non-Maasai (in irrigation groups) and between Maasai clans or age-sets (in group ranches). There is evidence that this factionalism is further fomented by outsiders. For example, the election of a Maasai KANU MP for the area in 1992 was followed by that MP's support for the exclusion of non-Maasai from the post of 'furrow leader', an elected position controlling water allocation within an irrigation group. Similarly, the MP has manoeuvred to ensure control of Kimana group ranch committee by members of his own Ilaizer Maasai sub-clan. Patron-client relationships with local Maasai clans have also assisted commercial tourist camp operators to defend their interests by fostering opposition to agricultural encroachment on the swamps.

Although a process of resource privatisation was initiated by government policy in the 1970s, local organisations have since pursued the same logic, and with it a process of socio-economic differentiation. In this situation it seems questionable whether resource management by local organisations can be expected to result in any empowerment of those at present disadvantaged, whether resources are held in common or privatised. The number of users of irrigation water continues to increase, and water is now insufficient to irrigate all the plots on some furrows. This has resulted in a market in water 'shares' among members of irrigation groups, with wealthier members buying the water of poorer members. In Kimana group ranch, subdivision of land is largely predicated on access to irrigation for all members. Even if feasible with the existing water supply, this will make landless Maasai within the group ranch who are not Group Ranch members, and further deplete the wetland resources of the 2000 members of the neighbouring Kuku ranch. It is equally unclear, however, that maintenance of the group ranch as common property in the form of a wildlife sanctuary will provide more equitable benefits, in the form of a share in revenue or employment, to those who currently use the group ranch resource.

**Redistributive Goals and Devolved Environmental Management**

I have argued above that proposals for a devolved natural resource management carry an implicit assumption that such measures would be socially redistributive. This research suggests this is problematic for a number of reasons. First, in practice defining environmental change as 'degradation' is not straightforward. It is easier to identify 'winners' and 'losers' from a particular environmental change than to make an aggregate assessment of 'improvement' or 'degradation'. This has been characterised using an extended entitlements approach (Leach and Mearns, 1992; Mearns, 1993; Leach et al. 1997) which identifies 'environmental entitlements', in a manner analogous to food entitlements (Dreze and Sen, 1989) as the 'outcome of negotiations among social actors involving power relationships and debates over meaning, rather than simply the result of fixed moral rules encoded in law' (Leach et al. 1997:23).

This definition of entitlements – 'who gets what' – draws attention to the need to address power relations in proposals to reform the governance of natural resource use. Recognition of this is perhaps found in the 'institutional' literature, where issues of equality/heterogeneity of different parties or stakeholders is a significant factor in determining whether, and in what form, cooperation will take place. Power relations may be seen as the overall manifestation of such 'heterogeneity'. The research summarised in this paper suggests that current policy emphasis on increasing the power of local authorities tends to obscure important and rapidly-evolving power relations between local social groups. This is due to a rapid growth of new markets in
rural areas, which offer opportunities for the practice of customary hierarchy to be translated into differential advantage in the market. It is arguable that in Kajiado district the process of privatisation in Africa is not merely underway, but has reached the point where kinship institutions which may have characterised 'local' identities in the past have been supplanted by those of wealth differentiation. Moreover, these processes seem likely to be accelerated by the prevailing climate of market liberalisation in Africa.

Under these circumstances, if local environmental management is to have a redistributive goal, then it must be formulated explicitly to achieve this, not merely as an implicit component of local sustainable ecological management. This study bears out some of the ecological arguments outlined earlier for less exclusive tenure rights as a basis for maintaining a diversity of livelihoods from a shared resource base (in this case, water), and it is probably necessary that such rights need to be negotiated locally. The evidence is that this will not be sufficient, however, and more emphasis needs to be given to the role of the 'non-local' in establishing a political climate in which disadvantaged groups have opportunities to organise and negotiate at local level. This, to some extent, will mean disempowering other local groups and thus requires some clarity of purpose: what is it that the enabling state wants to enable? In Kajiado, the political complexion of the Kenyan state is manifest in a dense network of market and patron-client relationships. Any redistributive goals of devolution of control of natural resource management must be contingent on the political nature of the central state. Reform at local level cannot therefore be a substitute for a progressive political agenda at the centre.

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Since its inception in 1980 Zimbabwe’s land resettlement programme has been marked by very varied performance and keen debate. There have been high hopes, deep disappointment, false starts (and stops), policy swings and controversy. In the 1990s analyses of the programme by both supporters and critics of land reform have generally been negative. Yet there is evidence that resettled people themselves have made real welfare and income gains. Strong support for the programme was also expressed by a large sample of rural-urban migrants in Harare in 1994. Their views, reported in this article, showed an appreciation of most aspects of the academic and policy debates, but clearly also tended towards the perception that redistribution of land in Zimbabwe is a moral issue. Government insistence on commercially-oriented production on resettlement schemes was perceived as unwarranted interference.

The progress and nature of Zimbabwe’s land resettlement programme since 1980 has been extremely varied. The balance between equity and efficiency elements in the programme has shifted ever further in favour of the latter. The causes and consequences of the programme, and of the changes, have been intensely debated and there is now a significant body of literature on resettlement in Zimbabwe (for example, Alexander, 1993; Moyo, 1994, 1995; Palmer, 1990). Aspects of the programme which have been well covered include the historical roots of the land problem (for example, Palmer, 1977; Sibanda, 1981), the multitude of internal and external economic and political pressures, related to land reform, on the ZANU government (for example, Stoneman and Cliffe, 1989; Palmer, 1990; Bratton, 1987; Moyo, 1994, 1995), the scope and procedures of the programme (for example, Zinyama, 1982; Kinsey, 1982, 1983; Wekwete, 1991), the institutional forums involved in policy debates (for example, Alexander, 1993), the tendency for agro-technical factors to dominate (for example, Drinkwater, 1991) and, associated with this last aspect, the use, misuse and abuse of environmental and/or agricultural productivity data to criticise the programme (for example, Whitlow, 1985, 1988; Whitsun Foundation, 1983; Davies, 1990; Kinsey, 1983; and critiques of such analyses such as Weiner et al. 1985; Moyo, 1994, 1995; Biot, Lambert and Perkins, 1992).

Rather less attention has been paid in published academic and official literature to how the people of Zimbabwe assess the land resettlement programme. An early survey of settlers who had moved on to schemes in 1980 and 1981, the first two years
after independence, found that they regarded them as a ‘mixed blessing’, and most felt their families were worse off than those not on schemes. On the other hand only five per cent wanted to return to their home areas, and the surveys were conducted after the first post-independence drought which very clearly affected people’s attitudes – many had suffered hunger and reported this as a problem, but this would frequently have been attributable to the impact of drought, rather than resettlement (Kinsey, 1984).

An important study of the Soti Source resettlement scheme in Gutu district in the late 1980s reported much more positive settler views (Berry, 1991:172). Berry found that the settlers’ expectations had been fulfilled, and that there had been a general improvement in their quality of life since relocating to the scheme. Similarly positive feelings are reported by Elliot in a study which included resettlement schemes adjacent to Svove and Shurugwi communal areas (1995). Other studies like Zinyama (1993) and Jacobs (1991) give some insight into settler’s feelings about specific schemes. Zinyama indicated many problems on a scheme in a poor agro-ecological area, again just after a drought period, whilst Jacobs’ findings which were generally positive, also identified a number of problems.

There seems to be no studies of how people outside resettlement schemes evaluate the programme. It is this aspect of resettlement which this article addresses. It does so by providing an analysis of how a sample of Zimbabwean rural-urban migrants explained their perceptions of the programme. The emphasis is on establishing whether a general trend can be discerned in their overall attitudes to resettlement, and which factors emerge as most important to them when they offered critiques and comments about the programme. This is situated in an examination of how their own ‘home’ areas have been affected by resettlement. Attention is paid to how the concerns of these people compare to the assessments and issues emphasised by academics and policy-makers.

The main purpose of this article is, therefore, to show what one group of Zimbabwean people feel about resettlement, how their feelings compare with the rather negative academic assessments, and contemporary debates within the country. This is important to do because ultimately the success or otherwise of a policy should be judged by the people it affects, and not only by those implementing it from above, or external ‘objective’ observers. Furthermore, if widespread support for a policy is evident amongst the population, this provides an excellent argument for the policy to be maintained or strengthened; and if problems are identified by the people these should be taken into account in future policy. One of the main purposes of this article is to let the ‘voices’ of local people be heard so that they may contribute to the ongoing debate about land resettlement.

Land Resettlement in Zimbabwe: a Contextual Note

Inequality in landholding between white and black people in Zimbabwe at independence was glaring: roughly half the farming land was owned by about four thousand white families and other commercial operations. The other half was occupied by perhaps three-quarters of a million African farming households. An important cause of support for the war for liberation was peasant anger over land inequality, and in 1980 government commitment to a land reform programme in Zimbabwe seemed strong. In the early 1980s plans to resettle 18,000 peasant households, then 54,000 and then 162,000 (by 1984) were developed. The latter plan was clearly over-ambitious and was soon scaled down to 15,000 families per year for
the period 1986-1990. By the end of 1989 52,300 families had been resettled on 2.6 million hectares of land under a variety of land use and settlement models (Zinyama et al. 1990).

The most widely used model on the schemes is called model A. This to a large extent replicates the conditions in the communal areas (CAs) from where many of the settlers originated. Individual families are settled in villages with usufruct rights to about five hectares of land each (which they cannot sell), and access to communal grazing land. Yet, a significant difference between model A schemes and the CAs is the degree of control exerted on the farmers by the government. There are rules and regulations about what crops to grow, how much to grow, livestock numbers and farming techniques. Commercially-oriented production is demanded, and purely subsistence production for the family frowned upon. In theory farmers can have their permits to farm rescinded if they do not abide by the regulations – their right to the land is not inalienable and secure. This technocratic approach to land use on resettlement schemes is certainly not unusual – Rhodesia had a long history of intervention in the peasant farming sector which was nearly always grossly misguided and often doomed to failure because of peasant resistance. Despite the lessons which might have been learnt from the past, the ethos and approach of the independent government towards the peasant sector, in terms of desired production patterns and techniques, has continued this pattern (Drinkwater, 1991; Alexander, 1994).

The speed at which resettlement could be implemented was affected by a multitude of factors (see Stoneman and Cliffe, 1988; Moyo, 1994; Palmer and Birch, 1992; Alexander, 1994). They included constitutional conditions imposed at the 1979 Lancaster House agreement which brought an end to the war and set up elections. These were that for the first ten years resettlement could only occur on land which was offered for sale, and purchased at market prices, remittable in foreign currency. This imposed huge financial constraints on the government. Another constraint is the very effective lobbying of the (previously white) Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU). The CFU argued that changes in land-use from large-scale private farms to small-scale peasant farms with communal tenure are likely to be economically disastrous. The assumptions behind such arguments are that resettlement will lead to significant falls in national agricultural output – on the grounds that peasant farmers are less efficient – and the replication of the land degradation which is characteristic of the communal areas. Whilst these assumptions are easily challenged (for example, see Weiner et al. 1985; Moyo, 1994, 1995; Biot, Lambert and Perkins, 1992) – most compellingly by the fact that the African small-scale agricultural sector in Zimbabwe since independence has achieved large increases in output of many crops, and is the most successful in the region (Endnote 1) – they have undoubtedly had strong effects on internal and external official support for resettlement. The important fact that much commercial farming land is not used to its full 'efficient' potential (Weiner et al. 1985) is relatively rarely addressed by officials, although underutilisation of land can now be used as a criterion for designating farms for purchase for resettlement.

One effect of these economic efficiency arguments has been that selection procedures for settlers have become increasingly focused on agricultural ‘efficiency’ criteria: established ‘skilled’ farmers are now prioritised. As social, historical, cultural and basic welfare justifications for resettlement are downgraded, the whole ethos of resettlement is transformed – righting wrongs and restoring people’s rights to land and livelihoods disappear (at least in the official conceptualisation of resettlement, but as will be seen the ‘popular’ vision of the programme retains many of these ideas).
Another impact has been that the most important donor, Britain, tries to keep land purchases for resettlement within those areas of the country which are least agro-ecologically suited to rainfed arable agriculture. These areas are anyway enormously over-represented in the land so far resettled: for example many farms there were abandoned during the war, the land is cheaper and farmers more willing to sell. The opportunity to redress this imbalance occurred after 1990 when the Lancaster House conditions came to an end. President Mugabe stated that perhaps 50 per cent of remaining commercial farming areas would be purchased for resettlement, and a Land Acquisition Act was passed to facilitate the purchase of farms. The resultant outcry from the commercial agricultural sector and donors was long and loud, but in fact the process of resettlement during the 1990s has remained very slow. Undoubtedly this has much to do with the huge shift in government ideology from socialist leanings (albeit within a protected capitalist framework) to a more or less full blown commitment to the market, in line with global trends. Many important political figures are now major landowners and members of the CFU, and thus the pressure from the top for land reform has largely dissipated. Nevertheless evidence from the survey reported here is that, whilst people are often aware of the debates outlined above, they remain convinced of the value of land reform and are not resigned to the sideling or collapse of the resettlement programme.

Whose Voices? Methodology and Respondents

This article reports on research from 1994 amongst migrants who had recently come to live in Harare. A large sample was surveyed to examine how migrants viewed the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) adopted in 1991. That programme had far-reaching consequences for the social and economic welfare of the urban and rural poor and the survey addressed issues of the differential impact of ESAP between town and country. Migrants are an important group to assess such differences. They also have important views about resettlement not least because of the vital nature of rural-urban linkages (Potts and Mutambirwa, 1991; Potts, 1996) and their opinions were also sought on this issue. Furthermore there are issues about the resettlement programme which very specifically affect migrants who become urban workers.

The respondents in our survey were 268 adult migrants, who had moved to live in Harare since the beginning of 1990. They were randomly sampled from households in Harare's high density areas (HDAs): 222 from Kuwadzana, a post-independence, high density, site-and-service scheme and 46 from three of the older townships: Mbare, Glen Norah and Highfields. Around three-quarters had come from the communal areas (CAs), almost always directly from their birthplace, whilst most of the rest had been living in another town before migrating to Harare. Apart from a minimum age criterion, there were no further restrictions on the nature of migrant respondents. In contrast to many social survey samples, we did not restrict ourselves to household heads, as this would have made it impossible to get a rounded view of migrant households, and of the views of different types of migrants. The data gathered included migrant's current socio-economic circumstances and migration history, and the nature of their rural assets. Their perceptions about the resettlement programme were gathered via semi-structured interviews. After asking if the programme had had any effect in the area from which they had migrated, and whether they had ever applied for resettlement land themselves they were then asked ‘What do you feel about the resettlement programme?’ We tried hard to make sure that the nature of the information gathered at this point was as ‘raw’ as possible so that it reflected the ‘natural’ response of the interviewee. We wanted the results to be as true a reflection of the people’s ‘voices’ as possible.
The sample of migrants was evenly divided between men and women, household heads (HHHs) and other household members, and married and non-married people. They were generally young, although the HHHs of the multiple member households were older than the average, as would be expected. However quite a number of HHHs were single migrants – that is people who were living in town on their own – many (but not all) of whom were young men.

Nearly everyone either lived in a household with, or was, a working HHH – and interestingly, despite the exigencies of ESAP, their jobs were nearly always in the formal sector. On the other hand most ‘dependent’ migrant respondents were unemployed or not earning by virtue of being housewives or in education. Most interviewees were from poor households where the average primary income earned by the HHH was US$121.

The Migrants Experience of Resettlement

The extent to which the respondents had direct experience of resettlement varied. Many of the urban-born, had none. One quarter of those born in the CAs were unsure about the impact of resettlement in their ‘home’ area (these categories are reflected in the ‘don’t know’ and ‘not applicable’ responses in Table 1).

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<tr>
<th>Effect of resettlement</th>
<th>per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More land has been made available</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some people have been resettled</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No impact despite resettlement</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No resettlement has occurred</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About two-thirds had some direct experience of resettlement, inasmuch as people from their ‘home’ area (this generally corresponds to the communal area in which a person was born) had moved to schemes. Of these about half commented that resettlement from their area had made a difference by making more land available. The other half felt that resettlement had not made any difference to their ‘home’ area; in other words, it had not eased the land shortage problem there. It has long been recognised that resettlement could not alleviate the land shortage problem in the communal areas by giving farmers who already had (insufficient) land more acreage. Even under the most ambitious and optimistic scenarios for resettlement, mooted in the 1980s, the rate of population growth always exceeded the rate at which people could be ‘removed’ from the land equation in the communal areas.

Beyond these general findings some specific answers to the question about the impact of resettlement in the migrants’ ‘home’ areas help to pinpoint the situation in the CAs where resettlement has occurred. Responses included comments like: ‘there has been no change as the land left is redistributed by headmen to relatives;’ and no change because resettled people leave their sons behind on their land in the communal areas; ‘the programme is good but must be speeded up’; and, ‘people must not resettle in the areas where they [the settlers] are coming from’.

Three rather different issues emerge from these statements which reflect personal experience and local variations in how ‘freed up’ land is distributed. The first indicates that local elites are able to use their power to obtain such land for their kin, the implication being that this pushes aside more needy and eligible people. The
second indicates again that the land does not necessarily go into a local ‘pot’ for allocation according to need, but remains within the kin group of the settler. The third may suggest that the respondent feels that some ‘freed’ land should be left fallow for some reason. Neither of the first two observations are surprising given that headmen can still frequently use their important position to obtain resources, and the natural tendency of people to try and retain resources for their families. The persistence of land shortage in most communal areas means the third comment above is probably only a pious hope, although it is important to remember that the degree and nature of land shortage does vary between communal areas. An important variable is the extent to which local communities are essentially cattle-based, as in many communal areas in Matabeleland. In these circumstances, actual resettlement of local people is not so much an issue as the need for more grazing land in adjacent areas. Few of the migrant respondents for this survey however were from Matabeleland communal areas.

