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Commentary: ‘Globalization’ & the Regulation of Africa

Ray Bush and Morris Szeftel

This issue of the Roape Review of Books brings together a number of critical analyses of the impact of various aspects of so-called ‘globalization’ on Africa’s political and economic crises. In different ways and through different themes, these papers explore ways in which the ideas and institutions of international capital are being imposed on understanding and practice – and the difficulties they are experiencing in imposing their writ. The studies include: the persistence of corruption in the face of international efforts to control it; the process of democratization and the position of women in post-revolutionary politics; the agrarian question (or more appropriately, agrarian questions) in the light of theoretical perspectives which eschew class analysis to focus on agri-business rather than rural producers; and the very crude ways in which the North views Africa. Taken collectively, they indicate a whole range of areas in which action is being prescribed and on which meaning is being imposed to make Africa better fit (what its adherents hope will be) the emerging global order.

Much of it involves understanding Africa as little more than a caricature. It is a perception found in a lot of recent travel writing which policy makers, notably in Washington, believe to be informed and analytical. Yet as Englund documents in this issue, recent assessments of post cold war conflict in Africa as the ‘coming anarchy’, depicted as the result of clashes between cultures rather than between states, and necessarily based on an expressing ethnic or other primordial conflicts, is shallow and uninformed. He is critical of the view that continues to be asserted that Africa’s ills lie with overpopulation, environmental degradation and ethnic conflict. In contrast to the travel writing of authors like Kaplan, Englund argues for perspectives which challenge and reject this conventional prejudice, and for a different methodology underpinned by anthropology and by debates relating to the new ecology and critiques of political and economic power in Africa. Similar issues are taken up by Barratt Brown in his examination of the prejudices inherent in some recent historiography; he argues for an alternative approach, one sensitive to the impact of imperialist forces – as exemplified, for instance, by Said’s path-breaking study of Culture and Imperialism.

The political power of which Englund and Barratt Brown write is shaped and characterised by wealth and access to the state. It is also shaped by gender, more specifically, by gender exclusion from access and from democratic participation. Connell examines the position of women in the process of democratization in Eritrea and South Africa after the success of their revolutions. In both countries, an ideological commitment has been made to remake gender relations, South Africa even adopting the constitutional aspiration of creating a ‘non-racist, non-sexist’ society. Connell assesses the difficulties of translating declared government policy supporting gender issues into implemented strategy. He does so by tracing the position of women in the two liberation movements, the problems which women have confronted in political and economic reconstruction and the political struggles
which women have engaged in to ensure that gender issues remain at the core of
democratic politics. The issue of gender empowerment in liberal democracy is taken
up also, in Anne Marie Goetz’s analysis of affirmative action and democratization in
Uganda and South Africa. The gender question has not been widely addressed in
democratization research although there have been some outstanding contributions,
especially in the path-breaking theoretical work of Anne Phillips.(2) Goetz’s article
addresses similar questions to those raised by Phillips in the context of specific
African experiences.

Englund’s argument is echoed by some issues raised by Szeftel’s review of efforts to
develop an international governance agenda which can control corruption. The
tendency by liberal commentators is to see corruption as ‘the African disease’, rooted
in a combination of authoritarian states and the politics of ‘neo-patrimonialism’. This
is a far more sophisticated approach than the crudities of travel writing but,
ultimately, it imposes similar stereotypes on Africa – that of corruption as arising
from the transposition of old autocratic attitudes, of ‘big men’ indulging in ‘the
politics of the belly’ – and couples them with a liberal attack on states which are not
‘market friendly’. It forms the basis of imposing conditionalities on African states to
force them to control corruption by making aid and balance of payments support
conditional on compliance. Yet is has proved difficult to check corruption. Following
Allen (ROAPE No. 65) the paper suggests that corruption needs to be understood
instead as arising from the strains imposed on the state by contradictions of uneven
capitalist development in peripheral formations – including processes of class
formation and accumulation. Without such an analysis, the (necessary) efforts to
promote institutional capacities capable of policing corruption will continue to
exhibit the present lack of success.

The persistence of spoils politics in Africa concerns the international financial
institutions (the World Bank has been particularly active in denouncing corruption as
a ‘cancer’ and demanding African governments take action against it). It has tempered
their optimism about economic reform but they have become upbeat about economic
recovery on the continent, nonetheless. At the Annual Meetings of the World Bank
and IMF in September 1997, officials noted that after more than 20 years of stagnation
and impoverishment, economic growth in Africa was exceeding the average 2.8 per
cent annual population increase. It was also noted that foreign direct investment was
on the increase and that stock markets were taking off across the continent –
including, since 1989, in Botswana, Malawi, Swaziland and Zambia. Economic
growth for 1996 was estimated to be 4.8 per cent. It had been just 2.8 per cent in 1995
and the average annual figure between 1990-94 was a mere 1.6 per cent. Several
optimistic themes seem to have come together for Africa’s future growth. The official
figures just mentioned, friendly noises from the US administration regarding more
favourable trading status for African countries promoting liberalisation, Clinton’s
visit to selected African countries in April 1998, and recent renewed calls for
fundamental debt relief made by some politicians in G7 countries, has lead to hopes
that Africa will experience a prosperous close to the millennium. Or does it? And if it
did would the prosperity be universally felt across the continent between and within
countries?

Much of the optimism arises from the assumption that ‘globalization’ has a positive
impact on developing countries – although just what it is and where it has generated
an impact is the source of much debate. This is a theme which underpins the article by
Kayetekin. She examines, for instance, the way in which the debate about
globalization has largely glossed over what happens to food producers in developing areas, including Africa, as a result of the hype relating to 'the global farm' and the role of agri-business in it. Kayetekin’s analysis seeks to find common ground between the postmodernist methodology adopted by most of the contributors to the influential volume by Goodman and Watts, on the one hand, and political economy, on the other. For all the restraint of her critique, her analysis points clearly to two fundamental problems with poststructural approaches. First, they overlook or downplay the nature of class processes, particularly capitalist class processes and, by so doing, produce work concerned with the problems of agri-business rather than of food producers. And second, this weakness results in an absence of much class analysis of rural households in the process of global restructuring (the survival dynamics of family farms in the face of capitalist encroachment, the vulnerability of rural producers in the South to middle class tastes in the North, and so on). Kayetekin’s critique tellingly points to two important gaps which would be at the heart of the issues of concern to political economy. First, the centrality of the state is posited without much analysis of the way in which restructuring has undermined its political capacity. And second, the editors note the ‘paradox’ that although restructuring increased food output faster than population grew, food insecurity became an increasingly important characteristic of the contemporary agrarian question, but the volume does not give this issue the emphasis it deserves.