Although made in the context of perceptions that resettlement had not made any change in their ‘home’ areas, these concerns about how ‘freed’ land is re-allocated do not, in fact, imply that there has been no improvement at all. On the one hand the headmen’s kin and the settlers’ sons have gained access to more land, and it need not be taken as read that they were necessarily land-rich before. On the other hand, these individuals may also have been removed from the list of applicants for land in that area, perhaps shortening the waiting time for others. Only local level research could determine these points, but even allocations which have not been made on strict equity criteria may help to ameliorate the rate at which pressure for land increases in some communal areas (which is the most the programme can hope to achieve). That some respondents tended towards a very egalitarian and over-optimistic view of land redistribution is evident from the following comment:

The migrants revealed that the resettlement caused little or no change in the rural areas in terms of land availability because either the vacant land was taken by somebody or the settler sells it to someone... There is no pressure release on land – to them (migrants) the programme must be speeded up so that everybody gets a share (interviewer’s report, 1994; my emphasis).

The observation about sale of land (which communal tenure supposedly excludes) is clearly very much against the spirit of the resettlement programme. Nevertheless, tenure in the communal areas has adapted to encompass sales in some areas and circumstances. This is evident, for example, from our previous migrant surveys in Harare, when some landless migrants stated that they intended to return to the communal areas in the future, and would buy land. The more positive perceptions of the migrants who perceived some improvements due to resettlement may have reflected the fact that more people had been resettled from their areas, compared with the group discussed above. Perhaps some had kin or friends who had benefitted from the settlers’ land. On the other hand their opinions may reflect a set of more realistic aspirations about how the resettlement programme could impact on the land shortage problem.

The Migrants’ Perceptions of the Resettlement Programme

The resettlement programme in Zimbabwe has, in many ways, had a ‘bad press’. This is partly due to the effectiveness of the various lobbies which had vested interests in retaining the pre-independence pattern of inequality in land holdings. They have not only been vociferous, but have also been operating in a favourable ideological climate for the 1980s and 1990s have seen the ascendency of market forces as the favoured
principle for allocating national and global resources. It is perhaps this ideological climate which has prevented the British government, the most important donor for the land reform programme, from responding positively to its own (ODA) evaluation of the resettlement programme in 1988. This report showed that the programme was one of the most successful planned developments in Africa, had brought considerable benefits to the majority of resettled families, and yielded an impressive economic return (estimated by The Economist at 21 per cent) (Cusworth and Walker, 1988; see also Palmer, 1990). Yet the British government has maintained a generally negative stance towards the programme, and has done nothing to publicise this objective evaluation, whilst taking every opportunity to support the CFU line that nothing must be done to damage the (large-scale) commercial farmers of Zimbabwe. The imperative of maximising short-term production has not passed Zimbabwe's resettlement programme by and many related policies, particularly in recent years, attempt to impose elements of this approach on the programme. As will be seen below, such policies are frequently not regarded with favour by the migrants in this survey.

Indeed, many commentators who have favoured land redistribution for equity reasons, and who would also judge that national agricultural 'efficiency' would not thereby be much affected (or possibly enhanced), have also been trenchant critics (for example, Cliffe, 1988; Palmer and Birch, 1992; Alexander, 1993). A vast range of problems has been identified, not least of which is the depressing withering of political will and financial resources to keep the process operating at any significant level at all. Corruption, bureaucracy, and heavy-handed policies aimed at maintaining central control of the settlers' lifestyles have all been targets for criticism – the usual 'set' of drawbacks which accompany any major development programme. There have also been many mistakes made at the level of implementation in terms of details such as design of settlements. All this can make for rather depressing reading on Zimbabwean resettlement to the point where one may start to question whether it is worth continuing. As discussed earlier, however, policies should not only be judged by academics, implementers, and donors. The most important views on the worth of the programme must be those of the people affected, and it is to these views that this paper now turn.

Our expectation was that the Harare survey would uncover gloomy and cynical perceptions of land resettlement amongst the respondents. This was particularly the case since, at the time of the survey (April, 1994), one of the hottest political issues in Zimbabwe was the discovery that several of the political and military elite had obtained land ostensibly purchased for resettlement. This did not, however, prove to be the case – the migrants were overwhelmingly positive about the programme.

There were broadly four categories of migrant assessment of land resettlement: positive impact, neither positive nor negative but confined to making a policy suggestion, negative impact, and a neutral view that it had not made much difference. Those with purely negative or neutral views were in a very small minority – only 3 per cent of the sample. The next two sections focus on the nature of the positive responses and the suggestions migrants made about ways in which the resettlement programme might be improved.

The Benefits of Resettlement: Land, Crops and Living Standards

Nearly four-fifths of the interviewees expressed a positive opinion about resettlement saying that the programme was 'good'. Most of these went on to identify and describe
positive aspects. Broadly speaking, these generally involved opinions about the quantity or quality of land made available, and the quantity and quality of crops that could be grown on the schemes. Not surprisingly, many people emphasised that resettlement had improved access to land for small-scale African farmers. Just over half of those who felt positively about resettlement mentioned this aspect in some way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Comment</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which caveat/suggestion included</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits specified:</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved access to land which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives people more land</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People get ‘large’ lands</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People get enough land</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landless people get land</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People get more grazing land</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black people own the land</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers can grow surplus for sale/money</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement land is fertile/productive</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers can grow all the crops they want</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers can improve standard of living</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers get ‘means of production’</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers can grow lots of food</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers can get govt. assistance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resettlement means less crowding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 186 respondents gave specific explanations about their views on resettlement: percentages are out of these 186 comments.

‘Improved access to land’ is a very general benefit, and people actually phrased their responses on this issue in a number of different ways and what respondents actually said about access to land is very important because their statements indicate rather different emphases about their perceptions of the programme. For many the issue was simply that land resettlement gives people more land (presumably this could mean either black Zimbabwean people in general, or individual settlers). Frequently people specified that settlers benefitted because they got large lands. A family on the model A scheme receives 5 hectares (12 acres) of arable land, plus grazing for up to 20 livestock units and this is definitely more than the average amount available to the poorer households in most communal areas. It is therefore not surprising that some respondents perceived that settlers’ landholdings were large.

Another often made comment was that the settlers get enough land. This immediately begs the question: enough land for what? When respondents left it at that, it is not possible to know precisely what they meant – but it is evident that there were some significant variations in migrants’ ideas about what settlers should be doing with their land, and ultimately therefore what the purpose of land resettlement in Zimbabwe should be. This is of course one of the key issues in the debate about land reform in Zimbabwe. For many commentators, and most of those involved in funding the programme, including nowadays to a large extent the government, resettlement must largely be judged on economic criteria. Settlers must be commercial in their orientation, and not ‘subsistence’. For some this is, at least in part, a reflection of convictions that subsistence farming is (for some reason – perhaps its lack of ‘proper’
regard for the market principle) a 'bad thing' in itself. More significantly there is the enormous weight of propaganda and lobbying about the need to guard against damaging Zimbabwe's commercial agricultural output by redistributing land uneconomically or inefficiently (or, indeed, in some quarters, at all). Over time this has succeeded in bringing about a marked shift in the government's selection criteria for settlers, from the most needy (for example, the landless, the very poor, ex-combatants) to those with what is deemed to be the necessary 'know how', and preferably capital and equipment, to embark on commercial agricultural production (Moyo, 1994). Evidently this shift means that settlers must have enough land to grow crops and raise livestock both for their own consumption needs, and a marketed surplus. By no means all of our respondents, however, were convinced about the importance or need for a commercial orientation.

Some respondents felt that the key aspect of improving access to land was that landless people got land. The issue of redressing the poverty faced by those without land, in a situation of grossly unequal land distribution, was clearly important in the rhetoric of the liberation war and the early years of independence, as evident from the earlier discussion about shifts in selection criteria. Yet this is no longer the case (although the President, Robert Mugabe, still makes reference to the landless when talking about the need for further resettlement). It is noteworthy therefore that this is still an issue which resonates with Zimbabwean people, There were also a few respondents who singled out the point that settlers get more grazing land. Given the centrality of cattle to most Zimbabwean peasant arable agricultural systems, it was perhaps surprising that more people did not emphasize this. It is probable that a similar survey in, for example, Bulawayo would find that the advantages of better grazing would be much more frequently mentioned, since in the dryer southern and eastern parts of Zimbabwe where rainfed arable agriculture is extremely risky, pastoral agriculture assumes an even greater importance. Finally only three respondents made any reference in terms of improved land access to the racial roots of land inequality, by pointing out that resettlement meant that 'black people owned the land'.

Other benefits identified were not specifically about land per se. The most important was that settlers could grow a surplus for sale, and thus raise cash – a factor identified by 15 per cent of all those who gave explanations about their views (and 19 per cent of those with specifically positive views about the programme). Thus the most frequently identified benefit of resettlement, after access to land, was a 'commercial' factor – and the implication is that settlers are perceived to be more favourably placed in this respect than farmers in the communal areas. This might give heart to those for whom the production of marketable surpluses should be a major determinant of the nature of the resettlement programme.

Interestingly several respondents believed resettlement land tended to be fertile (presumably in comparison with the communal areas). Yet most of the land allocated has been in the least favourable agro-ecological regions of the country (Regions IV and V). Many commentators have pointed out that this puts settlers at a huge disadvantage in production terms, especially when compared with large-scale commercial arable farms in the more favoured regions. It may be that these respondents knew of particular instances where settlers had been fortunate in the farms where they had been resettled, or as noted by Zinyama (1990), they were influenced by the fact that in the early years resettlement farmers sometimes benefit from 'stored up' fertility in formerly white-owned farms where the land had been underutilised for decades.
Further positive perceptions were that settlers could satisfy their needs in terms of the range of crops they could now grow, or in terms of the amount of food they could grow. Some felt that settlers were able to achieve better living standards than they would have had before. Other benefits specified included the fact that settlers obtain the ‘means of production’ (this point was presumably made by people who were thinking of the programme in terms of giving land to the landless); that they get government assistance (since there are various loans and grants available for settlers); and that resettlement means less crowding in the communal areas.

Improving Zimbabwe’s Resettlement Programme

Many respondents suggested how the land resettlement programme could be improved, or where it had gone wrong. The majority of these criticisms or suggestions were made in terms of a rider to the generally positive responses to resettlement already noted. Thus about one-third of these people qualified their praise with caveats or suggestions for improvement and a further 14 per cent of the interviewees confined themselves to making such suggestions. Straightforward opposition to the programme was found amongst only 3 per cent.

Table 3: Problems and Policy Suggestions Identified by Migrants Relating to the Resettlement Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Comment</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main problems and policies identified:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone must be eligible (for example, workers too)</td>
<td>6¹(17)²</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must allow ‘communal’ farming/not dictate practices</td>
<td>6 (15)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must educate farmers and/or choose those with skills</td>
<td>6 (15)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers must be given title deeds</td>
<td>4 (11)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need more infrastructure</td>
<td>3 (7)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need more equipment</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need more capital</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resettlement is causing environmental problems</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elites/politicians taking resettlement farms</td>
<td>3 (8)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must settle ‘good’ natural farming regions</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 1) 186 respondents gave specific explanations about their views on resettlement: unbracketed percentages are out of these 186 comments; 2) 72 respondents gave explanations which identified or included a problem which they felt had either been caused by the resettlement programme, or which needed to be addressed for the programme to be more successful: the bracketed percentages are out of these 72 comments.

Three issues emerged as being being important for respondents. The first was that the selection procedures were unfairly discriminatory, particularly against ‘workers’. There was an early prohibition on households with a wage worker (in the urban areas or on the commercial farms) gaining access to resettlement land. Although there was a certain logic in this approach in terms of selecting the most needy, there are clearly problems too. For example, one of the reasons why people migrate to urban areas is that they do not have access to land in the communal areas – in fact they are landless. As one respondent remarked: ‘workers must also be considered, as we don’t have adequate land’. The majority (62 per cent) of our sample fell into this category (that is, were landless). In many cases people may not be able to ‘afford’, or be prepared, to wait in the CAs to be selected for resettlement, feeling that they must find work to survive, despite the fact that they would also like the opportunity to join a resettlement scheme. To discriminate against those who are trying to support themselves by finding a job may seem rather hard, although it has to be acknowledged...
that given the slow pace of resettlement in relationship to need, hard choices will always have to be made by selectors. What is clear however is that our respondents were particularly opposed to this aspect of the schemes which suggests that many of them do indeed have some interest in resettlement for themselves (although very few had actually ever applied). A further paradox confronts the landless in both rural and urban areas relating to contemporary selection procedures: the need to acquire farming skill 'qualifications'. As an interviewers post-survey report noted:

Some of the migrants indicated that they would opt for resettlement for more land. BUT they also highlighted one problem that for one to be resettled he or she must have a Master Farmers – a certificate of competence in farming. This means therefore that the person must have land where they must grow crops to be given the certificate before they can apply for resettlement. The question is how are those people without the land going to prove their competence in farming?

The migrants also expressed two directly opposing opinions about what land redistribution in Zimbabwe should try to achieve – differences of opinion which reflect aspects of the resettlement debate in other circles.

The first point was that the sort of farming practices and choices made by settlers should be left for them to decide. Some respondents felt very strongly that the degree of interference by programme implementers was completely unacceptable, because redistribution of land was about redressing past inequities in access to land, and not about agricultural production. The feeling was that the programme would be improved if it confined itself to giving black people access to land, so that they then had the opportunity to live a reasonable life in any way that they would choose. The insistence on dictating how people should grow things, what they should grow, setting marketing objectives, restricting livestock numbers and grazing practices – all of which are commonplace on resettlement schemes as the government attempts to assuage critics who predict that land redistribution will lead to economic and environmental disaster — was perceived by some respondents as quite unacceptable. In some cases people specifically said that settlers should be able to be ‘communal’ farmers, the implication being that they should control decisions about how the land is used and to what degree agricultural production should be for ‘subsistence’ and/or the market. The flavour of people’s feelings about this issue become clearer from their own comments, some of which are reproduced below:

People should live near their fields, with no limit on the number of livestock;

Government must not interfere with the life of resettled people;

People must be allowed to grow what they want – they must not be dictated to;

The government must not dictate what is grown;

Farmers must be allowed to lead a communal way of life;

Farmers must be given more autonomy;

Farmers must grow what they want and there must be communal ownership of the land;

Settlers must be allowed to live life similar to that in rural areas.
On the other hand were those who offered the opinion that the schemes should ‘educate’ farmers about how to farm, or should select settlers who already had appropriate skills. These migrants had a rather different view of the purpose of resettlement than the previous group and were more accepting of the argument that land in Zimbabwe must be used ‘productively’ and that it is reasonable to discriminate in favour of those who have proven farming skills. One of their concerns was that settlers who were not successful in production would sell government inputs, which was clearly felt to be unfair. Again their own comments are illustrative:

| Settlers must be educated on good farming methods; |
| Willing and good farmers should be settled; |
| Farmers must be given skills otherwise they will sell government inputs; |
| Good farmers must be settled, lazy ones will sell fertilisers; |
| People are not equipped and have little knowledge of agriculture; |
| Competent farmers must be resettled; |
| People with farming knowledge must be preferred. |

Although these comments indicate that this group of respondents was concerned that resettlement land should be used ‘competently’ or ‘skillfully’, none specified that settlers should be made to produce for the market, or should not be allowed to be ‘merely’ subsistence farmers. For some this may have been the sub-text of their comments, but there can be no certainty that subsistence farming, as long as it was done skilfully, would have been regarded by all these people as wasting the resource of redistributed land. This however is the view of most of those making relevant decisions in the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as the main donors to the resettlement programme.

Another policy issue identified related to the nature of land tenure on the schemes. Currently settlers have a lease on their land, which can be revoked should they not comply with the various terms and conditions of the scheme. This is the most significant ‘stick’ that government representatives have to make settlers practice the sort of agriculture deemed necessary for the scheme. Yet none of the migrants offered any support for the leasing system – every time that it was mentioned it was in the context that it was seen as a bad policy, and that all the settlers should be given their title deeds so that their right to the land was assured. One of the few respondents who had a purely negative perception of resettlement based her reactions on this issue, saying that the programme was ‘bad, as people are not given title deeds; they can be removed at any time’. According to Jacobs (1991:76), this sanction is rarely used, although the threat is very significant. Our respondents felt that this was a very real issue. One of our interviewers reported she knew of people in her home communal area of Chihota who had been moved off schemes because they had not met maize production targets. There was probably a connection for many of our respondents between this issue and that of settlers not being allowed to farm as they wanted – and in a few cases both points were brought up by the same individual. One commented: ‘settlers must be given title deeds, they must do what they want and not be told what to grow’. 
A problem that a number of resettlement schemes have faced is a lack of, or poor infrastructure, so that settlers have found it difficult to fulfil their productive or welfare needs—at least in the short term (for example, see Kinsey, 1984). In some cases the issue has been that the settlers lacked equipment, such as ploughs, or capital for purchasing inputs or building houses; in others that there have not been any schools, or poor water supplies, and our respondents alluded to one or other of these issues. A small number also raised the contentious element of resettlement alleging that settlers were causing environmental problems by using inappropriate farming techniques. Given the high profile that this issue has had in the Zimbabwean media, and the literature generally, it was perhaps significant that so few of our respondents felt that this was a problem. For example President Mugabe has cited a figure of 80 tons of soil per hectare per year being lost on average in the CAs, and by implication this sort of figure seems to be assumed by many to also be true of resettlement areas. The figure itself is nonsense, and is probably related to the worst case scenario of old erosion plot research in colonial Rhodesia which did not replicate the situation on cultivated land in the CAs (see Biot, Lambert and Perkins, 1992:18ff).