The World Bank has assisted the spread of an uncritical optimism about ‘globalization’ because it has been so keen to ‘talk up’ African growth. The international financial agencies have too often been reminded that they have set much store in their role as agents of the continent’s recovery – or the lack of it. And they seem to be more aware than at any time in their recent history of the need to demonstrate that policies of liberalisation, structural adjustment and the dismantling of the (often corrupt and inefficient) state can generate economic growth. Yet ‘globalization’ confuses rather than clarifies the character of uneven and combined development in Africa. The reality is that economic growth on the continent has not been universal and is, of course, never likely to be. Moreover, where there has been growth recently, it has begun from extremely low levels and, where there has been direct foreign investment, it has been skewed to one or two countries, namely South Africa and Nigeria. For while the continent doubled its share of direct foreign investment from $1.5bn in 1984-89 to about $3bn in 1994-95, the continent’s share as a proportion of all developing countries has fallen. Indeed, UNCTAD’s 1997 World Investment Report noted that Africa’s proportion of fdi inflows in 1996 was the lowest since the early 1980s and two-thirds of them went to Nigeria. Africa has thus been largely excluded from the much-hyped role of fdi in developing the world’s poor countries while, at the same time, this failure of private investment has coincided with plummeting official aid flows (they fell 48 per cent in 1996 to just $3.2bn – the lowest for 10 years).

And despite the optimism of recent World Bank pronouncements the achievement by African countries of a forecasted rate of economic growth of about 4 per cent over the next ten years would still, even by World Bank estimates, result only in per capita continental income in 2006 equivalent to levels in 1982 and 5 per cent lower than in 1974. While the Bank has been keen to maintain its profile on Africa, and its President has declared his main concern to focus on poverty reduction, World Bank financial commitment seems to have declined. New loan commitments for instance by the Bank to sub-Saharan Africa 1996-97 fell by 36 per cent to $1.73bn – the lowest figure for the 1980s (the average annual figure 1987-91 was $3.2bn). Actual disbursements for 1996-97 were 17 per cent down to $2.47 bn. Perhaps more worrying, for Africa’s poorest
countries was that soft loans from the World Bank’s IDA fell 1996-97 by 38 per cent from $2.74bn to $1.68bn. Although that decline in IDA funding to Africa was in line with soft loans to all other developing regions it was explained as the result of greater bank selectivity in its lending policy. Priority was now given to countries showing ‘firm commitment’ to improved economic management.

The figures give us some clue about the intent of the rhetorical affirmation of ‘globalization’ and development – and in the process bring us back to questions of the way African realities are represented internationally. In June 1997, in Denver, Colorado, the Group of Seven (G7) industrialised countries debated ‘globalization’ and its effect on Africa – the first time in G7 history, it seems, that a meeting was given over to African development. They concluded that ‘our objective is not only to facilitate the progressive integration of African countries into the world economy but also to foster the integration of poor populations into the economic social and political life of their countries’ (quoted in *Africa Recovery*, 11, 1, 1997:6). Also in 1997, the UN Security Council debated African security and peace at Ministerial level for the first time. The open meeting heard the Secretary General of the UN assert that ‘security is no longer confined to preventing invasions’ but is built on ‘a firm foundation of sustainable development’.

Here, however, differences in what ‘globalization’ means emerged. For Robert Mugabe, sustainable African development and the eradication of poverty needed, not charity, but a new and credible partnership giving urgent attention to debt relief and the bolstering of fdi. For US Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, however, the ‘primary impetus’ for economic growth had to come from the private sector. She called for policies which ‘make indigenous investment rewarding and foreign investment welcome’ (*Africa Recovery*, 11, 2, 1997:5). Similarly, the final communiqué of the G7 meeting in Denver argued that ‘increased prosperity ultimately depends upon creating an environment for domestic capital formation, private sector-led growth and successful integration into global markets’. Recognising that the protected markets of the north impeded exports from Africa, the G7 noted: ‘We each will continue to improve, through various means, access to our markets for African exports’ (quoted in *Africa Recovery*, 11, 1, 1997:6). In line with this strategy, it is interesting that while Bank lending fell, lending from its’ private sector affiliate, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) increased from $191mn in 1996 to $385mn in 1997 (*Africa Recovery*, 11, 1 and 2, 1997).

This should not surprise us, for at least two reasons. First, ‘globalization’ is a concept which performs very important and powerful political functions – above all legitimating the international pressures for states in the South to accept the hegemony of international capital within their borders – but which stands on shaky empirical ground as a descriptor of an economic process (its capacity to attract research funding notwithstanding). In a trenchant review of the process being described as ‘globalization’, Linda Weiss points to trade and capital flows of similar magnitude having occurred prior to 1913 and to recent evidence of a slowing of the growth of these flows in the eighties and nineties. Moreover, she argues, the existing data on the magnitude of fdi and the nature of capital mobility (both at the heart of the argument that states must do what ‘global’ capital tells them to do or they will up and leave) does not support the argument that there is a ‘globalization tendency at work in the sphere of production’ (Weiss, 1997:9). Turning to the distribution of trade and investment, Weiss further asserts that ‘three trends are inconsistent with a globalization tendency’ (Ibid:11), these being the national bases of most production processes, North-South
divisions, and the development of regional rather than global trade and investment. Even in the case of financial markets, where the evidence for globalization is strongest, she notes that, despite international speculation and ‘casino capitalism’, the price of capital has not converged, and that there are marked differences in savings and investment rates between national and regional financial markets. The state is not ‘powerless’ and ‘globalization’ not ubiquitous, argues Weiss.

The second observation follows from this first. It is precisely because there is less to ‘globalization’ than meets the eye, in economic terms at least, that ‘globalization’ must be pursued so vehemently and aggressively in political terms. Debt peonage is not to be forgiven and written off, despite the enormous capital flows that usury has directed towards western capitals. Instead it is to continue to be used to nail down the international dispensation set out by the G7 leaders and the IFIs. When Asian capital markets spiral into crisis, there is an opportunity, in the midst of concern about the effect on Western markets, for the IMF teams to be sent out to extend the empire of conditionality further. We have argued before, in these pages, that adjustment programmes use debt repayment to substitute regulation by international agencies for that by the local state. What ‘globalization’ means for Africa is the subordination of its states and economies to the rules of capital accumulation set not just by markets but also by the core states. The implications of the G7 and Albright message are clear: if African countries are to achieve sustainable development on their terms, it would seem that a partnership of private capital and international regulation is envisaged. Yet, as many of the papers in this issue indicate, it is easier to lay down the rules than to enforce them. And, as Weiss argues, the ability to confront the internationalization of capital is still a question of state capacity and the need is for ‘building state capacity rather than discarding it’.

References


This article assesses recent debate regarding dimensions of post-cold war conflict in Africa. It reviews the populist, and influential assertion that the ‘coming anarchy’, in Africa and elsewhere, is the result increasingly of clashes between cultures rather than states, and that these nation states necessarily give rise to primordial ethnicities. There continues to be a view that Africa’s ills lie with overpopulation, environmental degradation and ethnic conflict. In contrast to the travel writing of authors like Kaplan nuanced perspectives challenging conventional wisdom can be underpinned by the force of anthropology and contemporary debates, relating to the new ecology and critiques of power.