Other widely cited and locally very influential research by Whitlow (1988b) on soil erosion is often believed to show that erosion in the CAs and resettlement areas is particularly 'severe' in the sense of the rate of erosion (that is, tons of soil removed per year), whilst in fact the data on which it is based could only indicate the areal extent of erosion. Whilst soil erosion is undoubtedly an issue for concern in many CAs, the debate about it and land 'degradation' in general has become so politicised that it is hard to achieve a sense of perspective. Of key relevance perhaps is the point that crop yields in many of the more agro-ecologically suited peasant areas have been slowly increasing (Biot, Lambert and Perkins, 1992), which suggests that in general people are managing the 'problem' rather well—in fact depending on perspective, it is not a problem at all. Another issue which is often publicly aired is that settlers on previous commercial farms cut down trees and use far more wood than they would if they were in the CAs. Again, depending on one’s perspective, this is unremarkable—frequently they are resettled on farms that were underutilised with large, wooded areas used only for grazing. They have to cut down some trees to make fields, and make use of the wood. Yet the pejorative tone of accounts of ‘deforestation’ on resettlement schemes is pervasive. In these circumstances therefore the fact that only four people mentioned this issue shows that there is a significant gap between their priorities and understanding of land resettlement, and those of officials and policy makers.

The issue of relative productivity and environmental impact of resettlement was also raised by another small group (3) who noted that only a small minority of the land made available for resettlement has been in the most favourable areas of the country for rain-fed arable agriculture (Regions I and II), and the majority in the areas which the agro-economists have deemed to be those where rainfed agriculture should normally be avoided in favour of livestock ranching (or game ranching, that is, Regions IV and V). One respondent noted, ‘People must be settled in regions I, II and III and not in drought-stricken IV and V’.

The issue which we had anticipated might be uppermost in people’s minds, but was only mentioned by six migrants was the fact that members of the black elite had just been ‘caught’ leasing farms which had ostensibly been bought for resettlement purposes. As one respondent put it, the programme is ‘good, but leasing farms to government officials is destroying the basis of a good idea’.
Listening to Migrant Voices?

Our survey uncovered a range of different opinions amongst rural-urban migrants about Zimbabwe’s resettlement programme and it is useful to now relate their perceptions to the wider social, economic and political context within which resettlement is taking place.

An important issues for rural-urban migrants was the discriminatory selection procedures which many felt to be unfair and not in the spirit of what they feel resettlement should be addressing. Whilst some particularly focused on the fact that workers (such as many of our respondents) were perceived as being ineligible, others cast their net wider and said that everybody should be eligible – a view that would undoubtedly meet with little support in official circles, let alone amongst those who oppose the programme or give it only qualified support. In fact it appeared that the conviction that workers were still ineligible was misplaced since in 1994 it was possible for urban workers to apply for resettlement at the local District Commissioner’s for their suburb – and, unlike in the communal areas, such applicants did not have to show a Master Farmer’s card. We have no information on how such urban applicants fared, and the policy is clearly not being widely publicised.

Strong opposition to the ways in which the government is trying to control the nature of settlers’ agricultural practices was also detected. From a historical perspective there are clearly many resonances here with the long struggles of Zimbabwean peasants against attempts to control and direct their agriculture, from the Native Land Husbandry Act to current technical interventions in the communal areas (for example, see Drinkwater, 1991; Alexander, 1993). The Zimbabwean povo are not in the mood to give up on this, and this research shows it to be an issue about which even those not currently involved in agriculture have strong opinions.

The fact that settlers only hold a lease on their land was clearly deemed to be unfair. If the comments about title deeds are combined with those about ‘not dictating practices’ on the grounds that they are addressing a similar point (the government’s attempt to control settlers and the nature of their production) then this becomes the most important issue identified by the migrants about the resettlement programme (10 per cent of the total sample; 26 per cent of those making a policy comment).

The expression of resistance to discriminatory selection, to controls over production techniques, and to leaseholds represent a strong sense of ‘moral economy’ in the migrants feelings about the resettlement programme. The nature and tone of many of the comments fits with the view that within Zimbabwe the right to land for Africans is (or should be) inalienable. In that context, support for land redistribution from the former white commercial farming areas means support for restoring such land rights, without conditions being attached. The feeling of some respondents that everyone (including, but not only, workers) should be eligible can be related to this. Respondents noted, for example that ‘hard working and lazy people must both be given land – there is no right to discriminate’ and ‘those without Master Farmer’s Certificates must be resettled and allowed to prove themselves’; ‘everyone must be eligible for resettlement’.

Respondents stressed that moral or economic ‘worth’ should not affect one’s right to land. The ‘moral economy’ issue may also be evident in the references made by to resettlement providing ‘land for the landless’ – an issue of great significance during the war and in the early years of the programme, but one which now is rarely
mentioned. The promises made during the war were clearly still on some people's minds: one person stating that 'workers must also be considered [for resettlement] – we also fought the liberation war'. On the other hand, few people alluded to the fact that resettlement transferred land from (usually) white ownership to black ownership, which was clearly an important point in the earlier days. Indigenization – increasing the role and ownership of resources and enterprises by black Zimbabweans – is one of the most contentious contemporary political issues. So in some ways this was a rather surprising finding. A possible interpretation is that today resettlement is no longer seen primarily as addressing a racial issue, but more as a policy which addresses rural poverty.

How should one interpret these perceptions in relation to the thorny issue of productivity on resettlement schemes? On one level the opposition we found to interference from the government, and support for the right to act as 'communal' farmers, might be taken as proof (by some) that resettlement could lead to falls in national agricultural production because it suggests that people want to be 'subsistence' farmers. However this is not necessarily so as many communal farmers produce for the market. Thus the most that can be deduced from this set of comments is that people are opposed to the level of interference extant on the schemes, but not that they are necessarily opposed to producing and selling surpluses. Indeed, it seems very significant that the benefit most frequently specified, besides the general one that more land was being made available (in some sense), was that resettlement schemes enable beneficiaries to produce surpluses. If anything this finding suggests a tendency towards a commercial orientation in our sample, rather than towards purely subsistence production. In fact significant shifts towards commercial production were noted at the start of the resettlement programme (Kinsey, 1984:7).

Interpreting the other view expressed that settlers should be educated farmers is seemingly much more straightforward. On the one hand this seems to indicate a much more economistic attitude to the land debate, and indicates that the same tensions which exist in that debate in scholarly and political circles can be found at the 'grassroots'. It is interesting to note however that the respondents who perceived this as an issue were not typical of the migrant sample in that over half of them (55 per cent) were urban-urban migrants, rather than rural-urban migrants. Although all of them had been born in communal areas, they had been living in another town before coming to Harare. Whilst it is not possible to know when they moved out of the rural areas, it can confidently be predicted that their direct experience of farming is more distant than that of the sample as a whole, and of course some of them might have no direct adult experience of farming at all. Thus their ability to balance negative media reports about 'uneducated' resettlement farmers against knowledge of the real constraints faced by peasant farmers in Zimbabwe would be, on average, less than for the sample as a whole. On a purely speculative note, their desire to see 'educated' farmers selected for the schemes might relate to reading and hearing about early or specific schemes where ex-combatants and destitute people, some without any farming experience, were settled. It is very unlikely that current resettlement procedures would select such applicants today.

The environmental degradation has attracted a great deal of attention in the literature but it was not one of the most significant problems about land redistribution for our respondents. The 'environment' issue is directly related, to the importance being attached to the overall productivity of settlers. 'Failure' in this area can be used by the large-scale commercial farming sector and others with a vested interest in supporting that sector, to berate the resettlement programme on the grounds that national income
will fall since a productive resource (former commercial farms) is being wasted. The suggestion that settlers are also damaging that resource by causing environmental degradation strengthens the opposition to land redistribution. Much research in the 1980s and 1990s has indicated that the causes and rate of environmental changes in the communal areas have often been exaggerated or misunderstood (for example, Biot, Lambert and Perkins, 1992; Wilson, 1990; Elliott, 1989; Macgregor, 1991; Scoones, 1990; Cousins, 1989), and even those who maintain that Zimbabwean peasants cause environmental degradation often simultaneously admit that the major reason is that the communal areas suffer unduly high population pressure due to the history of unequal land distribution (for example, Whilot, 1988). The responses in this survey may suggest that rural-urban migrants are generally not very convinced that environmental degradation is the problem it is sometimes made out to be, perhaps because they have more direct experience of rural environmental conditions. Resettlement may, alternatively, be seen as a way of escaping the environmental problems of the communal areas. It is arguable that the frequent reference to settlers obtaining ‘enough’ land or ‘large’ lands, that it means less crowding, and that settlement land is fertile, all point in that direction – and furthermore indicate that the respondents do not assume (as do some of the opponents of the programme) that settlers, farming at much lower densities, will face the same sort of environmental dilemmas that many communal area farmers must deal with.

Another issue raised by the survey is the question of how resettlement affects the communal areas themselves. A few respondents indicated that resettlement was having little impact because village headmen were allocating ‘freed’ land unfairly. Given that village headmen are (potentially) to get more powers for local land distribution under the recent Land Tenure Commission Report, this issue may need some attention from those involved in land issues. On the other hand, the government appears to be dragging its heels over some of the proposals in the Report, which are often in favour of decentralization of control (Palmer, 1996), so it is not yet clear how land allocation procedures in the communal areas will function during the late 1990s. In any case the respondents’ views about the impact of the resettlement programme on the communal areas varied quite widely, and do not offer conclusive evidence either that it is working well, or that it is working badly. Undoubtedly allocation practices must vary with local circumstances such as the degree of land shortage, the nature of local power relations and the degree of corruptness in local officialdom. The perceptions of each individual in the sample are also likely to be influenced by whether their circle of kin and friends has ever received some benefit. That nearly a third were generally positive about the impact of resettlement in their area, given the limitations of the programme for improving the situation in the communal areas, could be viewed as a reasonable success.

This article has highlighted the views which a group of urban people have about one of Zimbabwe’s most significant post-independence policies. Their views seem very much at odds with the perspectives of officials and many academic commentators regarding land reform. Matters of justice and equity were deemed far more important than economic criteria and respondents also expressed a strong attachment to the concept that land rights should come without pre-conditions.

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Endnote

1. Concern (or criticism) is sometimes directed at the fact that these production successes are unevenly distributed spatially – peasants in parts of Mashonaland producing the majority of the increased agricultural production. Whilst there is undoubtedly a welfare issue here for those in the less successful provinces, it must be noted that these production patterns in the peasant sector merely reflect very similar geographical patterns in the large-scale commercial farming sector. They are due to inherent geographical factors such as water availability, soils and access to markets and have little to do with nature of peasant production per se.

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Relief & Rehabilitation in Complex Emergencies

Phil O'Keefe & John Kirkby

Since the late 1980s international aid for development has fallen while humanitarian assistance for emergencies has increased. This change of emphasis reflects the collapse of the USSR and consequent political instability in the former Soviet Union, its former satellites and client states. It also reflects donor disillusion with the failure of many development projects. Much humanitarian assistance is delivered in complex emergencies such as in Angola, Somalia, Rwanda, the Caucasus and former Yugoslavia. Almost without exception these emergencies relate directly to global, regional, national and local political instability created by the 'new international political order'. Many of the emergencies have roots in the colonial era and a deep history in cultural tensions loosely described as ethnic conflict. Many complex emergencies entail enormous violence, massacres of civilian populations, deliberate destruction of the means of production, ethnic cleansing, torture and rape, displacement of population, refugeedom, social and economic collapse, traumatisation and psychosocial problems of whole populations and state collapse. Complex emergencies are dynamic, characterised by uncertainty and by rapid and unpredictable changes affecting all aspects of life.

Responses to complex emergencies are necessarily complex. Resolution of these particular emergencies demands diplomatic activity on the part of the international community to recreate government at national and local levels. The environment in which agencies operate in attempting humanitarian relief is much more difficult than in normal emergencies. That is because of the level of destruction of infrastructures, the intense psycho-social problems of the affected people and the insecure working conditions for agencies and for local people when government no longer functions.

But not all complex emergencies are characterised by violent conflict. In some, the complexity lies more in tensions between the political aims of the major actors. It is difficult to formulate appropriate responses when estimates of the level of need become politically charged bargaining counters and when famine becomes a political event.

Humanitarian assistance in the acute relief phase may be difficult because of restrictions on access and it requires constant negotiation with de facto local powers. In principle, however, it is largely a matter of logistical support to supply water, food, health services and rudimentary shelter. To a considerable extent it is a quasi-military and top down delivery operation. In the post acute phase, refinement is possible and participatory planning, organisation and delivery is possible and necessary.
Complexity increases in trying to establish the conditions for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development particularly if no government structure emerges. As a consequence there is heavy reliance on international and local NGOs for the implementation of humanitarian assistance. These NGOs, and the multilateral channels for donor funds, have enjoyed significant growth and consequently argue that rehabilitation, reconstruction and development must be seen as part of a disaster continuum. Essentially this is an argument for business-as-usual, or rather, funding-as-usual. In contrast, donors wish not to see a continuum but disjuncture. That is not least because relief is much more expensive than development assistance and arguments for continuum suggest that these high costs will be borne for an extended time period.

It is possible, however, to specify how rehabilitation and reconstruction should be planned. Rehabilitation should be part of the relief process. Where rural livelihood systems have collapsed, there is need to provide seed and tools in agricultural societies to gather a catch-crop in the first available season; in pastoral societies, there is need to provide veterinary inputs to minimise disease and maximise herd reproduction. In parallel with these efforts, there is need to establish local seed nurseries to minimise the import of agricultural inputs in the following season. Rehabilitation efforts, in effect, should be completed in two agricultural seasons. The pricing regime of rehabilitation activities should be one that emphasises cost effectiveness.

In general, reconstruction efforts take longer – up to seven years after a disaster. The cost basis for reconstruction efforts, which are largely focused on infrastructure, must be a move from cost effective investment to cost recovery. Quite simply, this is a move from grant to loan. While these principles are clear, they are rarely applied in post-disaster situations. The striking thing about disaster handbooks is not the detail of what to do in the relief phase but the absence of any information on how to move on from relief. There is rightly concern about the generation of aid dependency particularly when the volume and price of food aid undermines the local agricultural market. The Kenyan drought, from 1992 to 1994 is a case study in how to do everything wrong.


While much of southern and eastern Africa suffered major drought in 1991/92, there is little evidence that Kenya was significantly affected. Yet there was major disruption of rural production systems in Kenya because of increasing ethnic violence in the Rift Valley and a surge in the refugee population emanating largely from Somalia. In Kenya itself, the highly populated provinces in the west, centre and east had reached a production platform in which there was little surplus generated for the local maize market. With relatively poor harvests from the large scale farms there was concern that the urban areas would not have sufficient food. Urban food scarcity or price increases were not desirable in the run-up to a general election at a time when the donor community was pushing for multi-party democracy.

In the autumn of 1991, the Government of Kenya (GoK) began to express concern about two issues: an impending maize shortage and the impact of drought in the north-east of Kenya. These concerns were voiced by President Daniel Arap Moi at the National Ploughing Championship, to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) representative. It prompted the FAO representative to suggest that the GoK seek assistance from the World Food Programme (WFP), while FAO simultaneously
assisted in the survey of cereal availability and projected requirements for 1992. This somewhat anecdotal description of the beginnings of the Kenyan disaster, 1992-5 is an accurate reflection of events. Much of the evidence for the emergency was anecdotal and little can be supported by written evidence.

On 20 November 1991, Philip Mbithi, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Public Service wrote to the Director of WFP asking for drought assistance in the Samburu, Machakos and Kitui districts and in parts of Meru. This letter was followed by another dated 5 December 1991 saying that the list of districts should be adjusted in order of urgency and the number of people needing help. This new list ranked the districts in order: Samburu, Marsabit, Baringo, Lamu, Tana River, Kitui, Kajiado and West Pokot. This letter was superseded by another, dated 9 December 1991, in which the number was increased from eight to seventeen adding Turkana, Isiolo, Wajir, Mandera, Garissa, Laikipia, Nyandarua, Elgeyo Marakwet and Machakos to the early list. More importantly, it showed a shift from the semi-arid agricultural areas of eastern Province to the pastoral areas of northern Kenya, a shift that reflected a change from the GoK’s concern about maize availability to the donors’ concern about the possible impact of drought in pastoral areas.

The Actors

With an expanded request for assistance from GoK to WFP, it is appropriate to comment on the actors involved in the ‘complex emergency’. A major player was the GoK. Through the office of the President it considered a national drought contingency action plan for the provision of assistance through local district offices; the working draft was released on 11 March 1992. The major multilateral agencies involved in this disaster were FAO, WFP and UNICEF. In the ensuing action, FAO and UNICEF were to play a critical role in mobilising the United Nations system to address the emergency, frequently acting for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which should have been the lead coordinator of a United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT). It has proved impossible to obtain any record of UNDMT’s operations. Summarising the three major multilateral actors, it was FAO that predicted a maize famine even though the figures were questioned by USAID. WFP could raise the volume of emergency relief supplies but did not have the staff with the ability to deliver them until the emergency was effectively over. The only multilateral organisation with operational capacity was UNICEF which shouldered much of the responsibility for action although it received only minimum support from the UNICEF Kenyan country office or from UNICEF Headquarters.

In the early stages of the emergency, WFP appointed the international NGO, CARE, to organise the delivery of supplies. It thus effectively bought international competence in the local Kenyan market. CARE became responsible for the trans-shipment of food at Mombasa, its transport to districts, its delivery to recipients, and for monitoring. CARE was the major distributor from March 1992 through October 1993. A number of national NGOs were also deployed in the emergency but they were incidental to decision-making about the quantity and timing of the major relief effort. Several bilateral donors, including the British, complicated the delivery of supplies by setting up separate relief channels through their own NGOs.

The account of those who intervened must also include donors who acted through their Nairobi offices. USAID was particularly important because of its determination to separate the issue of the shortage of maize from that of the emergency in the north. USAID thought FAO estimates of food shortages were considerably overstated. This
was a reflection of the general level of tension between the donors and the GoK and within the donor community itself which arose because the issue of the provision of cereals for Kenya was central to the structural adjustment programme, negotiated between the donors and the World Bank in 1990, and reinforced in the November 1991 Paris Meeting.