Overpopulation, environmental degradation and ethnic conflict loom large in the post-cold war nightmares of metropolitan discourses. Robert Kaplan, a contributing editor of the Atlantic Monthly, has been prominent in articulating these discourses, first in his book on the Balkans (Kaplan, 1993), then in an influential article on ‘the coming anarchy’ (Kaplan, 1994), and now in a lengthy volume of travel writing and far-reaching political speculation. Paul Richards, an anthropologist, engages with Kaplan’s imagery and arguments, particularly in the context of understanding Sierra Leone’s war. Melissa Leach and Robin Mearns have brought together geographers, historians, anthropologists and ecologists in an edited volume, where a whole range of case studies carry forward the critique of conventional wisdom on African environmental degradation. They show that this conventional wisdom is not simply the making of some analysts seeking a new role after the cold war, it resonates with much knowledge practice of colonialism. In his geographical interpretation of Africa’s pre-history, James Newman comes close to Kaplan’s imaginings in his approach, though not in his tone.
After its publication in February 1994, Kaplan's article on 'new anarchy' gained instant currency among US foreign policy officials and analysts. It was faxed from the Department of Global Affairs to every US embassy in the world. The genocide in Rwanda, only two months later, could scarcely have come at a more opportune moment to verify the convictions that Kaplan had just enunciated. His object had been West Africa, however, and with a further leap of imagination, the 'third world' in general. In a nutshell, the 'coming anarchy' thesis maintains that political conflicts are increasingly clashes between cultures rather than nation-states, and that those cultures give rise to essential, primordial ethnicities. The root cause is environmental degradation and increased competition for resources. In some cases, such as in the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, this predicament has already degenerated into crises that resemble more crime and banditry than organised warfare that the international community could profitably try to curb. High birthrates produce likely perpetrators of these crimes - urban youths with few prospects for formal employment, cut off from the moral fabric of the rural society and left to confront their world of superstition and deprivation with drugs and increasingly accessible firearms. They are 'loose molecules in an unstable social fluid', an image which recurs in Kaplan's book (p. 16) and to which Richards takes particular exception.

When the 'coming anarchy' thesis was being debated in the US, Kaplan had already embarked on an ambitious journey to add comparative detail to his vision. He began the journey from West Africa, of course, and travelled through Egypt and Iran to Central Asia, India, Pakistan and Southeast Asia. Donning the costume of a worldly writer, he uses the early pages of his book to announce how 'naive' (p. 7) he had been at the beginning of his journey, how his 'theory' had become 'more refined' (p. 9). What this more refined theory could be is anyone's guess, because Kaplan is not inclined to enunciate it, apart from admitting that 'the effect of culture was more a mystery to me near the end of my planetary journey than at the beginning' (p. 423). Make no mistake the mystery of culture only begins to dawn on this intercontinental voyager in Southeast Asia, at the end of his journey. Africa, alas, appears as transparent in its misery as ever. It is, in fact, with a reference to Africa that Kaplan still defends the explanatory weight of culture: 'To avoid the subject of culture as a determinant would be to avoid a principal cause for the difference in development patterns' (p. 412).

In Africa, Kaplan feels compelled by the subject of culture precisely because the subject of nature appears so overwhelming there. 'Africa is nature writ large' (p. 5), reads one of his opening maxims. The reference here is to Africa as the cradle of our species, of that original humanity which, scarcely distinguishable from our common animality, even this metropolitan recognizes in himself. But the evocations of common origins do not carry us far. Adumbrating his theory of culture as a product of climate and natural terrain, Kaplan observes that 'even as Africa's geography was conducive to humanity's emergence, it may not have been conducive to its further development' (p. 7). According to Kaplan, nature is a force that needs to be tamed, but Africans, sadly, only know its 'terrifying face' (p. 3). Left to itself, Africa's nature provides enough for human subsistence, but its appropriation for greater achievements requires constant effort. Kaplan's words again speak for themselves:

'[T]he earth here had been too generously abundant to demand the exertions a culture required in order to develop the self-discipline that peoples of less favored climes had been forced over the eons to learn (p. 63).
It follows that the processes of human procreation and culture are little more than extensions of the blind, linear system that is nature. The 'exploding populations' (p. 83) of Africa demand no extended reflections. The observations that Richards (p. 121) makes on population growth in Africa - that Africa is catching up with the rest of the world, that children may be assets for the poor, and that educated women have fewer children than those with little schooling - allow the possibility that Africans are conscious about what they are doing. But Kaplan never gets to know particular Africans and their families. His guides and interlocutors are mostly foreign diplomats and aid workers, and the rare African voices come from politicians and journalists who are introduced to confirm Kaplan's own ruminations. He excels in what one contributor to the Leach and Mearns collection calls 'casual roadside observations' (p. 47). When the truck carrying Kaplan in Sierra Leone breaks down in the countryside, it gives an opportunity to make a searching inquiry into contemporary village life. 'The sheer nothingness of it all', Kaplan sighs before he unleashes his verdict: 'Life went on, babies were being conceived and born, and yet little was created, or even repaired, beyond the bare necessities' (p. 62).

This is of course immensely poor travel writing by any standards. But Kaplan's book needs a more sustained response, because despite its subjective, often arrogant tone, it is clearly designed to be influential. Kaplan has carved out a niche for himself, particularly in the US, and the nearly 500 pages of The Ends of the Earth are not offered as idle entertainment. 'I thought of America everywhere I looked' (p. 436), he admits at the end of his journey. Whereas the 'coming anarchy' thesis could be read as a pretext for Western governments to leave 'third world' conflicts in their own unmanageable confusion, he is now convinced that their effect on the affluent North is inescapable. Richards notes that such metropolitan and middle-class anxieties, linking environmental determinism and cultural essentialism, have a long ancestry. 'The fear of the revenge of the enslaved and dispossessed is hard to quell' (p. xiii).

It is useful to list briefly Kaplan's key strategies of representation. Environmental determinism has already been mentioned. This includes the important notion that 'nature' is a linear, coherent system which flourishes or degenerates as a whole. Second, as has also been mentioned, Kaplan is unabashed in his evaluation of cultures in terms of their capacity to tame and appropriate nature. This means that those cultures deemed superstitious have little chance of overcoming their environmental problems. Islam and Christianity stand opposed to such weak cultures. The prevalence of secret societies and masks in the forest areas of West Africa provokes this observation, rich in its imagery: 'The forest, a green prison with iron rain clouds draped low overhead, may have helped weaken Islam and Christianity' (p. 28). Third, while Kaplan would never want to be accused of being 'academic', he draws liberally upon some of the most obsolete academic inventions. Sir James Frazer, for example, is cited as an authority on 'animism', itself curtly dismissed as superstition (p. 28). In Egypt, Kaplan feels compelled to immerse himself and the reader in an extended discussion of 'oriental despotism' (pp. 92-95). He does acknowledge that current scholarship is less than enthusiastic about the notion. But this does nothing to diminish Kaplan's own fascination with it, let alone that he would actually engage with recent critiques.

When prejudice culminates in a wilful neglect of current scholarship, what hope is there for a reasoned argument? None, perhaps, but the effort to speak reason to unreason must prevail (cf. Wolf, 1994). The first thing to note is Kaplan's failure to see any complexity in the relations between external and internal factors. He considers
that postcolonial events have long since erased colonial responsibility. In Freetown, he finds solace in a restaurant run by Lebanese, away from the dust and rot, 'the very air of West Africa' (p. 68), an oasis with 'international standards of cuisine, cleanliness, and management without the need of foreign advisers' (p. 68). Cultural essentialism is, of course, a corollary of Kaplan's inability to grasp internal-external dynamics. In an intriguing paper, Rosalind Shaw (1997) suggests that witchcraft beliefs and practices in Sierra Leone may owe much to the searing experiences during the Atlantic slave trade. The implication is that the 'superstition' in Kaplan's imaginings is integral to the transnational regimes of exploitation that continue to mould Sierra Leonean realities.

On a more general anthropological plane, innovative perspectives are emerging to move beyond 'cultures' as bounded units (see for instance, Stolcke, 1995; Ong, 1996; Fog Olwig and Hastrup, 1997; Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). These perspectives, while responding to long-recognized theoretical problems, gain urgency from the popular and political evocations of cultural difference as more 'correct' strategies of exclusion than those based on the notion of race, particularly in dealing with refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe and the US. Of the books reviewed here, Richards' and Leach and Mearns' are explicitly geared to addressing internal-external dynamics as both practical and intellectual dilemmas. Both are also reasonably successful, Richards through anthropological fieldwork, the contributions in the Leach and Mearns collection through combining fieldwork with exciting insights from 'new ecology'.

Counter-strategies: the Force of Anthropology

Despair is not an unreasonable reaction to the imaginings of such metropolitan analysts as Kaplan who, after much sustained scholarly effort in African studies, should know better. Richards must be applauded for not yielding to despair. His book renders complexity accessible in an engaging, informal language that nevertheless retains analytic rigour. Even though it was written and published quickly by academic standards, Fighting for the Rain Forest could not keep pace with events on the ground. It is an account of Sierra Leone's war until the 1996 initiatives towards negotiated peace. As such, it is an effective antidote to the arguments and images that formed the bulk of Kaplan's 'coming anarchy' thesis. It shows the force of anthropological fieldwork in a world where intellectual capital appears to emanate from casual roadside observations.

Richards offers a detailed account of the process by which the insurgent Revolutionary United Front (RUF) emerged. He shows how the origin of Sierra Leone's crisis was largely in Liberia's civil war, how the 1992 coup led to a campaign that almost wiped out the RUF and how the movement, after more forced conscription among Sierra Leonean youths and by taking international hostages, re-emerged in 1993-94. Richards' main concern, however, is to understand the complex interrelations between history, the form of the state, youth popular culture, the exploitation of forest resources and the war. The result is a coherent argument which shows the hollowness of the 'coming anarchy' thesis, but is by no means a mere rebuttal of Kaplan's article. It is not a dismissal of Richards' wider objectives to note how his anthropological counter-strategy, and his argument of images confronts Kaplan's perspective and imagery. Kaplan uses particular images to stand as evidence for general patterns. When Richards takes up the same method, his images summarize what a prolonged
analytic exposition would make inaccessible to the more impatient reader. For
discussing the international ivory trade from the seventeenth to nineteenth
century as an instance of the region's long-term exploitation for overseas markets, he
argues that the work of white hunters in supposedly 'pristine' Africa was made easier
by earlier African farmers. The latter opened up forest to rice cultivation. The patchy
forest mosaic that resulted was ideal for elephants, and the relationship between
elephants and human populations was symbiotic, the elephant assuming ancestral
status among many rice-growing peoples of the Upper Guinean forest. Richards'
image recalls the use of ivory in Europe's pianos. 'That prize instrument of Victorian
civility - the upright piano - embodies African culture as much as rain forest nature'
(p. 68).

Sometimes Richards is simply triumphant when he confronts Kaplan's idiocies. The
image of 'loose molecules in an unstable social fluid' comes under repeated attack.
Richards presents an interview with a young ex-fighter who has returned to
secondary school and who finds the school's Boy Scout troop particularly rewarding.
Richards comments: 'It changes the picture somewhat to know that the "loose
molecules" of Kaplan's frightening account might be harbouring a secret desire to join
the Boy Scouts' (p. 90). Later, Richards gives evidence on unemployment among
young men as a problem for the educated classes, particularly those who have
completed secondary education without achieving qualifications. The image is
characteristically wry: 'If these are Kaplan's "loose molecules" then the chances are
they would flourish a well-thumbed copy of Newsweek and quote liberally from
Macbeth' (p. 126).

On a more analytic note, Richards' study highlights a crisis of the patrimonial state.
The war becomes here a reaction to social exclusion, perpetrated especially by
'excluded intellectuals' (for instance, pp. 25-27) in the context of state recession. The
conflicting meanings of patrimonialism are immediately apparent. For the selected
few, it is 'sponsorship', for the excluded, 'corruption' (p. 161). Richards dismisses
regional and ethnic factors and stresses the experiences of the RUF leadership as
exiles and as a town-oriented elite with a long background in formal education.
Unemployed graduates, higher education dropouts and frustrated teachers in rural
secondary schools joined forces as senior figures in the movement.

Sierra Leone's diamond districts had become stopgaps for youths who lacked means
to continue their education or who had failed to find employment after graduation.
Transnational mining interests had abandoned Sierra Leone in the 1980s, and such
youths were working as underpaid diggers for often faceless sponsors, mainly
politicians, government officials and Lebanese and Guinean merchants far from the
mines. It was in these mining districts that the RUF found its youthful constituency,
later supplemented by the capture of ever younger persons to fight the battles of
excluded intellectuals.

Mary Douglas (1986) inspires Richards to reflect on the irresponsibility of excluded
intellectuals, on their 'academic' project of wreaking havoc and spreading terror in
the countryside in order to make a point in the capital. They appropriate aspects of
forest symbolism and practice and in the process make interpretation easy for Kaplan
and other metropolitan analysts. The dramatics of a primitive frenzy obscures forest
societies' symbolic and practical resources for peaceful solutions to current crises.
Richards' evidence is sufficient however, to refute Kaplan's representation of the war
as anarchy perpetrated by unthinking 'loose molecules'. He shows, on the one hand,
that even many educated youths have direct knowledge of forests and a clearly more nuanced understanding of local environmental issues than the vociferous metropolitan analysts themselves (pp. 139-151). On the other hand, Richards demonstrates young people's access to modern media, such as videos and radio news, even in remote diamond districts (pp. 100-114). Soap operas and violent action movies, far from fostering sheer fantasy and escape, are consumed by Sierra Leonean youths to give practical clues how to tackle problems in their own world.

As an anthropology of political violence, Richards' book leaves much to be desired. It lacks the subtlety that characterizes ethnographies which, through intimate knowledge of particular relationships, address a whole range of existential, cosmological as well as political issues (see for instance, Werbner, 1991; Hutchinson, 1996). It seems that much of Richards' interview data was collected by research assistants, and his reflections on young Sierra Leoneans' attitudes to environmental issues and their access to modern media are based on quantitative surveys rather than on qualitative observations. But perhaps Richards' study should not be assessed by the standards of polished ethnographic monographs which, sadly, are often even more out of step with current events by the time of publication than Fighting for the Rain Forest. Richards has an opponent of a particularly harrowing kind. His argument needs to be readily accessible to audiences other than strictly academic ones. As an anthropologist, I do not feel embarrassed to quote his book as an example of versatility in my profession.