The Emergency Unfolds

As the GoK was making the initial requests, evidence from the field did not suggest a general famine in northern Kenya. The Turkana Early Warning System Bulletin for the third quarter of 1991 showed that rainfall was inadequate and natural vegetation poor; as a consequence the nutritional status of livestock and of children had declined. Although it said that matters could get worse, the situation was 'normal'. This was a sensitive analysis which recognised that although pastoralists normally employed a complex series of strategies for survival, these could be threatened by extended drought. The need for early intervention to support coping mechanisms if the situation deteriorated was acknowledged, but only on the basis of targeted support. From then on, tension arose between those who understood the local situation and those who used global data to determine what interventions should take place. Quite simply, local actors had sensitive information but took time to analyse the data: international agencies had crude data which did not capture the complexity of the situation.

The conclusion drawn by the late 1991 Turkana report was supported by the WFP 'Back to Office Report' (Anderson, 23 December 1991) describing a visit to Samburu, Baringo, West Pokot and Elgeyo Markwet:

*Few districts are experiencing drought stress at present, for example in West Pokot conditions are much better than last year, they have had adequate rainfall, their animals are healthy and their harvest is on par with a normal year ... local NGOs bilateral donors and GoK appear to be capable of meeting current levels of demand.*

The report strongly suggests that the droughts 'were recurrent and predictable' and that districts 'have not reached a state of emergency although there could be pockets of drought stress that are in need of temporary food assistance.' The same report expressed concern over how an emergency appeal might be justified and how food relief might be used for political control, reflecting concern that the GoK had just announced a general election. It emphasised that local government had the capacity to implement the GoK's own relief programme.

Relying on the Turkana Early Warning System Bulletin and the Anderson Report, WFP replied to the requests for assistance from the Office of the President on 16 January 1992, suggesting that there was not a 'stage [sic] of emergency'. It also asked for prioritisation to be based on information, yet to be collected, on the physical conditions at district level, the local political economy and the erosion of entitlements to food. WFP suggested a format for data collection and that five districts from the seventeen be prioritised for intervention.

At this point, WFP (Kenya) was in a quandary. Its Head of Mission was responsible not only for Kenya, but for the region and, judging by volumes of correspondence, the regional responsibility, not least because of the situation in Somalia, southern Ethiopia and southern Sudan, was taking up most of his time. Furthermore, since December 1991, WFP (Rome) had insisted that WFP should launch its own relief...
appeals rather than joining with FAO. This seems partly to reflect internal United Nations discussion about relative responsibilities in emergencies. By March 1992, it had become very clear there was a distinct struggle between WFP and UNICEF for institutional space in terms of leadership of the emergency. Donors wanted WFP to deliver relief in order to avoid GoK involvement in food distribution, but also wanted to make use of the local leadership and management capacities of UNICEF as the lead agency in Kenya. Pushing WFP into food distribution without specified targets and a plan for withdrawal ensured that the donors excluded GoK from decision making in a situation which did not warrant humanitarian assistance.

None of this was helped by the lack of Kenyan response to the donor demand for economic reform. In January, February and March 1992, donors considered the need for fiscal, parastatal and civil service reform which included the USAID targets for dismantling state investment in market institutions by April 1992. In particular, the donors wanted the implementation of the World Bank reforms which addressed problems of agricultural marketing. Issues under discussion included legislation to improve maize movement – a compromise with the donor community as USAID wanted to eliminate all movement control; to see maize producer prices raised; to remove beans from the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) schedule list and to finalise a performance contract for NCPB. NCPB was seen as the parastatal requiring root and branch reform linked to new action plans for food and nutrition, drought contingency and marketing reforms if the issues of Kenyan structural food shortage were ever to be addressed.

A Maize or Cattle Emergency? Peasants or Pastoralist Famine?

FAO was concerned that pressing for reform of the NCPB might delay effective provision of emergency food supplies. Following its mission of 6-23 February 1992, it had estimated that 300,000 tonnes of cereal, of which most (80 per cent) should be maize, was needed and would have to be provided with international assistance. This estimate showed clearly that the three most densely populated regions – Central, Eastern and Western – barely had break-even figures on annual production despite twice-yearly harvests; in contrast, the Rift Valley, with a single harvest, dominated annual cereal production. In the following year, the FAO assessments suggested an increasing cereal deficit to 1.44 million tonnes of which 725,000 tonnes would have to be made up from food aid; even by June 1994, assessments indicated that some 600,000 tonnes of food aid was still needed if Kenya was not to face major famine. Central to this debate was the importance of maize where ‘no one factor can be singled out to explain the fall in maize production’ and there was considerable regional variation in yield.

Two points need to be noted about these FAO assessments. First, they tend to exaggerate the annual shortfall because the annual projections for Kenyan production are too optimistic and second, the FAO calculations themselves were strenuously questioned by the donors, particularly USAID, as they tended to exaggerate emergency requirements. It must be stressed, however, that the FAO statistics, while not covering the pastoral areas adequately, remain the only constant base of information about food production throughout the emergency areas and were used, therefore, for calculating what was needed to make up the shortfall.

It is important to take into account that, from 1992 to 1994, there were five inter-agency assessments of food need in Kenya but, particularly in late 1993 and early 1994, WFP noted that conflicting opinions and data emerged from them which were
'biased towards the objectives of the inter-agency employers'. WFP found it particularly difficult to assess the food needs of each district because GoK estimates tended to exaggerate the population numbers so as to maximise delivery. The combination of over-estimating both the size of the cereal shortfall and the number of people in need produced a situation in which serious questions were raised about the extent of the emergency in Kenya. By late 1993, there were significant questions about whether WFP was eliminating local coping mechanisms and increasing levels of dependency thus jeopardising attempts at ending the emergency.

Documentation on UNICEF's involvement is relatively thin but it is apparent that in early 1992 the organisation fought with WFP for institutional supremacy. The UNICEF representative had to inform the Office of the President that both WFP and UNICEF were involved in responding to the emergency. Later that spring, an exchange of correspondence between WFP and UNICEF representatives stressed that WFP had been asked to lead emergency relief by the donors. This institutional struggle was made more difficult because WFP was unable to deliver inputs to the FAO crop and food assessment mission of early 1992 and, as a consequence, had little field data on which to establish the volume of needed humanitarian assistance.

UNICEF addressed emergency relief through the establishment of its own field offices and with contracts with local NGOs. There is little documentary evidence at National Headquarters of the overall programme, although the principal sectors of operation were nutrition, health, livestock, water and sanitation. According to UNICEF's own reports, it was working in eight of the seventeen districts.

If there was confusion among the bilateral donors about the number and location of the districts affected by the emergency, among the international NGOs the emergency provided a sense of opportunity. GTZ (Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit) and OXFAM redirected their efforts and CARE offered to run food distribution for WFP, an offer it readily accepted. The first meeting with the NGOs was called for 17 March 1992 at which the GoK informed NGOs that it intended to assess the situation in twelve selected districts (Kitui, Isiolo, Samburu, Garissa, Machakos, Wajir, Tana River, Nyandarua, Marsabit, Kajiado, Nyeri, Baringo). On the following day, the UNICEF representative launched the first formal appeal which, on 19 March, brought a rapid rebuke from WFP, suggesting that UNICEF was causing confusion in the donor community and making WFP's task of co-ordination more difficult. Simultaneously, WFP wrote to the Office of the President supporting the establishment of a ministerial Task Force because it emphasised 'the gravity of the situation'. As GoK was making the initial requests, evidence from the field did not suggest a general famine in northern Kenya. Throughout this early part of the effort to raise consciousness about the emergency, WFP had provided the Office of the President with background material, including forms for emergency assessment, so that it could make its request to WFP.

The Push for External Intervention

Donors began to discuss possible food aid contributions during April 1992. WFP correspondence from Nairobi to Rome (6 April 1992) indicates that the first donor to commit commodities was the European Union which was willing to release up to 40,000 metric tonnes (mt) of whole wheat, of which 15,000 tonnes would be released immediately for emergency operations even though WFP noted that wheat 'was not a commodity familiar to many of the drought affected peoples' but also remarked that, 'for immediate assistance we have no other grain than wheat'.
UNICEF paid a field visit to Isiolo, Marsabit and Samburu in the second week of April 1992. The subsequent Back-to-Office report said that, in places, ‘over 80 per cent of cattle, 40 per cent of sheep and goats and 20 per cent of camels had already died’ and that ‘around half of the children are below 80 per cent of expected weight for age’. On the basis of this short report, UNICEF looked for local supplies of energy dense food. It hoped to get 200 tonnes of UNIMIX because pastoral populations did not easily accept conventional cereal products. This report became the basis of the figures that continued to be quoted by relevant agencies to emphasise the importance of the drought as the cause of famine and, therefore, of the emergency.

While at this stage rains were good in a few places and there was some localised drought many areas were enjoying higher than average rainfall and there was little evidence of significant drought. Yet despite this, drought was given greater credence as the cause of the emergency by the publication of the United Nations Environmental Programme’s report that the El Niño phenomenon was generating drought in southern and eastern Africa. Up to that point, none of the early warning systems had indicated that Kenya was experiencing a major shortage of rainfall and it was not until late 1993 that the regional early warning systems talked of drought in Kenya.

Early in May UNICEF, together with MSF Belgium, AICF (Action Internationale Contre la Faim) and the Crescent of Hope, sent a rapid assessment mission to Wajir, Mandera and Marsabit. That resulted in requests for emergency assistance of some US$5.1 million. This report was covered by the press in a way which suggested that ‘the area had been forgotten by the Government’, which in turn, produced a press response from GoK (26 May 1992), that the claims were ‘quite disturbing and outrightly ridiculous.’ GoK maintained that it had taken appropriate measures to correct a situation created by drought and exacerbated by conflict in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, GoK press release indicated that:

> an investigation was launched immediately and it has been discovered that the malnourished people, whose photographs appeared in a local daily, were not Kenyan. These pictures are of Somali nationals who have arrived in a very serious malnourished condition.

The report of a similar assessment mission undertaken by Save the Children Fund (SCF) was made available in Nairobi by early June. It indicated that SCF UK did not wish to become involved because:

> reliable information relating to the consequences of the drought is both scarce and incomplete. It provides an inadequate basis for rigorous analysis of the problems which the drought poses and hence for the proposal of appropriate measures for their resolution.

The authors of that report also said that:

> The problems were not as bad as people were saying in Nairobi. Existing social structures and NGOs were providing support. There was no evidence of mass migration and if the problems had been both severe and extensive, then SCF (UK) would have been involved (interview).

USAID files, together with e-mail discussions registered with them, provide corroborative evidence of confusion about the nature of Kenya’s emergency. On 17 March 1992, Simmonds, a senior official of USAID, preparing for the first formal food aid meeting of 18 March, noted that it is necessary to separate the emergency needs linked to drought in the northern districts from the more general maize shortage. He continued to note that when the GoK presents adequate data on drought conditions in the north, then USAID will ask for emergency food assistance from Washington.
Furthermore, it was important for USAID to stress that the response to the maize shortage should not be one in which USAID used ‘food as a weapon in our cereals market liberalisation dialogue’.

The same e-mail contains a savage critique of FAO’s analysis of cereal shortage, including the point that on-farm stocks are not calculated, that only 40 to 50 per cent of calorific intake comes from cereals in Kenya and that crop losses are significantly lower than suggested by GoK. As a consequence, USAID suggests that the actual shortfall is likely to be as low as 250,000 tonnes. In the e-mail it is also said that donors are under pressure to respond to drought in southern Africa and that it is unclear what a quantity of cereals GoK needs to import. Most importantly, the e-mail establishes the USAID view of the emergency:

we should indicate that we do not find weather to be the principal cause of the shortage (the causes are not in our stars but rather in our food policy). We should then go through the litany of central policy problems that have discouraged production by farmers and raised prices to consumers. We then should indicate that principal policy reforms required removals of price controls, movement controls and prices to mills.

Further comments in the e-mail noted that the NCPB system was not transparent and therefore USAID would not be prudent stewards of American taxpayers’ funds if they were to suggest food imports. The e-mail ends by noting that the Paris 1991 meeting signaled that there could be no quick dispersal of assistance until the requisite policy reforms, including agricultural marketing reforms, had been made. Another e-mail (19 March 1992) notes the original UNICEF fax calling for help for 270,000 people in Marsabit, Wajir, Isiolo and Samburu but rejects the WFP’s estimate of one million people in need. Distrust of WFP figures was emerging as early as March 1992.

Unclassified USAID cable traffic on 2 April 1992 noted an official GoK request and the appearance of a pro forma for the comprehensive assessment of nine districts. In this cable, rainfall conditions, particularly the below average long rains, are given as a cause of drought. The population affected is estimated was 550,000 which could easily treble if the 1992 long rains (April-June) did not materialise. Comparing the 1992 drought with the 1984-5 drought, the cable noted that the condition of livestock at the beginning of the current drought was worse than it had been at the start of the 1984-5 drought and, as a consequence, little milk was available. Young children and lactating mothers, who relied on milk, made up a significant proportion of those who were vulnerable to famine. It says that the mission proposed that a relief ration of 1,600 calories – compared to WFP’s figure of 2,100 calories – per person per day be used to calculate food requirements. The cable finished by saying that the quality and level of donor NGO co-ordination led by WFP was high but that, to date, only SIDA had made a commitment.

In support of the official request, the cable traffic includes the text of an editorial from The Daily Nation (Wednesday 22 May 1992) emphasising that USAID Kenya finds the factual information reasonably accurate. The text began:

Calamity has befallen the land ... the tragedy is this. While Kenyans are dying, dying just like the refugees they are playing host to, Kenyan officials are not talking about this catastrophe. They are not. They are talking about the next elections ... According to report by UNICEF, more than one million people in North-Eastern Province face starvation.
Other cable traffic on the same day referred to the mission’s observation of drought in Wajir district, and continued to say that the situation was critical and that there was widespread famine in the North-East. E-mail for the same date reported on conversations with UNICEF’s representative who were reported to be extremely upset by WFP’s slow response, adding that WFP had ‘displayed absolutely no operational capacity’. UNICEF’s representative wanted to know when WFP Rome would send an assessment mission to design a distribution plan and to calculate the needs of the food pipeline. He also said that appointing CARE as an operational partner was an inadequate response from WFP to a major disaster and, because of the lack of operational capacity, airlifting food had to be considered. The e-mail commented that ‘it is pretty unbelievable that we are at this point in Kenya’. Unclassified cable traffic for 21 May 1992 contains a request for US$2.6 million of food and for nine districts for three months to a sustainable emergency. The following day, cable traffic included the text of an article published in The Weekly Review (22 May 1992). It begins with the words, ‘The reign of terror continues’ and describes high levels of ethnic conflict and banditry in which over 150 people were killed and 70,000 livestock stolen in three months. The situation in North-Eastern Province was regarded as a threat to national security and was beginning to affect Eastern Province. GoK attributed growing lawlessness in the Province to ethnic violence among Kenyan Somalis. While there was an overspill of fighting from Somalia, local terrorism included the ambushing of public transport. The report ended by noting that, there has been a severe drought.

USAID visited GTZ’s Wajir operation in late May and produced an unclassified cable ‘Ground Truthing the Drought Situation in Kenya’. It concluded by stressing that:

*The overview of the situation provided by this field visit strongly supports technical reports from other sources that widespread famine in North East Kenya has already begun.*

The Evaluation Team found technical reports on other districts impossible to obtain but, from field work, accepted that Wajir was hardest hit even though the impact was not uniform. In effect the situation in Wajir becomes the North-East Famine and the North-East Famine becomes a Kenyan Emergency within one month.

By 4 June 1992, the Economics Office of the United States Embassy was, with the help of USAID, drafting a response to the famine in northern Kenya arguing that Kenyan needs had been buried beneath concern for the more vocal south and tragedies in the Horn of Africa. It used the UNICEF figure of 270,000 in urgent need of assistance and perhaps one million others being affected. It focused attention on acute malnutrition in children, particularly in pastoral areas where children are unable to digest grain or bean based foods rather than the traditional food of grain and blood. As a consequence, the Embassy makes clear the need for CSM (corn, soya, milk).

By July 1992, e-mail traffic was extremely lively, demanding that someone should find out why funds were still required for airlifts which cost US$330 per tonne to ship food. WFP and CARE were firmly instructed to find out why ground transport was not working. Of greater concern was the use of the European Union Stabex funds to reconstitute NCPB’s strategic reserve. USAID made very clear that they were disappointed by the EU funding, because NCPB had not undertaken any institutional reforms.
USAID commissioned a report by Cuny and Esposito, undertaken in August 1992, which concluded that a recovery strategy relying heavily on market-based interventions, rather than free distribution, was the way out of the emergency. USAID Kenya, clearly concerned about the presumptions underlying the restoration of maize stock, was doubtful about such a strategy because it seemed to be in conflict with its desire for unrestricted markets.

It is obvious from the USAID files that there was a willingness to address the problems of a developing famine in the north-east but, simultaneously, its unwillingness to associate a localised famine with the provision of cereal, especially maize, for Kenya in general. It clearly favoured UNICEF's operation since it demonstrated greater operational capacity and was closer to the NGOs which were the implementing partners of US deliveries. A formal response to the original GoK appeal came some six months after the initial request, a timetable which parallels the lack of rapid response by other donors.