**Counter-strategies: New Ecology and the Critique of Power**

Whatever the practical justifications for the lack of subtlety in Richards' book, high standards of scholarship do, in themselves, generate insight that is so absent in Kaplan's disregard of current research. This becomes even clearer by contrasting Newman's book with the Leach and Mearns collection: both address the interplay between environmental issues and human agency. Newman offers a geographical interpretation of Africa's pre-history, but fails to incorporate recent research. The contributions in the Leach and Mearns collection, on the other hand, are at the cutting-edge of ecological, anthropological and historical thinking. They are not, as a consequence, simply 'scientific' responses to popular and political imaginings of environmental issues. Intrinsic to this current scholarship is a critique of science itself, the capacity to reflect on the political and ideological context where scientific ideas emerge.

Earlier reviews by experts in African pre-history have already detected errors in Newman's book, errors that make it unreliable as a source of reference (see Vansina, 1996; Schoenbrun, 1997). Apart from occasional errors, The Peopling of Africa deploys an approach which could appeal to Kaplan. To be sure, Newman is no arrogant roadside observer. He states that 'Africa and Africans deserve to be known on their own terms, and to achieve this goal, we need to improve our understanding of what took place before colonialism rewrote many of life's rules' (p. 3). This promising introduction is followed by a look into the origins of humankind, where 'the agricultural transformation' assumes a pivotal place, effecting growth in both brain size and population numbers. It is this exclusive focus on the material conditions of population dynamics that brings Newman's approach so disappointingly close to Kaplan's. Moreover, Newman's text sometimes uses concepts and notions that are by no means innocent. Quite apart from whether the pre-historic transactions in persons could be labelled 'slavery', as Newman suggests without reflection, to describe
persons in this context as ‘commodities’ is to abuse concepts (for instance, p. 204). Newman’s discussion of *mfecane* basically in the terms of the 1960s scholarship is symptomatic of much else (pp. 198-200). This is a history of ethnic groups as primordial units, and, *The Peopling of Africa* is a poor guide to the scholarly debates of the 1990s.

The critique of ‘conventional wisdom’ in the Leach and Mearns collection is made compelling by a rethinking of ‘nature’ as an object of knowledge. Anthropologists have, of course, long provided alternative perspectives on the basis of contrasting ethnographic cases (see for instance, Croll and Parkin, 1992). *The Lie of the Land* utilizes these perspectives and, at the same time, brings epistemological insights to bear on various case studies. Such insights derive from the intellectual and scientific movement that began as an attempt to confront chaos in physics and has more recently come to nourish other fields, including ecology (within voluminous literature, see for instance, Gleick, 1988; Worster, 1990). There is reference in virtually all of *The Lie of the Land’s* eleven chapters to non-linear dynamics and complex stochastic effects. The epistemological assault is on ‘nature’ as a coherent system that is in the throes of linear degradation. An example is the notion of successional change in vegetation, leading to a climax vegetation, if the linear process avoids disturbance. The case studies that Leach and Mearns have brought together challenge this view by dismantling the idea of one, all-encompassing ‘problem’ of degradation. They disclose, instead, a series of problems and attend to the variable temporal and spatial scales in environmental transformations.

An important aspect of these contributions is their effort to show how obsolete scientific ideas are linked to persistent popular and official notions of ‘development’. Following Roe (1991), some contributors stress the role of ‘development narratives’, and Hoben, in the final chapter, states that these narratives are culturally constructed and reflect the hegemony of Western development discourse’ (p. 187). It is a bland statement and by no means unproblematic in the light of my earlier misgivings about ‘culture’. The fascination with ‘discourse’, as in Escobar (1995), may also degenerate into a functionalist view of ideology (cf. Lehmann, 1997; Mohan, 1997:315-316). More plausible is other contributors’ search for ‘counter-narratives’ which pay closer attention to epistemology and power. Jeremy Swift, for example, sees ‘better science’ (p. 90) as integral to such counter-strategies, and Daniel Brockington and Katherine Homewood write about ‘competing hypotheses and methods’ to test ‘refutable ideas’ (p. 101) in the debates on the African environment. In other words, the challenge is, according to most contributors, not to wrestle with a ubiquitous ‘culture’, but to recognize alternative intellectual-cum-political potentials in current scientific and social movements.

For the post-modernist, such appeal to science comes in a hopelessly archaic manner. But in their Introduction, Leach and Mearns do make the customary bows to Foucault’s direction, and throughout the collection, the naive, unreflective uses of science are undermined on at least three counts. First, as mentioned, the case studies build on perspectives that entail a new vision of nature. Second, the relations between science and political power are for many contributors profoundly problematic. This is raised when Michael Stocking, discussing conventional wisdom on soil erosion, writes about scientists as one set of actors in the ‘soil erosion game’ (p. 141). And he examines the issue of the impact of circumstance and prejudice on their experiments. Ian Scoones also questions the relations between science and political power when he argues that the science of grazing management has offered and legitimized a solution to various governments’ desire to control land, livestock and people in Zimbabwe.
since the colonial era. Third, many contributions celebrate ‘indigenous knowledge’ as an invaluable challenge to conventional scientific wisdom. W. M. Adams’ study of irrigation and erosion in Kenya is, in fact, a rare example of caution against romanticizing or essentializing ‘indigenous knowledge’. In surprisingly many contributions, the questions of power and history in ‘indigenous knowledge’ are under-theorized (for more cautionary perspectives, see Grove and McGregor, 1995).

The ‘narratives’ in the volume include overgrazing, the desertification of drylands, soil erosion and deforestation. The case studies are located in southern Africa, the Guinea forest zone, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia. Among the most compelling ‘counter-narratives’ is the work of Leach and James Fairhead on West African rain forests, largely in the same landscape as Richards’ study. Although their argument has appeared in greater detail elsewhere (Fairhead and Leach, 1996), its outlines deserve repeating in the present collection. They show that the notion of natural climax vegetation underlies the view that forest patches are ‘natural’ formations, threatened by the expansion of savanna - the ultimate reason being the destructive land-use practices of unthinking farmers. Leach and Fairhead draw attention to the historical persistence of the forest-savanna mosaic in the area as evidence against a linear process. They identify different production and gathering possibilities in forest and savanna vegetation. Even more, they highlight farmers’ own land-use practices that have enriched the landscape and increased its forest cover. Non-equilibrium ecology combines here with solid anthropological analysis to produce a counter-narrative that would build on local resource management in addressing environmental problems.

One disconcerting finding of many contributions is that political transitions from colonialism to postcolonialism have not necessarily introduced changes in both policies and ‘scientific’ claims. Swift, for example, shows that concern with ‘the encroaching Sahara’, and with desertification overall, has intensified during or shortly after periods of drought – especially during the period of low rainfall between 1905 and 1920 and again in the 1980s. For both colonial and postcolonial governments alike, desertification has justified control over resources. As Swift insists, if many parts of Africa now witness a wetter period, this should not be allowed to terminate the debate on dryland environmental problems. In a similar, if more controversial, comment on changing political regimes, William Beinart observes that the linear views of veld degradation in South Africa have long occupied the imagination of scientists and officials and have been adopted by anti-apartheid environmentalists. While stressing the tentativeness of his historical analysis, Beinhart ends up defending a virtual status quo in the ownership regimes of veld pastures, no longer, of course, defined in racial terms. Beinart’s conclusion is, however, preceded by much nuanced analysis which stresses the importance of considering individual farms rather than generalizing about whole districts or regions.