The final set of evidence about the nature of the emergency came from The Daily Nation, which provided the best coverage of the situation in northern Kenya. Its coverage focused on the maize issue and noted that a decline in maize hectarage, the decreased use of fertiliser per hectare, low producer prices and slow payment from NCPB all operated against the production of cereal surpluses. By March 1992, there was talk of the impact of food aid on the balance of payments but the first mention of drought as a problem in pastoral areas does not occur until April 1992. At the same time, there are increasing reports of the impact on Kenya's economic situation of the freeze on funds by the donors as well as of the increase in ethnic conflict. In May 1992, Kenya's emergency food requirements were mentioned, but largely as a result of an influx of refugees from Somalia. In June 1992, in a story under the headline 'Kenya Accused of Apathy', WFP's Representative drew GoK's attention to the warnings of an imminent emergency issued by his office since 1991. By mid-June the Office of the President had responded by formally asking for assistance for over 650,000 people affected by drought. Donors, including Britain, responded by focusing attention on the pastoral, not the agricultural, areas. By the end of 1992, when the IMF was still dissatisfied with the rate of reform by the GoK, it was apparent that no new monies would be available except for those voted under Humanitarian Assistance. During that same period accusations that relief food was distributed by local officials so as to solicit votes or favours in the forthcoming election increased. It was a charge that was also sometimes levelled at district officials.

The newspaper coverage is striking in that there are few reports from the field except when one of the donor ambassadors went to assess the situation on the ground. Most of the editorials are dominated by discussions of maize availability linking it to the balance of payments rather than to production or agricultural marketing. Greater coverage is devoted to the agricultural than to the pastoral system and, after September 1992, there is little reportage of the so-called drought.

The need to maintain development budgets, despite official requests through the Paris Club to end aid to Kenya until its Government implemented agreed reforms, was a major consideration for European donors, but was difficult to address at the time. Transferring development aid to humanitarian assistance rather neatly resolved this problem for donors who could thus maintain their Kenyan positions without supporting development initiatives. Several senior figures in diplomatic circles have suggested that this shift to humanitarian assistance from development aid was 'actively' pursued. Whether 'active' or not, by June 1992, most donors were willing to
support a Kenyan appeal for an emergency which initially had been raised as an issue by GoK some nine months earlier, despite the fact that GoK itself was denying major famine. Donors did so by trying to distinguish between a maize shortage at the national level and a famine in the pastoral north. There was little agreement between different actors on the nature of the famine and no significant evidence of widespread, generic famine at the time the emergency was called. There was undoubtedly localised famine and people had moved to urban areas in search of relief, but the poor recovery from the 1980s drought, the successive years of localised drought from 1990, the ethnic conflict and the impact of refugees from neighbouring countries provided a complex context for emergency assistance. In retrospect, it does seem unusual that Kenya, for the first time since independence, should declare an international appeal for an emergency and that, more importantly, the donors and multilateral agencies should support such an appeal without adequate evidence of famine. In one sense, it served all the actors well to mount such an appeal, but, ironically, it also served the people of Kenya well too. This declaration of a dubious famine was successful because of the states of emergency throughout the rest of eastern and southern Africa – but having made it, Kenya then suffered from a drought in semi-arid and farming areas that would have caused famine and death had relief not been in place. Because of the conflict over numbers and the areas affected, it was difficult to plan delivery. No attempt was made to anticipate the end of relief.

Emergency Start-Up: June 1992 to October 1992

Both WFP and UNICEF substantially increased staff numbers as the emergency began. WFP’s staff quadrupled while, by January 1993, UNICEF had some 110 new workers in the field. The emergency start-up was difficult for several reasons, largely to do with external political influences rather than with problems in the organisations themselves. These included:

• the dominance of the December 1992 election and the associated reports of political interference with the distribution of humanitarian assistance;
• increasing levels of ethnic tension in Kenya spilling from the Rift Valley into the North;
• the continuing cross-border problems, particularly with Somalia;
• the risk to local staff in the field because of the high levels of political insecurity.

WFP and UNICEF in this period lacked staff sufficiently experienced in emergencies which meant that there was little professional control. Few reliable records are available and there was a significant decrease in reporting back to headquarters at the critical point in the emergency.

The irony in this that the signs of widespread famine began to appear by October-November 1992. The long rains had failed and their failure had a significant impact on the availability of maize. Major food deficits, requiring extensive intervention by the multi-lateral agencies, appeared in Eastern, Western and parts of Central Province. For WFP, this was largely an issue of delivering food rations for subsequent distribution in the districts. For UNICEF the situation was more complex because they essentially fulfilled a variety of roles in service provision that had traditionally been undertaken by GoK, though lack of money had created a marked deterioration notably in human and animal health.
Emergency Decline: November 1993 to August 1994

November 1993 marks the consolidation of the WFP Programme, achieved largely by bringing in a professionally competent team to cover the emergency. By November 1993, WFP had taken over primary food distribution from CARE and was effectively monitoring the provision of relief assistance and asking questions about defining the end of humanitarian intervention. The period was dominated by conflicting inter-agency reports in which GoK, the international NGOs, the multilateral organisations and the donors each offered differing assessments of the number of people at risk. This dispute remained unresolved and forced WFP to employ outside consultancies to define, at district level, the moment when humanitarian assistance should be ended. UNICEF, in parallel, began specifying a five-year plan with the GoK as it moved from relief to rehabilitation. Central to this transition was the acknowledgment that UNICEF had essentially taken over many of the service roles normally provided by government.

Emergency Close Down: September 1994 to June 1995

With the help of external consultants, WFP and UNICEF defined the end of the emergency in all districts. Only in Kajiado was the need to end humanitarian assistance rejected. UNICEF continued to implement its five-year service plan but had to manage with a far smaller staff and was not helped by the adverse publicity attracted by the financial audit of the Kenya Country Programme. Although it proved impossible to get exact figures, there was talk at UNICEF in the spring of 1995 of under-spending the emergency fund by a sum of between US$2 and 6 million. There was also talk, but little evidence, of the difficulties of reconciling food-stock borrowings that occurred between multilateral agencies at the beginning of the emergency. It was not until September 1994 that WFP's long awaited international finance officer was made available to WFP in Nairobi; such capacity did not exist for UNICEF.

Towards a Conclusion

Our discussion suggests that a widespread famine was declared without adequate supporting evidence. When the donors supported it, and insisted that the multilaterals implemented the humanitarian assistance relief effort, they did not realise that neither UNICEF nor WFP had the professional capacity in Kenya to undertake such a programme. By the time that the agencies had experienced people in place, the donors were concerned that too much humanitarian assistance was being provided, so that the professional capacity of WFP and UNICEF was primarily used to mediate conflict between donors and the GoK about the size and significance of the funding as well as the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The Kenyan complex emergency had no single cause. Despite claims that drought conditions had created famine, there is little evidence to support a generalised drought as the cause of the emergency. On the ground most people attributed the emergency to the collapse of local security. Donor attention was focused initially on the pastoral areas of the North-East but, underlying this, was concern about the poor performance of agricultural production in semi-arid areas. While it is impossible to attribute the declaration of an emergency to one single political actor, there seems to have been a consensus that the declaration of an emergency would allow the donor community to address a whole series of problems in Kenya by launching a famine appeal on the back of localised famine in the pastoral areas.
Total investment in the emergency probably exceeded US$250 million, although real expenditure is difficult to establish. The early declaration of the emergency meant that, when drought affected the semi-arid farming areas in 1993 humanitarian aid mechanisms were in place thus avoiding excessive suffering and death. It was, however, political chance not pre-disaster planning that produced this situation. There is little evidence that the vulnerability of pastoral and farming communities to famine has been reduced or that entitlements, particularly for infrastructure and social services from the Government of Kenya have been improved.

Because it is difficult to identify a single real cause for the famine, it is also difficult to identify the rapportage that described the need for a declaration of emergency and subsequent interventions. While there is little doubt that WFP, and to a lesser extent UNICEF, followed their agreed procedures in assessing the physical needs of the affected communities, there is little evidence to suggest that, for the first year, adequate attention was paid to the monitoring and evaluation of their programmes. By late 1993, both WFP and UNICEF had professional teams in place to address this problem but this was almost two years after the issue of humanitarian assistance had been raised. Both WFP and UNICEF worked extensively with international and local NGOs where again, there was little monitoring and evaluation with the exception of the physical delivery of commodities. Quite simply, initial analysis of the famine conditions, monitoring and evaluation were poor. It gave little indication to donors of how co-ordination could be bettered or when the relief phase would end. Without such rapportage, it was difficult to define disengagement from relief activities and this therefore required from WFP a unique, systematised effort, district by district, to define the termination of humanitarian assistance.

In the field, recipients did not identify with the channel of aid, especially with regard to WFP efforts. Beneficiaries usually identified the source of commodities as the GoK, sometimes an international NGO and occasionally UNICEF. There was never any identity with individual donors. Local beneficiaries, repeatedly, emphasised that the major problem was the breakdown of law and order, usually attributed to internal ethnic conflict rather than cross-border problems. There is little doubt that insecurity in pastoral areas, particularly around the time of the 1992 election, was a significant cause of difficulty in distributing aid effectively. Claims that political interference caused inefficient distribution of food aid were quite frequent but unproven. Relief workers themselves were frequently in danger and felt isolated from Headquarters in Nairobi. With the termination of the airlift, by August 1992, transport logistics depended on using existing road networks, exacerbating the isolation of the relief workers. There is evidence that the relief workers did not take into account local cultural and religious sensitivities, thus leading to a breakdown in trust between local communities and the relief agencies.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

Efficiency is the relation between intended result and cost, including the time taken to deliver goods. As there is little evidence of a generalised acute famine, it is impossible to measure efficiency in this context. What does emerge, however, particularly in the case of WFP towards the end of the relief programme, is a highly professional response which could serve as a model of best practice for future planned withdrawal from relief programmes. Efficiency is more difficult to judge in the case of UNICEF. Its programme consisted of a wide range of individual projects implemented by short-term contract staff who did not have the capacity for creating an institutional memory for models of best practice.
Three years after the start of the programme it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the physical distribution of goods. The UNICEF district survey cannot be used to make a judgement about the humanitarian aid programme, because, although it records a decrease in acute malnutrition, there is no means of attributing this drop to the quality of humanitarian aid. For WFP, in particular, the lack of targeting of women and children created some local criticisms, principally from those communities where there were several families in one household. In general, effectiveness seems to have been limited because an anthroprometric rather than a broader social approach was taken to food need definition. Furthermore, the delivery of food as a physical commodity, rather than as a tool to encourage the maintenance of production systems, had a negative impact in pastoral areas. As humanitarian assistance is broadly defined as an intervention for generalised famine in agricultural areas, there is need to rethink the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery for localised famine in pastoral areas. The impact of the intervention substantially ensured national food security in 1993 and avoided the need for the Government of Kenya to spend substantial amounts of foreign exchange on the importation of basic food commodities. It is difficult after the event to assess accurately the impact on household food security, there is evidence that this must have been sustained not least because considerable amounts of food aid were immediately sold directly onto the market.

Execution of Relief Activities

The drought relief organisation of the Kenyan Government, from national to district level, appears to have been a model system. Within districts, there is conflicting evidence about the effectiveness of local organisation. One key area where there was conflict between agencies and the Government of Kenya was on the precise assessment of the numbers at risk. This will always be a difficult problem because of the paucity of information and, more particularly, because of the movement in pastoral societies. There was little evidence of beneficiary participation in programme formulation and execution with the exception of international NGOs. And there was little explicit attention to gender issues.

In general, the planned activities and outputs of the programmes have been achieved although delivery of commodities, at a district level, showed some variation from planned delivery targets. A range of reasons account for this including the availability of transport, the scheduling of commodity flow and the difficulties of commodity movements especially during the rainy season.

In the initial phase, there was limited operational capacity for UNICEF and WFP. Both had to work with what was available in the field. However the WFP in mid-term insisted that implementing NGOs demonstrated both storage and implementing capacity before including them in the programme. Although there was significant variation between the performance of NGOs, in general, both international and local NGOs demonstrated satisfactory performance although there was substantial conflict over the issue of secondary transport, overhead and administrative costs, which NGOs felt should have been paid. WFP in particular provided a strong training framework for their implementing partners.

In terms of project design, there was no specific target group; the programme was a generalised humanitarian assistance programme. UNICEF's focus on children meant that it recognised maternal obligations and was de facto gender conscious. The degree of targeting by WFP was more a function of individual NGOs rather than any guiding principle laid down by WFP. The best example was OXFAM, who in some districts
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by-passed local administration and relied upon women to define need and distribute within the household. Particular mention should be made of the innovative UNICEF programme on veterinary health which by seeking to address the problem of the reconstitution of pastoral herds attempted to recreate sustainable economic systems in pastoral areas. There are examples, especially at the beginning of the famine, of inappropriate inputs, particularly the provision of wheat. It has to be noted, however, that the rejection of wheat implies that the famine conditions could not have been as severe as claimed by the donors.

Monitoring
The entire Humanitarian Assistance Programme was headquarters-driven. It lead to the monitoring of logistical inputs but not of the impact of relief aid. It is important that a simple logical frame programme system is put in place to monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of future interventions. The significant monitoring exercise that was instituted during the emergency was a district-by-district evaluation of the end of relief. While there were several inter-agency missions during the humanitarian aid programme, they served only to highlight the differences in opinion between actors involved in delivering relief and had little impact on the formulation of appeals.

Impact
The provision of relief clearly improved the food situation in Kenya as a whole. There was increased supply and access to human and animal medication, food commodities, water, communication, transport and a platform for communities to highlight their problems. The volume of relief undoubtedly saved lives and prevented both acute and chronic malnutrition. But the volume and length of time that relief was available seems out of proportion to the size of the famine, retarding a move to rehabilitation. The distribution of relief aid, particularly through towns, suggests a somewhat centralised method of distribution encouraging migration, and perhaps the build-up around strategic towns of a welfare system that the GoK itself could not afford. In pastoralist areas it is essential that relief aid is distributed to small centres of population so as not to encourage the formation of quasi urban areas (famine camps) where people have no basis for livelihood other than relief supplies.

Several important issues need to be considered by donors and agencies alike. For the donors these issues include a need to determine the extent, intensity and the probable duration of the disaster; decide both institutional and management responsibility for implementation; require agreed reporting procedures for monitoring and evaluation, identify whether multi-laterals are to be used as multilaterals or instruments of bilateral policy and finance multilateral disaster preparedness capacity. For all actors there is a need to: ensure that institutional memory is retained, that resources are deployed for preparedness capacity and co-ordinate structures for NGO involvement. Monitoring and evaluation need to be strengthened within the relief phase, not least because field staff should not lose sight of their objective, which is to work themselves out of a job. An ‘exit’ strategy should be developed at the planning stage of a relief operation.

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Chronology Of A Complex Political Emergency: Four Stages

Political Confusion
September 1991: GoK/FAO concern over food shortage at national level;

November 1991: Paris Club, withdrawal of development aid: reaffirmation of structural adjustment programme (NCPB); demand for end of corruption; demand for multi-party elections;

December 1991: declaration of multi-party elections; FAO/WFP separated; FAO suggests identification mission plus appeal: first GoK request (7/18);

January 1992: WFP North East mission inconclusive;

March 1992: anecdotal reports suggest increasing severity of drought; WFP organises first NGO meeting; WFP convenes donor meeting; Care offer;

May 1992: first donor pledge meeting (EU provides food), 17 districts identified; WFP/UNICEF spat; USAID concern regarding NCPB & EU;

May 1992: famine in North East Kenya; UNICEF/MSCF Belgium, Crescent of Hope;

June 1992: no famine in North East Kenya; a rapid assessment of conditions and immediate relief needs of nomadic populations, SCF/UK;

June 1992: Sepha appeal; GoK formal request; WFP to deliver locally;

July 1992: formal launch, GoK – drought management strategy; maize concern; forex implications, Donors – From Development To Humanitarian Aid, International NGOs – Pipeline Income;

Local NGOs – work.

Emergency Start-up
July 1992, inter-agency teams expand districts. Drought in Eastern and Central Province;

March 1993, ethnic strife, cross border problems, reports of political interference, high risk to local staff.

Emergency Operation
April 1993, two conflicting inter-agency reports, conflict over numbers, WFP/UNICEF operational management problems resolved, monitoring in place, Care role reduced;

September 1994 to March 1995; Defined close-down (WFP): UNICEF audit plus emergency surplus; Definition of service availability.

Conclusion
Famine called for reasons not to do with the North East.
Desertification: the Uneasy Interface Between Science, People & Environmental Issues in Africa

David Thomas

Desertification is a major environmental issue that is the focus of a recent UN convention (the CCD) that aims to improve the resolution of the problem.

Desertification is however not a straightforward issue and has many controversial dimensions, in part due to confusion over its definition, extent, characteristics and causes. Many difficulties have arisen at the interface between science, politics and decision makers. From a scientific perspective, these problems have been a result of the speed of scientific research, the way in which scientific ideas evolve, the manner in which data have been selectively used and, in parts of the developing world, because of perceived links between science and colonisation. It is argued that despite these problems that create an uneasy interface between science and politics, desertification can not be tackled from political and social directions alone.

Science has a real role to play in combating desertification, particularly in the light of CCD goals. This role includes retaining the clarity of the issue, identifying environmental responses to human disturbances, monitoring the extent of desertification, and identifying appropriate scales of remedial action.

Introduction

'Environmental issue' is a popular term. Environmental issues are at the interface of society environment relationships, and fall into two broad categories. First, where society impacts on the environment, and second, where a natural component of the physical environment (for example a drought, hurricane, or volcanic eruption) impacts negatively on people. The latter category is primarily the result of people being in the wrong place, at the wrong time, or at least people taking a calculated risk in trying to play off gains of doing something somewhere against the dangers that might arise. The former is where human actions have effects that are realised, known but accepted, or exceed the expected scale, on the environment.

Concern about negative human impacts on the natural environment has probably never been greater than at present. Nor, for that matter, has scientific knowledge of natural environments ever been at a higher level. Despite these incontrovertible points, when it comes to environmental issues that are of global importance and which are widely occurring, finding appropriate solutions appears to be difficult. This article explores the role of the environmental sciences in explaining, and finding solutions to, desertification, with especial reference to Africa.

The rationale for doing this is fourfold. First, science has had a lot to say about desertification, or at least it is widely assumed that it has. Second, desertification has been controversial, both in its representation as a problem and in terms of the way it has been linked to issues of famine, drought and poverty. Third, the potential
role that science can play in contributing positively to addressing environmental issues, is well exemplified by the interplays between science, decision makers and those affected by desertification. Fourth, desertification is regarded as one of the major global environmental issues (for example, UNEP 1987. Goudie, 1990). To explore these themes, desertification and the role of science needs to be deconstructed. For the purposes of this article, the definition of desertification utilised in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNEP, 1995) is used: land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry-subhumid areas (collectively known as the ‘susceptible drylands) resulting from various factors including climatic variability and human activities.

Understanding the Environment

Desertification is an environmental issue that has been on international agendas, especially with reference to sub-Saharan Africa, since the 1970s. The status of desertification as an environmental issue, in both societal and scientific contexts is, nevertheless, contentious. In 1977 the United Nations Conference on Desertification (UNCOD) was held in Nairobi. This high-status meeting, with participants from political and scientific circles, raised the international profile of desertification and it lead to the UN taking a direct role in anti-desertification activities (Thomas & Middleton, 1994).

The primary reason behind UNCOD however, was not specifically land degradation. Rather, it was the terrible social and environmental consequences of the severe drought that had affected much of the Sahel region during the 1970s. The interrelationship between drought and land degradation, including confusion between the two, and over what is the cause and what in the short term can be similar environmental outcome is significant (Warren & Khogali, 1992; Thomas & Middleton, 1994). Linked to the confusion surrounding desertification are the 100 or so published definitions that have appeared. Some regard it as a physical process, others a state of the environment, others as a collective term for various degradation processes. It is perhaps not unreasonable, in the light of these confusions, and variable interpretations, that some have called for the use of the term to be discontinued (Mainguet, 1991), but the reality is that it is a term with emotive connotations that has perhaps greater political than scientific utility.

There has been considerable physical science interest in desertification with research falling in four main areas (Thomas, in press): assessment of the extent of desertification (for example, Abel & Hellden, 1991; UNEP, 1992); identification of desertification processes and their impact on environmental systems (for example, Rhoades, 1990; Scoones, 1989); identification of appropriate remedial actions (for example, Brown & Wolfe, 1986; Roose, 1988); and the relationship between desertification and other environmental problems and natural hazards (for example, Walker & Rowntree, 1977; Hulme, 1989). The need to understand the environmental aspects of desertification has been paralleled with investigations into its social dimensions. The human dimension of desertification is of marked importance (Stiles, 1995) given attitude and decision-making changes are needed by policy makers and land users if solutions to desertification are to be found. It is at the interplay of social and scientific aspects that many issues and controversies about desertification lie. As desertification has often been ill-defined (or at least, there has been no clarity of agreed definition), then what it is and means in terms of the physical environment has been either ill-conceived or interpreted differently by different people, sometimes according to how it suits their needs. The lack of
scientific clarity begs the question as to whether science has a role in tackling and understanding an issue that manifests itself not just in environmental degradation but, particularly in the developing world, in poverty, famine, population displacement and death. As people cause desertification, and are the ultimate losers from the problem, is science relevant anyway?

**Desertification: Can Scientists be Trusted?**

It often appears that politicians and decision makers do not trust scientific information. There may be good reason for this on occasions, but there may also be problems with how non-scientists treat or interpret the outcome of scientific research. In some quarters, particularly in media and political circles, science has been seen responsible, in part or in whole, for failing to solve 'the desertification problem' (for example, Pearce, 1992; *The Guardian*, 1993). From a scientific perspective, there are a number of reasons why this view is untenable, which relate either to unreasonable expectations of what science is with the way that scientific findings are put to use in non-scientific situations.

*The speed of scientific research*: Scientific research rarely provides immediate solutions to urgent problems, as research commonly operates at timescales longer than social crises and political agendas. In the context of desertification, which by definition is a dryland problem the issue reached global prominence at a time when scientific research in the affected environments was relatively underdeveloped. In essence, there was not, in the 1970s, a pool of scientific outputs to draw from in order to provide explanations and solutions to the problems of the day. The lack of baseline research may also be part of reason for the debate over what desertification actually is.

A good indication of the problems and friction that can arise when science meets politics head-on actually comes from the desertification arena. In a debate in Lund, Sweden in 1993 between Ulf Hellden, Swedish Geographer, and Bo Kjellen, diplomat and chairperson of the United Nations negotiating committee for an International Convention on Desertification and Drought (INC-D), Kjellen was reported as noting that 'scientific controversies and details are irrelevant to people facing famine' (*The Guardian*, 1993). This point is a relevant one, particularly at times of crisis when human suffering may be acute; nonetheless, the role of science is not to deal with short term relief measures. Kjellen's comment also highlights a popular misunderstanding which is well addressed in the CCD, that it is in fact drought not desertification that tends to lead to significant episodes of famine, as desertification is related to processes of land degradation that gradually lower the productivity of the land (Thomas, 1993). The environmental sciences are more likely to contribute to tackling desertification than to relieving the social consequences of drought, which needs humanitarian relief actions.

*When science does have answers, they do not always generate quick solutions*: It is widely accepted that desertification is not a single process but represents a series of degradation phenomena with an array of contributory social, political and environmental components (for example, Ollson, 1993). Definitive quick fix solutions, applicable to all agricultural systems in all environmental circumstances, simply do not exist (Kemp, 1990; Thomas & Middleton, 1994). Even where viable solutions and remedial actions have been developed their transferability from one place to another may be hampered not only by differences in the physical environment but because of cultural, political or economic constraints. The complexities within and between physical aspects of desertification may in the short term prevent environmental scientists making
simple, broadly applicable, statements about desertification, but ultimately they are likely to enhance the applicability of actions and technologies that are developed. The absence of simple solutions being put forward is not an indication that science is shirking social responsibilities, by a clear pointer that it is properly investigating the complexity of the problem.

The evolution of scientific ideas: It is a fact that scientific research is rarely definitive. The environment is a complex place and understanding takes time. On the other hand, end users want clear, simple definitive outcomes and answers. There have been many discussions over the extent of desertification and many revisions of the (often imprecise) data that are used. Notions of ‘the advancing Sahara’ are now abandoned in line with the recognition of the diverse causes of desertification and its spatial complexity. Where data have been generated they have often been estimates (UNEP, 1977; UNEP, 1992). These estimates have been exaggerated at times (Thomas & Middleton, 1994) and even though some may not like it (for example, Stiles, 1995) it is another fact that there has been a tendency to revise down estimates of the global area affected by desertification processes as method of assessment have improved or been more rigorously applied (for example, Tucker et al. 1991; UNEP, 1992).

There has also been, through the collection of more data, the development of scientific understanding of dryland systems based on research within those environments rather than the application of ideas developed in better studied temperate regions (Thomas & Middleton, 1994; Thomas, 1997). Advances, progression, revision of ideas and occasional major paradigm shifts can be regarded as normal components of the development of scientific thinking (for example, Kuhn, 1970). Such changes and shifts may, however, sit uneasily with the demands made on scientific inputs to addressing problems with a human dimension, while science may gain a reputation for inaccuracy and ‘being wrong’ when further scientific analyses lead to the revision of previous interpretations. In reality of course, science is not a single activity. Scientists debate ideas and agreement is not always common, especially when dealing with something that is under researched. It is therefore not the case that there is ‘science’ and ‘a scientific view’ about desertification, but that is often the way in which things are portrayed or are demanded by non-scientists involved in matters relating to the issue.

Science has been linked to colonialism and even racism: Mistrust sometimes exists in Africa about scientific finding emanating from the western world. In some respects that mistrust is justified: there are for example many instances where ‘west knows best’ views have seen traditional practices, especially pastoralism and environmentally degrading. Now anthropologists and range scientists recognise the environmental sensitivity of traditional livestock management strategies (Livingstone, 1991; Mace, 1991). Sometimes degradation/desertification debates have been used to show the alleged superiority of western approaches over those of indigenous groups, with political ends as much a part of the agenda as environmental ones. Beinart (1996) provides an interesting account of the interweaving of environmental concerns and political agendas in the case of the ‘expanding’ Karoo of South Africa.

The selective use of scientific outcomes and false expectations: It is not pompous to suggest that some scientific findings are often too complex for non-scientists to understand. Non-scientists often require simple explanations of complex issues, and scientists have often failed to recognise this need. Where simplification has occurred, misrepresentation, whether deliberate or the result of misinterpretation, has sometimes ensued, with the case
of the advancing Sahara (see Thomas & Middleton, 1994) being a good example. With the demands of sound-bite politics, the notion of matching sand dunes is simple, visual, and suitably alarmist – it is not surprising that President George Bush and members of the British parliament have presented this view in political speeches (Warren & Agnew, 1988; Thomas & Middleton, 1994). The need to alarm, in order to create action over environmental issues is not a new phenomenon. In the 'dirty thirties' the dust bowl soil erosion issue in the USA and the desire to get public funds for relief efforts led Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, to advise President Trueman to take an alarmist stance in a forthcoming speech to Congress: 'Scare Hell out of them Harry, or nothing will be done' (R. Simonson, personal comment, 1995).

Outside scientific circles, there are sometimes false expectations about what science can deliver. Consequently, data and scientific outcomes may be interpreted with an accuracy that was not intended, and may ultimately end up with a status that is unfounded in scientific terms. Estimates may become fact through repeated use. In the context of desertification, Mainguet (1991) has questioned whether it is better to have no data at all, or to have estimates with political utility, even if they are of limited worth scientifically. A problem here is that if such data are used out of context and are eventually scientifically refuted, significant problems may result from decisions based on their incorrect use. The blame for this may then be placed on the shoulders of science, whereas the misuse or misinterpretation of the information by non-scientists may have been the root of the problem. The use of a 1977 desertification hazard map as a map of actual desertification extent is a good example of where this has occurred (Thomas & Middleton, 1994).

Is There a Role for Real Science?

Scientific contributions have, for a variety of reasons, not always been positively received or used in desertification circles. Despite this, there is an important role for science to play in their understanding and resolution, including in the case of desertification (Agnew & Warren, 1996). That role will not provide and reinforce the crude conceptualisations and simplifications of desertification that have too often been presented. The CCD recognises the complexity of desertification, and this recognition is implicitly accepted by the many countries (and their politicians) that have ratified the convention. If the CCD marks a new era for political awareness and treatment of desertification, it also offers a better opportunity for science to play a viable role. Four themes can be identified for scientific action.

Establishing and retaining issue clarity: Having a scientifically credible and agreed definition is critical for donors and agencies dealing with anti-desertification measures. The CCD incorporates a definition of desertification, presented earlier, that should now be the only definition that is used. This definition differs from that initially proposed by UNEP (1992), which stated only human activities as the causal mechanisms. There were significant advantages, especially from the perspective of effectively tackling the problem and scientific justification, in the simpler causal component of the UNEP (1992) definition (Thomas & Middleton, 1994). Nonetheless, the definition of desertification adopted in the Convention has scientific relevance and is perhaps justified in the context of current concerns over the impacts of anthropogenically-induced global warming and its impacts on semi and desert margin environments (Williams & Balling, 1995).

Having a clear, agreed definition, along with the improving understanding of
dryland systems, mean that distinguishing the impacts of desertification from those of other environmental issues with similar societal outcomes becomes feasible. It is vital that science gets across to politicians that, while there are linkages, desertification and drought are not identical and have different outcomes which require different scales of remedial action.

Identifying environmental responses to disturbances: As population and land use pressures grow in dryland environments, a significant scientific contribution will be to 'develop a predictive understanding of the interactions between drought and land use' (Milton et al. 1995). Part of this understanding relate to the growing recognition of the resilience of dryland ecosystems and the complex responses these systems have to natural and human disturbances.

Desertification monitoring: Effective monitoring is an important part of identifying the onset and impacts of desertification as well as measuring the effectiveness of anti-desertification measures. Monitoring relies on an agreed definition and a reproducible monitoring system and UNEP has utilised a system of land degradation monitoring called GLASOD in its global assessment of desertification (UNEP, 1992). GLASOD has been criticised by some (for example, Agnew and Warren, 1996) for problems of data reliability. With the absence of good primary data it is easy to criticise the type of approach that has been adopted, but it is in fact difficult to identify feasible alternatives (Stocking, 1987). The approach used in GLASOD has been refined and applied in southeast and southern Asia and a very detailed, field based, application has been developed and used in the Aral Sea area (Middleton & Thomas, 1997).

Identifying appropriate scales of action: By increasing understanding of the complexity and diversity of desertification causes and processes, science can contribute to effective solution implementation, even if this is by showing that the phenomena has multiple causes that require site and community specific solutions. The importance attached to local scale actions in the CCD (Toulmin, 1995) increases the opportunities for effective scientific actions to grow.

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Reconstructing the Congo

Carole J. L. Collins

This follow-up to 'The Congo is Back!' in the June issue of ROAPE (No. 72) focuses on the ADFL's (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo) economic project and plans for reconstruction; Western and African governmental and private sector responses to the Congo's economic prospects; how Kabila's ongoing dispute with the UN over human rights abuses during the ADFL advance may affect these; and how civil society is faring in the new period.

Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko's precipitate flight from Kinshasa on 17 May marked the end of a political era and the final collapse of the military pillar of his kleptocratic regime. It also opened an array of new economic possibilities for the newly proclaimed Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Laurent Desire Kabila, head of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (ADFL) which overthrew Mobutu, has faced daunting challenges and contradictory pressures from various economic actors and donors since becoming DRC president 27 May. Much of his capacity to consolidate political support for his rule, and lance the boil of simmering ethnic and regional tensions, will rely, in great part, on his capacity to rapidly improve Congolese people's daily lives.

Kabila's initial six months in power, however, raised as many questions as it answered regarding how he and his government plan to tackle economic reconstruction. Contrary to the hopes of civil society groups that they would participate in the new government's planning, most have been ignored while a small group around Kabila has proceeded to draw up a series of plans for consideration by foreign donors.

Moreover, since early July Kabila and the United Nations have become immersed in an increasingly acrimonious dispute over his hindering of a UN mission - appointed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to replace a similar UN Commission on Human Rights inquiry also opposed by Kabila - seeking to investigate alleged massacres of Rwandan refugees and Congolese civilians during the ADFL advance. The US, European Union and many other donors, frustrated by the DRC's obstructionism and concerned over reports on human rights abuses recently issued by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and several Congolese human rights groups, have said future aid for the DRC may depend on its allowing the inquiry to proceed unhindered. The desire of many Western donor governments and NGOs, and some Congolese human rights groups, to make foreign aid to the DRC contingent on the progress of the UN inquiry runs counter to the views of most of Kabila's African allies. Leaders from Uganda's Museveni to South Africa's Mandela have sharply criticized these efforts as unfair (since Western countries never tried to do the same to curb Mobutu's human rights abuses), as not giving Kabila sufficient time to reorganize the government, and as holding Congolese people's development needs hostage to Western human rights concerns. It is within this rancorous international context that the DRC...
government has been striving to define a reconstruction strategy that will not depend overmuch on aid inputs that may not materialize, or at least not soon. In assessing the current status of the ADFL’s ‘economic project’, one needs to look at a number of factors, including:

- the economic structures, conditions and trends it inherited from the Mobutu era;
- economic decisions and deals it made during its 8-month advance across the country;
- the economic assumptions, priorities and plans for national economic reconstruction of various government officials (as reflected in specific statements, decisions and actions since Kabila assumed office 27 May);
- varying and oft contending economic demands and incentives from a host of creditors, potential donors, private investors and neighbouring countries, all interested in winning a slice of the Congolese resource pie; and
- what room for manoeuvre Kabila will likely retain in the coming months as he seeks to reconcile oft competing political and economic priorities.

Mobutu’s Economic Legacy

The virtual collapse of the ex-Zairian economy has been well-documented both anecdotally and analytically in recent years. To visit Zaire in the last years of the Mobutu era was to enter a world of cannibal capitalism, where most banks and public services and any logic of economic growth and expanding productivity had ceased to operate. Zaire’s economy shrank more than 40% between 1988 and 1995, and its 1993 per capita gross domestic product—a modest US$117—was 65% lower than in 1958, just prior to independence. The foreign debt inherited from the Mobutu regime is close to $14bn, and economists estimate almost 70% of DRC workers are currently unemployed. Yet despite this virtually collapsed economy, Zaire in 1995 was Africa’s fifth largest mineral producer and the world’s fourth largest diamond producer. And the ADFL’s early seizure of ex-Zaire’s mining centres gave it, even before it took Kinshasa, the prospect of substantial revenue from the mineral wealth in these areas. During the ADFL advance Zaire did not suffer— unlike Liberia, Sudan and Sierra Leone—the devastating degree of destruction produced by a violent civil war. But once the ADFL seized the capital city Kinshasa, the new government has faced many functionally equivalent conditions:

A dearth of state funds: government coffers and bank accounts were literally empty of money and precious gems, their contents smuggled out of the country in the days and weeks preceding the fall of Kinshasa.

Chaos at ministries: Ministry files had often been lost, destroyed, left in utter chaos or, in some cases, had never been maintained in the first place. Many ministry buildings were stripped of most or all furniture and equipment, forcing the new government to work out of the (costly) Hotel Intercontinental, which at least had a functioning fax machine.

Early ADFL Economic Policy

The embryonic outlines of Kabila’s future economic policy began to surface during the course of the ADFL’s rapid advance across the country. Even before it took Kinshasha, it began to signal that it wanted to decisively break with past Mobutist economic practices and investment policy. The economic decisions it took in late 1996 and early 1997 were rooted in a mix of motivations, some ideological (drawing from Kabila’s Lumumbist and marxist origins), others rooted in an effort to end rampant corruption and develop a more
equitable (and profitable) relationship with outside investors. Still others reflected its pressing need for ready cash to fund its advance on Kinshasa and to jumpstart the local economy in areas it controlled.