Knowledge Practices, War Machine and the State

Beinart’s somewhat sour view of radical politics absorbing conventional wisdom serves as a reminder against simple solutions to ‘green imperialism’ (cf. Mackenzie, 1990; Grove, 1995). As Leach and Mearns point out, the dilemma is how to render complexity accessible and how to create political and economic institutions that engage with ‘plural rationalities’ (p. 33) in all their diversity. Leach and Mearns are not looking for simple solutions. They are sceptical about neo-traditionalist attempts to resolve policy conflicts in the shade of ‘an African palaver tree’ (p. 32). They go on
to admit that even the counter-narratives of their collection, however much one would like to see them displacing conventional wisdom in the mass media, can easily turn into sectarianism devoid of real debate. In the context of Sierra Leone's political crisis, Richards recommends 'smart relief', knowledge-intensive assistance that draws upon local symbolic and material resources. As Leach and Mearns also remind us, however, the exchange of diverse, sometimes incommensurate, ideas always takes place within specific power relations. Anthropology and new ecology can make the conflicts involved more explicit and thus shift the focus of negotiation. But profound questions about power and knowledge practice remain unresolved.

The extremes in Richards' Sierra Leonean case should not suggest that violence is simply coincidental in the knowledge practice of linear dynamics. The terror tactics of RUF's excluded intellectuals may have more in common with the measures of control and coercion documented in the Leach and Mearns collection than is immediately apparent. The intimate relation between knowledge and power becomes a truism. The examples in these two books demand, rather, that the modalities of knowledge and power are theorized. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1988:351-423) have proposed to call the distinct, and yet interpenetrating, dynamics of power in vastly different socio-political organizations 'war machine' and 'state' (for an illuminating discussion by an anthropologist, see Kapferer, 1997:274-286). The concepts need not denote actual military organizations and structures of government, but a tension between distinct dynamics of power. While war machine de-territorializes, state imposes limits and hierarchy. As interpenetrating processes, one is not somehow superior, both in moral and temporal terms, to the other. Rather, 'the war machine is exterior to the State apparatus' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988:351) and confronts the state in the dynamic of their interpenetration. RUF's excluded intellectuals wreaked havoc in order to shock the custodians of the patrimonial state. For colonial and postcolonial governments in Africa, on the other hand, the notions of linear degradation have been integral to their attempts to impose new boundaries and limits on social and ecological formations.

The ultimate example of violence in such knowledge practices is to be found not in the Sierra Leonean crisis but in Kaplan's book. The latter is putting its case to a global superpower, not to a declining patrimonial state in a West African backwater. If, as mentioned, Kaplan thought of America wherever he went, he had domestic as much as global concerns in mind. 'Future crises beyond our borders ... sharpen ethnic and economic fissures at home' (p. 436), he warns. The very bodies of middle-class Americans are under attack: 'As AIDS shows, Africa's climate and poverty beget disease that finds its ways to the wealthiest suburbs. We are the world and the world is us' (pp. 437-438).

Colonial and postcolonial knowledge practices again prove their compatibility, for the colonial encounter also forged an image of the lower classes 'at home' (for instance, Comaroff and Comaroff, 1997:23-24). The violence in Kaplan's approach, as in all state dynamics, derives from the potential to attack this exteriority, to cut off this malignant tumour that threatens purity and order. It becomes abundantly clear in the pages of The Ends of the Earth that Kaplan feels no responsibility nor remorse for African crises. The violence lies not in his solutions - he shuns proposing any - but in the demonising of Africa. The linear dynamics of natural degradation and cultural strife define a counter-image for the world worth defending.
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**Bibliography**


Strategies for Change: Women & Politics in Eritrea & South Africa

Dan Connell

This article examines the position of women in the process of democratisation in Eritrea and South Africa. It examines the difficulties in translating declared government and policy document support for gender issues into implemented strategy. It does so by tracing the position of women in the different movements, the problems which women have confronted in political and economic reconstruction and the political struggles which women have engaged in to ensure that gender issues remain at the core of democratic politics.

One of the first post-war surprises in Eritrea probably shouldn't have surprised anyone. Shortly after the shooting stopped in May 1991, men in many villages and towns formed secret committees to try to block women from participating in peacetime distributions of land.

'The men were rushing to divide the good land for housing and for agriculture before we established our rights', Askalu Menkarios told me one afternoon three years later over a hurried lunch in Asmara, the Eritrean capital. Askalu (Endnote 1) headed the 200,000 member National Union of Eritrea Women (NUEW), which in 1994 was shifting its focus from mobilising women to support the liberation struggle to educating and training them to participate in the post-war economy. By then, Eritrean women were also confronting the need for a rearguard defence of gains they had won during the 30-year fight for independence from Ethiopia.

Women played a central role in the war, making up almost a third of the 95,000 strong Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and some 13 per cent of the frontline fighters (Endnote 2). But they were not alone in their new conundrum. Reaction to radical social change commonly surfaces after victorious national liberation struggles, and by now the particular back sliding that takes place on women's issues has been widely recognised. Nonetheless, it seemed to take the Eritreans off guard. And the increased demands of peacetime domestic life added yet another dimension to the profound transition underway for the former women guerrilla fighters constituting the 'double shift'.

We sat in Askalu's two-story, garden-style apartment in the compound known as Radio Marina, a former military installation built by the US in the 1940s, where many EPLF members now live with their families. Melley, one of Askalu's two daughters, was recovering from flu that had kept her home from school the previous two days. Her sister Winta burst in shortly after I arrived to join us on her school lunch-hour. Moments later, Askalu's husband, Senay, then the head of training at the Ministry of Health, popped in to say hello and pick up something he'd forgotten earlier that morning. In what seemed like seconds, he raced out, late for something. The phone rang repeatedly.
Askalu and I traded snatches of conversation between interruptions. A tape recorder sat in the middle of the dining room table, wedged between bowls of tsebhe dorho and salad, like a post-modern centrepiece. This was Eritrea in the 1990s: a hodgepodge of unconsolidated revolutionary reforms, remarkably resilient traditions, and intense pressures emerging in daily life. The appearance of the secret men's committees was one of many instances of regressive forces re-emerging to challenge the social content of the revolution, but not the only one, at a time when new challenges and demands were appearing by the day (Endnote 3).

Leading women activists found themselves drawn into a steadily growing number of important but time-consuming political projects. These included writing a new constitution, revising the civil code, developing new legislation, restructuring the civil service, demobilising former guerrilla fighters, forwarding recommendations for economic development and drafting a host of other new policy initiatives. However, urgent these tasks were, they represented a sharp break with the grassroots-level work to change gender relations with which they had been engaged throughout the war years, alongside (and often as a part of) an effort to draw women into activities that directly supported the independence struggle.

At about the same time, women veterans of South Africa's long anti-apartheid struggle faced a similar problem. But their situation was complicated by the fact that the African National Congress did not secure an unqualified victory – only a compromise that in 1991 took them out of the streets and into a political arena already defined and structured by their enemies. One unintended and unforeseen result was that the country's first non-racial elections in April 1994 siphoned off the best and the brightest from the liberation movement, including the most skilled and experienced women organisers, to carry on the struggle for democracy within the state apparatus. Inevitably, this happened at the expense of the dynamic popular organisations that had helped bring the ANC to power in the first place. Some began to atrophy, others collapsed. Thus, in both Eritrea and South Africa, women found themselves battling for their social, economic and political rights on new and decidedly unfamiliar terrain.

The transition from resistance to governance has not been easy for any of the armed political movements that have came to power in the former European colonies since World War II. And it has only become knottier since the end of the cold war. Most national liberation movements moved to demobilise women once short-term political goals were achieved. Or, in the name of maintaining (male) unity, they postponed attention to women's demands in instances where national objectives remained unmet or new forms of counter-revolution surfaced. The post-war situations in Eritrea and South Africa however, presented a different challenge to women because the victorious political parties, acting through the state, continued to champion women's rights, even as they discouraged autonomous women's organising.

Gender Reform in Post-war Eritrea

The decades long independence war in Eritrea left the new country in ruins. At the close of the fighting, water and sewage systems in the towns barely functioned. The few asphalt roads had been torn up; port facilities were badly damaged; the rail system was entirely dismantled, its iron rails used to make bunkers; and the entire country had a generating capacity of only 22 megawatts, barely enough to keep the lights burning in the major towns. The World Bank estimated the country's per capita
income in 1993 at less than US$150, compared to US$330 for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. To conserve resources and avoid sinking into debt, the former guerrillas serving in the government collected only a basic living allowance instead of salaries until June 1995. Most of the population lived at below-subsistence levels, and there was no class of wealthy Eritreans left in the country from whom to pull resources for a programme of redistribution. The only option was growth, but a central question was how to promote it without regenerating vast social inequalities, especially between women and men in a rigidly patriarchal society where women had, with few exceptions, long been treated as chattel with limited economic or political rights.

In a society where close to 80 per cent of the population lived through agrarian-related activities, women were uniformly denied the right to own or inherit land. In both Christian and Muslim communities, girls were routinely married at puberty under contracts arranged at birth. A bride might be as young as nine or ten, although she continued to live at home until menstruation commenced. Genital cutting, known euphemistically as 'female circumcision', was widely carried out, as cliteridectomies in the mostly Christian highlands and often in more radical forms in the Muslim lowlands. Here the clitoris was removed, the inner and outer labia sliced away, and the remaining skin sewn together in a practice known as infibulation. Girls frequently contracted vaginal infections during and after these crude operations, and death in childbirth was extremely common, due to the chronic malnutrition and anaemia that afflicted women, traditionally the last in the household to eat. At the end of the protracted conflict, Eritrean women had a life expectancy of barely 40 years.

However, early in the post-war transition, programme targeting their second-class economic, social and political status, originally developed and tested in the liberated zones, were codified and extended to the rest of the country. These programme formed the starting point for post-war gender reform and for the anti-feminist backlash.

After the clandestine postwar men's mobilisation aimed at blocking women from gaining land was discovered in 1992, protesting women marched on the president's office to demand action. Several of the men spearheading the drive were jailed, but the incident highlighted the pressing need to reform Eritrea's complex land tenure system. In August 1994 a government-sponsored Land Commission recommended a form of nationalisation that allocated use-rights to all Eritreans, women and men alike. Long-term leases were to be made available for commercial purposes, and individual land-users were to be able to recoup or leave to their heirs improvements made to the land.

The most important other initiative affecting women, announced in 1991 but not fully implemented until later, was a national service campaign. This required all women and men over eighteen to undergo six months of military training before spending a year on reconstruction projects. It was intended to compensate for Eritrea's lack of capital and to reduce dependence on foreign aid, while welding together the diverse society (half Christian and half Muslim, from nine distinct ethnic groups). It would also place women and men in a condition of relative gender equality for eighteen months, much as service in the liberation front had done. The importance of this social-engineering project was underlined when it was written into the new constitution, adopted in May 1997, as a fundamental obligation of citizenship.

While the national service programme was up and running by 1994, it would be some time before the land reform, also incorporated into the constitution, was widely
implemented. The government sought first, to test public reaction to it and to carry out pilot projects in different settings. Nevertheless, the measure signalled the new government's intent to demolish the remnants of feudal land relations and to attack the material basis for male domination in rural, agrarian society. Yet this ran alongside the incident with the underground men's committees that put women on notice that the dramatic gains they had made during the liberation struggle were far from safe. That message was reinforced by sharp rises in child marriage and other formerly banned practices, such as humiliating 'virginity testing' for prospective brides, and by a sharp rise in the divorce rate among former fighters. Many men, often under strong pressure from their families, jettisoned their wartime wives in favour of traditional brides from their home villages.

It was clear that measures such as the land reform, the national service, the enforcement of laws against sex discrimination by a woman attorney general, the appointment of a near majority of women to the 50 member Constitution Commission, and the reservation of 30 per cent of the seats for women in newly elected People's Assemblies, were insufficient to counter the efforts to rollback women's gains arising from within the deeply conservative society. In post-war Eritrea, custom remained more important than law, and the most powerful institution was not the government, democratic or not, but the family. Under these circumstances, slippage was inevitable. The question was what would the political movement, acting through the state, the party and the various sectoral movements, do to stem it.

'From what we saw, it is clear that we have to campaign again to maintain the changes we've achieved', Askalu told me in 1994. This effort would require strong organisation of women at the village level, as well as continuing advocacy at the national level, and a sustained campaign of public education that reached into all Eritrea's patriarchal institutions, old ones and new ones, including (and especially) the family. Unfortunately, the NUEW's insistence to maintain unchallenged hegemony over all work on women's issues, coupled with the centralist habits of the liberation movement, undercut efforts to expand and diversify this effort. As a consequence, many women who could play key roles in such work have walked away from it rather than sow disharmony in the political movement.

The Eritrean Women's Movement

The NUEW had 200,000 signed-up members at the end of 1997. It was by far the largest of the three popular sectoral associations, the others being for workers and the youth. It spun off from the liberation movement after the war and it was the main institutional vehicle for representing women's interests in the wider society. Founded under the auspices of the EPLF in 1979, the NUEW held its fourth congress in September 1992, where it was re-launched as a semi-autonomous social movement. A fifth congress, convened in February 1998 after long delays, reorganised the union and produced new leadership, but it did not substantially alter its role in society. Throughout the post-war years, the union retained strong links with the EPLF, which in early 1993 was reborn as the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) and which continued to exert strong behind-the-scenes influence, if not day-to-day control, over both the programme and the composition of the NUEW's leadership.