A major focus of ADFL policies in the zones it controlled was to try to end corruption and get the economy restarted. In Goma, notes the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU, 1997), it quickly moved to repair several roads, to reduce import and export duties and reopen banks. Some customs and government officials were arrested for soliciting bribes (although, since the ADFL has lacked funds to pay local officials’ salaries, many have again resorted to bribe-taking in recent months to survive).

All these measures encouraged a surge in crossborder trade and, as the EIU noted, the return of several foreign owned businesses (for instance, a Heineken brewery in Bukavu and a Belgian shipping company based in Goma). They also raised hopes that some of the estimated 6,000 tons of coffee previously smuggled to Uganda or Rwanda annually might begin to generate state revenue in the DRC. Both in Kivu and Haut-Zaïre, the ADFL pressed foreign mining companies – among them Mindev (Kimin mine), Banro (involved in Societe Miniere du Kivu) and Barrick Gold, all of which had earlier withdrawn personnel during the fighting – to quickly resume operations once ADFL control was secure.

The rapid pace of the ADFL advance soon placed most major economic centres in ADFL hands. Much of the Kivus came under ADFL control by early January. On 15 March, Kisangani, ex-Zaïre’s third largest city and a major diamond centre, fell as well. By 4 April, ADFL rebels had seized Zaïre’s largest diamond centre Mbuji-Mayi, a vital source of ready cash flow for Mobutu up to that point (as the EIU notes, Kasai’s diamond revenue could generate $300-400mn in revenue for the ADFL). On 9 April, ADFL rebels entered Lubumbashi, Zaïre’s major copper and cobalt centre. By 23 April, they had seized Tshikapa, only 300 miles east of Kinshasa and site of Zaïre’s highest quality gems.

As a white Zimbabwean businessman once said about Mozambique’s civil war, ‘the investor who gets in while the bullets are still flying is the man who makes a bundle.’ As the ADFL frontline advanced, so the number of foreign investors eager to clinch an early agreement with the future rulers of the new Congo multiplied. This growing competition served to increase ADFL leverage over both new and old foreign investors.

**Breaking Old Monopolies: DeBeers’ Debacle**

An example of this is how the ADFL advance helped undermine South Africa’s DeBeers company’s heretofore unchallenged dominance of diamond purchasing in ex-Zaïre, and at a time when several other countries (notably Russia) were also trying to break away from being forced to sell their production to DeBeers’ Central Selling Organization (CSO). As late as 1996, CSO reportedly marketed a third of Zaïre’s diamond output. (While ex-Zaïre’s official production was estimated to be around $450mn a year, illegally smuggled diamonds may have amounted to three times that figure.)

Before the ADFL takeovers, Kisangani and Mbuji-Mayi boasted close to 60 diamond comptoirs (warehouses) run largely by Lebanese traders (most of them in partnerships with Mobutu’s relatives and generals). The largest comptoir in each city, however, was owned by SEDIZA, a DeBeers subsidiary which eventually closed all but its Kinshasa office as the ADFL advanced (largely to avoid looting by fleeing Zaïrian soldiers).

DeBeers also held a minority stake in the state-owned diamond company MIBA
(Societe Mineiere de Bakwanga) in Mbuji-Mayi (through its 20% stake in the Belgian Company SIBEKA, which in turn holds a 20% interest in MIBA). And DeBeers also had an exclusive contract to purchase all of MIBA’s output (MIBA until recently was the world’s largest producer of industrial diamonds; only 2% of its output is of gem quality).

But many Congolese had resented DeBeers for its excessive profits and for funnelling hundreds of millions of dollars in supposed ‘taxes’ into the pockets of Mobutu and his close cronies. On 14 April, ADFL finance commissioner (and now Finance Minister) Mawampanga Mwana Nanga (a US-educated economist from Kentucky) announced that DeBeers and Anglo-American could continue working in the country, but no longer as a monopoly. The ADFL government has restated this position since then.

New Challengers

Ironically, DeBeers’ pre-eminence was challenged by a former employee, 45-year-old Mauritius-born Jean-Raymond Boulle, who had been their chief diamond buyer in Zaire back in the 1970s. Boulle, former chair of Diamond Field Resources of Canada, had shifted his interest to precious metals in recent years. He is currently the majority stockholder in America Mineral Fields (AMF), a Vancouver-based venture mining company he cofounded with a land surveyor from Clinton’s hometown of Hope, Arkansas. Sensing the ADFL’s momentum was unstoppable, Boulle suspended negotiations with the Mobutist Kinshasa government over a major mining venture and jumped ship; on 16 April AMF subsidiary AMF International (AMFI) signed a $885mn contract with the ADFL to rehabilitate copper, zinc and cobalt mines in Shaba province. Under informal investment guidelines defined by the ADFL, AMF reportedly paid close to $80mn in cash (equivalent to 15% of the total budgeted investment) at the time of contracting. Boulle’s loan of a Lear jet for Kabila’s personal use during the ADFL advance also may have helped cement the deal.

It was when DeBeers declined an ADFL rebel request to promptly reopen its Kisangani comptoir (to help restart the local economy and provide tax revenue to the rebels) that the ADFL turned to Boulle. Boule – at the ADFL’s request – created America Diamond Buyers (ADB) to purchase from Kisangani’s local diggers. ADB’s company logo of red, white and blue T-shirts soon appeared all over Kisangani as ADB bought between $50,000 and $100,000 worth of diamonds daily after opening for business on 4 April. ADB paid sellers lower prices than before (in line with Antwerp prices); sources indicate diamonds had previously been bought at above world prices as a way to launder dirty money. But it would only have to pay a 2.5% tax on diamond purchases to the rebel authorities; under Mobutu, the tax regime took 22.5% of turnover and 50% of eventual profits, one reason why MIBA had run at a loss for many years.

It was an ADFL offer to sell ADB a shipment of diamonds intended for DeBeers (seized when they took over Mbuji-Mayi) that evidently prompted DeBeers to begin negotiations on 11 April with the rebels; the diamonds were later bought by DeBeers for $5mn. As a condition for continuing business in rebel-held areas, DeBeers reportedly agreed to end all dealings with Mobutu and open up the trade to more buyers.

Boulle and AMF are likely to profit handsomely from striking a deal early with the ADFL. But AMF was not alone in ‘entering while the bullets were still flying’. Willy Mallants, a retired Belgian colonel and director of Societe Zairoise Mineiere du Kivu (Sozaminki), seems to have helped protect his interests in alluvial diamonds in the rebel-held Lubutu River area by briefly becoming an economic
and military adviser to Kabila. Other firms eager to restart business in the new Congo include the Canadian firm Consolidated Eurocan Ventures, Banro Resources, Sibeka (which appointed a new director with no past connections to Mobutu). Interest among foreign investors is steadily growing. In September David Miller, executive director of the 170-member, US-based Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) visited Kinshasa, reportedly meeting with the minister of mines, the central bank governor and Kabila's special economic adviser Unba Kyamitala. The CCA's special 'Congo Work Group' – including Bechtel, Caterpillar, Chevron, Cohen & Woods, Equator Bank, GM, Mobil and Telecel – are assessing business prospects in the DRC. CCA reportedly may send a delegation of interested investors to the DRC and help activate a US-Congo Chamber of Commerce. On 7 October, DRC and mining industry representatives – including Canada's Tenke Mining Corporation and International Panorama Resources Corporation, Australia's Anvil Mining, Anglo-American, AMF, US-based Banro Resources – met to discuss forming a chamber of mines.

Some 'early backers of the ADFL horse' remain ambivalent about many ADFL policies, however. Many criticized the ADFL for requiring Lebanese traders (mostly diamond dealers) to pay to leave Zaire (their forced return to Lebanon has had significant negative effects on the economy there). And the ADFL's April takeover of Sizarail, the South African-Belgian firm managing Shaba's railways, led to a halt in cross-border traffic and legal moves by the firm's South African parent, Spoornet, to recoup its losses. But most warmly welcomed ADFL moves to eliminate corruption and cut exorbitant licensing fees. (In Kisangani, for example, the ADFL slashed the cost of a diamond exporter's annual comptoir license from $150,000 to $25,000; Boulle's company was the first diamond trader to be issued this cut-rate license by the rebels.)

The new government has yet to adopt a formal foreign investment code, but the informal guidelines it worked out during its military advance still govern new investments. In addition to requiring an 'up front' non-refundable cash deposit equal to 15% of a proposed investment contract, the guidelines also prohibit any monopolies in any sectors and require participation by local Congolese. In the mining sector, according to the EIU (1997b), investors are also required to 'plan for domestic production of finished goods' and develop a social programme that includes construction of schools and clinics.

Problems with Planning

A major problem for the new government since it was formed in late May has been the inexperience of many new Cabinet ministers responsible for economic matters as well as a lack of sufficient coordination among them. Key government ministers on economic matters include:

finance minister Mawampanga Mwana Nanga (an Internet activist who joined the ADFL last November, he is originally from Bas-Zaire; he has a PhD in agricultural economics from Penn State University in the US; he has played a major role in negotiating new contracts with foreign investors);

economy, industry and commerce minister Pierre-Victor Mpoyo (originally from East Kasai province, he studied in Katanga and later worked for France's ELF oil company. He is married to Justine Kasavubu, daughter of Congo's first President);

mining minister Mututulo Kambale (an ADFL adherent from North Kivu, he has studied in the UK and US);

planning and development minister Babi Mbayi (an ADFL member from east Kasai, he has a degree in industrial economics from a French university);
national reconstruction and emergency planning minister Etienne Richard Mbaya (from Katanga, he lived for many years in exile in Germany where he taught law);

international cooperation minister Thomas Kanza (Patrice Lumumba’s UN Ambassador in 1960), he later was ‘Lonhro’s man’ in Zaire for many years;

Foreign minister Bizima Karaha’s economic adviser, Paul Saidi, has an MBA from Harvard.

Kabila and his government are wrestling with several sharp dilemmas. They need to find a way to generate sufficient state revenue to pay government salaries. Their inability to do this has already contributed to a recurrence of bribe-soliciting and other forms of corruption among people who initially welcomed the ADFL’s active stance against corruption. But to generate state revenue, the government needs to rapidly repair or rebuild the Congo’s shattered and tattered transport and communication infrastructure. At present, much of what rural or urban producers grow or manufacture can’t be gotten to markets inside or outside the Congo because the transport to get them there doesn’t exist or function; but this will require substantial capital investment. The sources of such funding can only come partially from export revenues and internal taxation, given the demands of state expenditure. So significant foreign aid will be needed. The question is: how much? from whom? on what terms? with what strings, economic or political?

ADFL economic policies as reflected in early ADFL statements and decisions seems to be an amalgam of anti-corruption and socialist objectives embedded in a free enterprise-oriented strategy. Sometimes using the phrase ‘social market economy’, early government plans project private enterprises shouldering various social services (much as Gecamines did in the past two decades). Sadly, government reconstruction plans are being developed with lamentably little input from most segments of the DRC’s dynamic civil society sector. This continues to be a source of tension between the government and civil society: the bulk of Kabila’s advisers are from the Congolese diaspora, most without any significant on-the-ground constituency or detailed knowledge of local Congolese realities.

In June 1997, the National Council of Zairian Development NGOs (CNONGD) convened a national conference to discuss reconstruction of the country. It came up with a number of recommendations which it forwarded to the new government (perhaps the most interesting being one to form a Truth Commission on corruption and mis-acquired wealth). The conference organizers had invited several Ministers to attend and, at the final session, asked the minister for reconstruction to include NGOs in the government planning process, which he promised to do. But when he convened a seminar in late June to begin this process, virtually no NGOs were invited; instead, the bulk of participants were reportedly from the diaspora.

Obviously the DRC needs – and is seeking – substantial new aid for reconstruction. Although Kabila reportedly reached agreement with the UN 25 October on allowing its human rights inquiry to proceed, donors’ continuing human rights concerns makes major immediate assistance unlikely. The ADFL is also exploring two other tantalizing sources of possible funding:

debt forgiveness by its foreign creditors. This would not generate new monies but would significantly reduce state expenditures earmarked to repay old loans (and accrued interest) contracted during the Mobutu era, thereby freeing up significant state revenue for reconstruction purposes. Until concerns over the UN human rights in-
quiry are resolved, creditors are reportedly loathe to commit themselves to any concessions, even those in line with current World Bank and IMF policies regarding Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs), which the DRC certainly is. Finance minister Mawampanga recently noted the government had set up a commission to analyze the ex-Zaire’s internal and external debt since no one really knows how much it owes or to whom. Kabila has precluded any debt repayment for now, noting he had inherited empty state coffers.

World Bank vice-president for Africa Callisto Madavo, however, has said future aid would likely be linked to a government plan to resume repaying the Congo’s foreign debts. Following Kabila’s 25 October deal with the UN the World Bank offered to help the DRC with plans to reschedule its debt. But in a 20 November speech in Washington, DC, DRC’s UN Ambassador André Kapanga, noting the World Bank knew in advance that loans to Mobutu would be diverted, indicated his government sought a ‘negotiation process, during which the entire portfolio of debt will be examined. We would then seek to reschedule the legitimate debt, and extinguish what is not legitimate.’

Recapture of mis-acquired wealth stolen by Mobutu and his relatives and cronies from ministries or parastatals. (This was a major focus of the Sovereign National Conference during 1992-93; Kabila’s officials have relied heavily from the detailed report produced by the SNC’s Commission des Biens Mal-Acquis – distribution of which was sharply limited by Mobutist forces at the time.) On 16 July, an ‘Office des Biens Mal Acquis’ was legally established by Kabila to oversee efforts to track down such mis-acquired wealth. But quick results from efforts of this office are unlikely due to the complex variations of legal systems under which the DRC will have to make its legal appeals.

The new government has published a list of 83 names of individuals whom it suspects have stolen public resources; this list has formed the basis for appeals to the Swiss, Belgian and US governments to freeze any assets held in their names. The Swiss and Belgian governments have frozen some assets held in Mobutu’s name, but the DRC will need to produce more concrete evidence of theft – difficult given the sketchiness or lack of ministry records – before stronger action will be taken. Meanwhile, the government arrested (and often released) almost 30 personalities from the Mobutu regime era for suspicion of embezzlement (including Bemba Saolone, head of the SCIBE group and former head of ex-Zaire’s business leaders association).

Plans and More Plans

Western governments have largely applauded Kabila’s efforts at fiscal reform and welcomed his gradual success in stabilizing the value of the currency (in the future, Kabila plans to replace the ‘Zaire’ with a new Congolese ‘franc’). On 5 September the ‘Friends of Congo’, an informal grouping of roughly 30 potential DRC donors, met in Paris under World Bank auspices to prepare for a more formal meeting now set for 4 December on DRC development strategy priorities and aid needs. Attending were representatives of Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Republic of South Africa, Sweden, the UK, US, European Union, ADB, IMF and UNDP; two DRC officials – Kabila adviser Umba Kyamitala and finance ministry official Gaston Katumba – reportedly attended as observers. While several donors spoke of the government’s need to strengthen its collaboration with civil society, others said development aid would depend on the ADFL’s resolving human rights concerns and demonstrating a movement towards democracy.
After months of delay in meeting his own timetable for steps towards democracy, on 22 October Kabila appointed 11 'historic personalities' and 25 'experts' to a Constitutional Commission. The members, most of Lumumbist origins but drawn from a broad spectrum of provinces, are expected to draft a new constitution, drawing on elements of both the 1964 constitution and the CSN-proposed constitution. Members of a US mission were told in October that the new constitution, expected to be ready by March 1998, would then be taken to the regions for some form of public discussion. A government-appointed constitutional assembly of 25 representatives from each region would be formed to approve the draft and would organize a constitutional referendum by late 1998. While local and national elections are scheduled for 1999, a special counsellor to President Kabila, Marcel Kalonji, told a Belgian paper on 23 October that they might be delayed indefinitely to allow the government time to stabilize the economy.

USAID has tried to target its aid to maintain some pressure in support of ADFL progress on human rights and democracy issues without denying the Congolese people desperately needed assistance. Through three regional offices (in Bukavu, Lubumbashi and Kananga) they are targeting small grants to NGOs and some regional governments demonstrating a degree of competence and institutional capacity. But at present USAID is not funding any central government projects, except for an immunization program being implemented jointly with UNICEF; its aid was limited to less than $10mn in FY 1997 (ended 30 September).

OXFAM International, concerned that donors were under growing pressure to hold development aid for the DRC hostage to human rights concerns, issued a position paper on 21 October entitled 'The Importance of Engagement: A Strategy for Reconstruction in the Great Lakes Region' calling for substantial levels of new aid and debt relief while working to foster greater respect for human rights by all governments in the region.

**Plans for Reconstruction**

On 31 May the new government announced vague plans for economic reconstruction intended to prioritize the health and transport sectors but offering no information on potential financing. Since then, the ADFL government has been working simultaneously on several proposed plans for economic reconstruction of the Congo, each with differing price tags and time lines attached:

1) a proposed US$350mn, 6-month quick recovery package approved in August would provide military back pay and new funding to jump-start the more productive sectors of the economy;

2) an additional US$2.5bn, 3-year minimum reconstruction plan developed by the Ministry of Planning and also approved in August is little more than a series of wish lists from various ministries (it has 8 priority areas). Most funds would reportedly go towards a 17,000-mile road rehabilitation programme (and upgrades in rail, air and water links);

3) Finance minister Mawampanga with help from Central Bank governor Masangu Mulongo is developing a financial plan with input from the World Bank (which dispatched a mission there in late September). Mission staff reportedly believe that the DRC's current tight monetary and fiscal policy – in the absence of substantial new funding from outside and with tight government control over expenditures – will keep the lid not only on inflation but also economic growth; Mawampanga reportedly heads a new inter-ministerial committee with the task of coordinating the planning initiatives of different ministeries.

An intriguing yet controversial role in these efforts is being played by Bechtel, a major US-based global construction firm.
with long-time Republican Party connections. It is reportedly assisting the DRC (free of charge) with a ‘conceptual study on infrastructural development’, in hopes this pro bono work will help it win future contracts to rebuild some of the DRC’s tattered infrastructure. According to Africa Confidential and the 14 October Wall Street Journal, Bechtel is helping the DRC develop a detailed resource and infrastructure inventory as part of the Congo’s master development plan to guide the country’s economic strategy for the next seven years. (Many expect the DRC will unveil this plan, a product of greater inter-ministerial coordination noted above, at the December donors’ meeting in Brussels.)

All of these plans, however, seem to ignore the issue of how to deal with the dynamic informal or parallel economy that grew up in the shadows of the collapsed state under Mobutu. One cumulative effect of Mobutu & Co.’s extensive theft from the public and private sectors, at both national and provincial levels, was an explosive growth of this underground economy. It became a major means of avoiding excessive or extortionate taxes, licensing fees or other irregular charges. Early ADFL anti-corruption measures sparked renewed participation in the formal economy (and hopes that the new government might be able to soon rely on tax revenues to fund government salaries). But little thought seems to have been given in its current economic plans for how to harness the strength of the underground economy.

The plans are also largely silent on the issue of how to deal with the 70% of Congolese who are currently unemployed. Perhaps as a partial means of addressing this, on 15 October, the government announced an effort to spur an ‘urban exodus’ and draw thousands of unemployed youth into supposedly voluntary military and agricultural training camps. The initiative, uncomfortably reminiscent of Maoist-model collective farms Kabila set up in the east of the country, is likely to meet significant resistance, not least because recruitment will be coordinated by a former Mobutu general, Kalume Numbi. According to Reuter News Agency, the first camp (planned to produce maize and house over 6,000 youth from 11 provinces) is expected to be launched, possibly in Katanga, in November. Camps producing rubber, cocoa and cotton – each run by soldiers – may be set up later in Equateur and Haut-Zaïre.

Thinking Regionally

Kabila’s military advance depended on substantial military and political support from key African neighbours – among them Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Angola. And many implicitly expect the ADFL to pay its ‘dues’ by welcoming their investment and trade in return. Several observers have noted that what African companies often lack in size and scale, they often make up for by being more attuned to the uncertainties of a country in transition.

Commentators noted African nations’ new diplomatic self-assertiveness and unprecedented collective military action on behalf of the ADFL both before and after it seized power in Kinshasa. Many of the DRC’s neighbours also share a pan-African dream of building intra-African economic and transport linkages independent of earlier ones built to serve the needs of colonial occupiers. For many, this holds the long-term hope of dynamizing a regional economy in Central Africa that will reduce the region’s growing poverty, a key element fueling some of the region’s ethnic conflicts. (While such regional strategies have significant merit, they risk provoking opposition from many Congolese in the DRC’s easternmost regions, who see talk of regional integration as little more than political cover and code for what they believe are Rwandan desires to annex parts of the Congo.)
The DRC remains ambivalent toward some of its new partners, particularly South Africa. Mandela has strongly supported Kabila in the international arena in recent months. But ADFL retains a lingering distrust towards South African companies – specifically DeBeers, Anglo-American – which for decades helped generate financial profits for Mobutu and his close cronies.

Signs of seeking more regional solutions to some of the DRC's economic problems and needs were evident during Kabila's 9 September visit to Rwanda during which he and Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame signed an agreement to build a Gisenyi-Kisangani railway. This is part of a broader effort by the DRC, Uganda and Rwanda to upgrade transport links between the three countries. In July, foreign minister Karaha told audiences in Washington, DC of plans to build a transport grid that would link east and west Africa directly.

Pie in the sky? Perhaps. But DRC is actively reaching out to collaborate economically with its many neighbours. In October it became the newest member of the Southern Africa Development Community (many of whose members are envious of the DRC's immense water reserves and hydro-electric potential; its membership is expected to boost South Africa's involvement in reconstruction activities there). And it also plans to join an emerging federation of eastern and central African nations as well.

Carole J. L. Collins, a journalist and former American Friends Service Committee Southern Africa representative last visited Zaire in late 1996. She lives in Washington, DC.

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Africa Confidential, 26 September 1997.

Mohamed Kadamy under Arrest
David Styan

In December 1996 ROAPE (No. 70) published an article by Kadamy entitled 'Djibouti: Between War and Peace'. In it he discusses the occurrence of several troublesome events which plunged Djibouti into a profound crisis in the first half of the 1990s. The most serious was a revolt against an emerging ethnic dictatorship, exacerbated by grave economic problems and compounded with a ferocious struggle for the succession of President Hassan Gouled who is seriously ill. It traced the course of events that brought Djibouti to the most dangerous point in its short history.

On 28 September 1997, the faultlines beneath political life in Djibouti were highlighted with the arrest and deportation to the country of leading critics of the government. Four exiled members of the Front pour la restauration de l'unite et de la democratie (FRUD) who remain loyal to Ahmed Dini were arrested in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and summarily deported to Djibouti. In mid-October the four were being held in Gadobe prison, where with 10 others they face charges of inciting violence. Those arrested include Mohamed Kadamy and his wife Aisha Dabaleh. Aisha Dabaleh worked in Ethiopia for a French NGO assisting the 16,000 Djiboutian Afar refugees who fled from northern Djibouti during the civil war in 1992/93.
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The arrests and deportations appear linked to a clash between militia loyal to the exiled FRUD leadership and the Djiboutian army close to the Eritrean border in early September. The fighting, in which 11 Djiboutian soldiers were killed, was the first in the north since the army militarily defeated FRUD in 1993. Following defeat, the FRUD leadership splintered. In December 1994 a partial peace deal was signed with the government by a faction of FRUD led by Ougoureh Kifle. In April 1997 his faction of FRUD was re-launched as a domestic political party. It promptly announced an alliance with the ruling party, the Rassemblement populaire pour le progrès (RPP) for the legislative elections. These are scheduled for December 1997. After a series of internal splits over the past two years, the RPP, like the country's police and armed forces, is now firmly under the control of Ismael Omar Guelleh, president Aptidon's nephew. With the octogenarian Aptidon now ailing, Ismael Omar is widely viewed as the heir apparent.

The arrest of Kadamy et al. is patently an attempt to buttress the shaky legitimacy of Ougourehs FRUD prior to elections. What is less clear is why the Ethiopian authorities, who hitherto had allowed Ahmed Dini's followers to operate discreetly in Ethiopia, have now decided to acquiesce in Ismael Omar Guelleh's vision of Djibouti's future.

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Book Reviews


The Tuareg are hardly represented in the Saharan states in which they live, and their twentieth century history is characterised by cycles of insurrection, exile and passive resistance. The idea for this book arose from the discrepancy between the mass media versions of the aftermath of the 1990 Tuareg insurrection and the points of view of the actors themselves, which are largely unknown to the outside world. The editors are an ethno-linguist specialising in the Tuareg and a Tuareg writer based in France. They have not tried to put across a single interpretation of events; on the contrary they have collected together a multiplicity of views. What most of these, ‘solitary voices’ have in common is that they are Tuareg, speak from exile, and their messages are unrepresented in the officially publicised version of events: they are the voices of elderly community leaders (one has since died in exile in Morocco), of women surviving in refugee camps, of young ex-fighters (including one woman), of intellectuals.

The book opens with an introduction which spells out this discrepancy between the official and the various Tuareg views. It starts with the very definition of a Tuareg: this term was created by outsiders and is not used by the people themselves; they have other terms referring to their unique language and culture but there are regional variations in form and usage. There follows a discussion of their numbers, which vary from about 1.3 to 3 million according to whom one listens to and how one defines a ‘Tuareg’.

The text proceeds with a detailed account of the recent insurrection and the subsequent attempts at negotiation, setting quotes from the press alongside alternative interpretations. Several Tuareg lines of thought are distinguished, and those typical of the rural pastoralist population are found to contrast with those common among the formally educated elite. The differences are particularly obvious when considering future solutions to the present situation: some favour a federalist project which would reunite areas currently divided by nationalist boundaries; whereas others would work within these state boundaries towards more equitable representation or some form of regional autonomy/decentralisation of government.

Some of the 24 contributions take the form of poems; most are interviews taken by one or other of the editors, particularly during 1995 in the refugee camps of Burkina Faso. Some contributions were originally in the French language, others were conceived in the Tuareg language and subsequently translated into French by the editors. The quality of these translations is excellent and the suggestive imagery of many Tuareg authors is transformed into vibrant French.

The contributions represent intimate personal accounts. Some of them dwell on recent experiences in Mali and Niger: for example, as survivors of the many fanatic racist revenge attacks against fair-skinned individuals, all of whom may come under the vague category of ‘rouge/Arabe/Touareg’; as front-line fighters based in rudimentary desert camps or caves; or as participants in the recent
peace negotiations. Others, especially the older interviewees, review a lifetime's experiences of bravery and hope, suffering and disillusionment. Some of these accounts are quite unique and would have deserved better publicity than the current volume can offer: remarkable tales of birth into previous periods of confrontations and coping with missing male relatives; tales of receiving formal education and then state posts – only subsequently to reject them; tales of decades in prison; of exile in various North Africa countries and in Saudi Arabia; of military training and service in the name of Gaddafi's Libya. Throughout these accounts, one theme is recurrent: the treachery of France, which, instead of returning political autonomy to the Tuareg people in 1960 after some four decades of colonial rule, passed the reins of power over to the Tuareg's southern neighbours who had been especially trained for government.

Claire Oxby, Perugia, Italy.


Les Touaregs n’étant guère représentés dans les états sahéliens ou ils habitent, leur histoire au vingtième siècle n’est qu’un cycle d’insurrection, d’exil et de résistance passive. L’idée clé de ce livre est née de la contradiction entre le discours médiatique sur les suites de l’insurrection targuie de 1990 et les opinions des acteurs eux-mêmes, qui sont pour la plupart ignorées du monde extérieur. Les éditeurs regroupent une linguiste-ethnologue, qui se spécialise dans les Touaregs, et un écrivain targui vivant en France. Ils n’ont pas essayé de faire passer une interprétation unique des événements mais au contraire ont rassemblé des points de vue multiples. Le seul point en commun entre la plupart des ses ‘voix solitaires’ c’est qu’elles appartiennent à des Touaregs en exil et leurs messages sont absents de la version officielle des événements. Ces voix sont celles de chefs communautaires (l’un d’entre eux est mort en exil au Maroc depuis), de femmes vivant dans des camps de réfugiées, de jeunes combattants (dont une femme) et d’intellectuels.

La préface du livre nous montre l’abîme qui sépare la version officielle et les différents points de vue des Touaregs. Il commence avec la définition d’un Touareg, ce mot créé par des étrangers n’est pas utilisé par ceux qu’il prétend décrire. Ils ont d’autres mots pour désigner leur langue et culture uniques, mais il y a des différences régionales d’usage et de forme. Ensuite les éditeurs nous présentent une controverse sur le nombre de Touaregs, qui varie entre 1, 3 et 3 millions, en fonction de l’interlocuteur et de la manière dont il définit le mot ‘Touareg’. Puis, le texte décrit en détails l’insurrection récente et les tentatives de négociation qui l’ont suivie en contrastant des coupures de presse avec d’autres interprétations. Les éditeurs examinent plusieurs lignes de pensée targuies et trouvent que celles qui sont typiques chez les habitants des pâturages se distinguent nettement de celles de l’élite cultivée. Ces différences sont particulièrement sensibles quand les gens envisagent des solutions à la situation présente. Certains sont en faveur d’une solution fédéraliste, qui unifiera des zones qui sont actuellement divisées par des frontières nationales tandis que d’autres sont prêts à travailler dans le cadre de ces
états pour une représentation plus juste et une certaine forme de gouvernement régional autonome/décentralisé.

Il y a quelques articles en forme de poèmes mais la plupart sont des entretiens tenus par l’un ou l’autre des éditeurs, notamment en 1995 dans les camps de réfugiées au Burkina Faso. Certains articles étaient écrits en français, d’autres dans la langue targuie puis traduits en français par les éditeurs. La qualité des traductions est excellente et les images évocatrices de plusieurs des auteurs targuis sont transformés en un français vivant.

Les articles sont autant de récits personnels intimes. Quelques-uns se concentrent sur des épreuves récentes au Mali ou au Niger: par exemple, des rescapés de l’une des nombreuses attaques racistes et fanatiques de vengeance contre des individus à peau claire, qui sont tout classés dans la catégorie floue de ‘rouge/Arabe/Touareg’, ou des combattants de l’avant-garde basés dans des campements rudimentaires au désert ou dans des cavernes, ou des participants aux négociations de paix qui viennent d’avoir lieu. D’autres, notamment les entretiens avec des gens plus âgés, résument toute une vie de courage, d’espoir, de souffrance et de désillusion. Certains de ces récits sont totalement uniques et méritent une plus grande diffusion que celle offerte par ce livre. De remarquables histoires racontent les naissances durant les conflits précédents et la vie des familles dont les parents mâles avaient disparus, d’autres mettent en scène des Touaregs qui, au bout de leur éducation scolaire, ont accepté des postes administratifs, qu’ils durent par suit abandonner. On y raconte des décennies d’emprisonnement, d’exil dans divers pays du Maghreb et en Arabie Saoudite et de service et formation militaire au nom de la Libye du colonel Gaddafi. Mais un thème revient constamment dans ces récits, celui de la perfidie de la France qui, au lieu de redonner l’autonomie au peuple targui après quatre décennies de domination coloniale, a transféré le pouvoir aux voisins sud des Touaregs qu’elle avait formé spécifiquement pour gouverner.


The rise in political instability and armed conflict that marked the ending of the cold war in Africa shows little sign of abating, as the protracted wars and humanitarian disasters in Sudan, Somalia, the Great Lakes, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and escalating levels of violence elsewhere, bare witness. The pervasive and long term impact of war on people, and the adaptations taking place within the international aid system, now warrants, according to the Institute of Development Studies Bulletin on War and Rural Development in Africa, the need for ‘a new or additional agenda for rural development’ in Africa.

With a range articles on military strategy, famine, gender, natural resource management, post-war rehabilitation, the mental health of war-affected populations,
and military humanitarianism, the Bulletin offers a useful contribution to the growing literature on armed conflict, development and complex emergencies. However, while it argues that rural development researchers and practitioners need to develop new skills in conflict analysis and new cross-disciplinary alliances to tackle the complex issues, there is little apparent consensus on what the new or additional agenda might look like.

Surprisingly for a publication on rural development the Bulletin offers little analysis of the state of ‘rural development’ in Africa and its links to contemporary warfare. In Africa, the cold war, while sponsoring widespread violence, also served to disguise a deeper structural political, economic, social and environmental crisis. Aggregate statistics on rural livelihoods in much of Africa during the 1980s indicates that this was a period of active ‘underdevelopment’, rather than development. The post-cold war economic and political conditionals placed upon aid recipient countries, and the withdrawal of aid investment from Africa, have only exacerbated a developmental crisis.

In the post-cold war era, this crisis is reflected not only in development’s failure to deliver on its promises of economic growth and technological progress, but also in the disappearance of any overarching theory or ‘narrative’ for understanding change or processes of poverty and inequality (Gardner & Lewis, 1996). Development theory, it would appear, has reached an impasse. The neoliberal and populist approaches which came to dominate much of the development discourse in the 1980s, do not in themselves comprise a homogeneous body of practice and theory. The diversity of approaches (reflected in the diversity of the contributions to this Bulletin) has left a ‘development agenda’ that is at best opaque.

If the upsurge in political instability, armed conflict and complex emergencies signifies, at least in part, a failure of development to build a stable global environment, then there is a need for a radical reappraisal of development thinking and practice. This is implicit in the Bulletin in several articles on gender and conflict, agricultural rehabilitation, trauma and healing, but is not fully developed beyond a general critique of ‘top down’ emergency relief and rehabilitation interventions.

War is now perhaps the single major cause of famine in Africa, and some of the most perceptive analyses of conflict in Africa are derived from the study of the social and political dimensions of famine, and responses to it (see Macrae & Zwi, 1994). The most pertinent contributions to this Bulletin – by de Waal on contemporary warfare in Africa and by Hendrickson et al. on the changing ‘functions’ of livestock raiding in Kenya – derive their analysis from this body of work. They examine the changing nature of rural society in Africa and the external and internal forces that have precipitated change.

Understanding the nature of conflict is one thing, but what, if anything, can development practitioners and researchers contribute to reducing or managing conflict? The articles by Cousins on conflict management among pastoralist and agropastoralist peoples, and Slim on the rise of United Nations military peacekeeping operations, begin to engage with the issue, although from very different perspectives. Cousins’ examination of local level institutions for conflict management among multiple resource users is perhaps most readily accessible to rural development specialists. Although the article neglects the changing political and economic context within which these institutions operate, given the destructive impact of wars on social institutions, understanding and maybe working to strengthen such institutions is important.
The UN military interventions in Kurdistan, Somalia and Rwanda (not to mention Bosnia) were significant events in the changing nature of North-South relations. Slim's analysis of the growth of military humanitarianism since 1992 is therefore pertinent. However, the conclusion that new peacekeeping 'is here to stay', 'has a lot to offer' and needs to be engaged with resonates uncomfortably with de Waal's description of the 'pervasive militarisation of society' in Africa. What the article and the 'new peacekeeping' doctrines appear to overlook is the context within which the military are operating. For all its 'newness', new peacekeeping ignores the complex societal, political and developmental crisis which breed wars and humanitarian disasters. An acceptance that military humanitarianism is 'here to stay' may be symptomatic of how far we have come in accepting the existence of a violent new world order.

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Books Received


Eade, Deborah (editor), Development and Patronage (selected articles from Development in Practice), Published by Oxfam, 1997, ISBN 0 85598 376 0.


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