With its emphasis on service-provision and project management, the women's union was the least adversarial of the three former mass organisations, rarely challenging
the state or the front in public. Its recommendations, for instance, to the Constitution Commission in 1995 were not even published in the NUEW's newsletter. That was in order to avoid controversy over its calls for recognising the right of women to equality in the family and for the elimination of what were termed 'harmful traditions'. On the other hand, the union managed a wide range of skills training, literacy and other self-improvement programme, as well as rural credit schemes and other development projects. Each of these were accompanied by consciousness-raising seminars, and it routinely monitored and advised other bodies on legislation, trade union contracts and policies that affected women. Whatever its failings, the union had a positive effect on the lives of tens of thousands of women and helped give them access to areas of the country's economic, social and political life hitherto denied them.

Critics of the union, especially among former members but also including outside evaluators, argued that it was spread far too thin and that its mandate was too diffuse, that it tried to do too much for too many distinct constituencies. As a result, certain key constituencies, like former fighters, fell through the cracks. This arose from the fact that the government, and the PFDJ, asked the NUEW to take responsibility for programme such as adult literacy, job training, income generation and health care provision that it should run itself, freeing the union to channel its resources into experimentation, mobilisation and advocacy rather than programme implementation and project management. This breadth of activity, coupled with the union's intolerance for rival organisations, stifled efforts at advocacy and discouraged programme initiatives that fell outside the scope of its perceived mandate.

Despite these burdens, the NUEW was successful in spearheading a number of reforms. Among the changes pushed by the union that were made in the inherited Ethiopia civil code were:

- marriage contracts can only be made with the full consent of both parties;
- the eligible age for marriage has been raised from 15 to 18 for women (matching that of men);
- both mothers and fathers are now recognised as heads of the family;
- there is to be no discrimination between men and women in divorce cases (grounds for which are adultery, desertion for two years, venereal disease and impotency);
- paid maternity leave has been extended from 45 to 60 days;
- abortion is legal in cases where the mother's mental or physical health is threatened and in instances of rape or incest;
- the sentence for rape has been extended to 15 years (Endnote 4).

The NUEW's main focus was on poor rural and urban women, who made up the bulk of the organisation's members and among whom land ownership had long been the central issue. During a series of workshops convened throughout the country in 1994, however, NUEW members called for such things as the formal banning of premarital virginity testing, 'circumcision' and infibulation; the inclusion of domestic violence as grounds for divorce; and the extension of the civil code to cover all citizens, including Muslims then falling under the jurisdiction of Islamic *shari'a* law. Professional women
and ex-woman guerrilla fighters expressed a growing impatience over the lack of a forum to press their grievances at a time when many men, including former liberation fighters, were reasserting traditional male prerogatives. The most urgent situation was that faced by demobilised women fighters, who were finding it difficult to return to home villages where they were considered unmarriagable due to their self-assertiveness. Yet many chose not to join the NUEW, or joined it and then dropped out, because it lacked a focus on their particular needs and because it was not a campaign-oriented organisation. As one former fighter put it to me, the NUEW was 'an organisation of women, not a women's movement'.

'Women's concerns are so diverse that we need a wide variety of organisational forms-issue-oriented organisations, perhaps affiliated to the national union but autonomous', said one long-time EPLF member, critical of what she saw as too much centralism in the women's union. 'We need to have lots of democracy', she added. One model she and others talked about was that of the trade unions, in which separate federations, each with its own structure, programme and identity arising from the particularity of its membership, came under one umbrella, the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW), to act on behalf of their shared interests as workers. This model was discussed within the NUEW but the leadership opposed it, opting instead at their 1997 Congress, to streamline the management structures to make the organisation more efficient, but not more decentralised.

For their part, the trade unions, re-established from scratch in the towns and cities after the war and by 1997 comprising five federations with a total of 20,000 members, were just then carving out a programme to deal with gender inequality in the workplace (and in the unions themselves). In late 1995, following the formal launch of the NCEW, union leaders established a women's committee to research the position of women in the industrial work force and to design a programme of education and advocacy to remedy inequities. However, over a year later, the research was not completed and no programme was yet forthcoming, in part because all but one of the committee members doubled as office secretaries and had to fit attention to gender issues into otherwise crowded work schedules. Independent initiatives were also met with resistance by the NUEW, as when NCEW leaders quietly floated a proposal to the women's union to jointly convene a forum on women's issues that would bring together women from the three sectoral associations and others from government departments and non-governmental organisations. The idea was quickly vetoed.

One post-war institution that took a more activist approach on gender issues and was not cowed by the NUEW was the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS). With an estimated 80,000 members by 1997, male and female from age 16 to 35 (including 15,000 members from outside Eritrea), it was the fastest growing, the feistiest and the most campaign-oriented of these sectoral associations. It only resumed its activities in 1992, after a two year hiatus, when 15 of its core organisers came together to re-launch the union with a new membership, new priorities and new activities. By the mid-1990s, it was running education and training programmes, as well as a wide range of cultural and recreational activities. Unlike the women's union, the youth movement made the issue of combating 'harmful traditions' a centrepiece of its advocacy work, and it publicly campaigned against female genital cutting, among other destructive cultural practices then making a comeback. Female NUEYS members targeted women, and male members targeted men in three-day educational programmes held in villages and poor urban neighbourhoods around the country. The NUEYS was also active at the training camp for the national service programme, where it attracted substantial numbers of new members.
Though the country’s leaders have repeatedly expressed support for independent organising, Eritrea has no tradition of pluralism in civil society, and there has been little evidence of growth in this area apart from the former EPLF mass organisations, and efforts to establish women’s NGOs have either failed or been blocked. One of the earliest attempts came when former women fighters moved in 1995 to establish the Eritrean Women War Veterans Association (BANA). Members pooled the payouts they were given upon leaving the front to set up a share company. Later, they also registered as an NGO that began to solicit and receive substantial foreign funds from European and North American sources. In one year, the membership grew to almost 1,000 women. They established a fish market, a bakery, training programme for commercial drivers and several other projects aimed at economic self-sufficiency. However, in the spring of 1996 the office was shut down after a row within the board of directors went public. There had always been questions about the project’s form of registration under Eritrea’s evolving legal system. But the combination of its rapid attraction of large-scale outside funds with its public exposure of internal problems appeared to do it in as an NGO, even though the share company was permitted to stay in business.

Another failed NGO experiment was provided by the Tesfa Association. That was formed by another group of ex-fighters living in the Kagnew Station complex in 1994, to address the lack of child-care facilities for working mothers. They established the Aghi Kindergarten and ran a series of public campaigns and fundraisers in Asmara, supported by top-level government officials, to underwrite the project. Soon, however, they also began to attract substantial foreign funds, as they started to look at replicating their success with new projects. In 1996, shortly after BANA was stripped of its NGO status, Tesfa, too, was closed down, with its projects and resources turned over to the women’s union. Afterward, there was some talk about conflicts over the site of the childcare centre, but the official explanation was that the project represented ‘unnecessary duplication’ of work done by the NUEW, indicating in a not-too-subtle way that organisational rivalry was a significant part of the explanation. The effect was to discourage other such initiatives.

Despite the lack of institutional pluralism, Eritreans as a whole, women and men, continue to be remarkably united in their wish to present a solid front to the rest of the world and to work out their differences on this and other issues within the national ‘family’. As a result, one finds little public discourse on such concerns. Meanwhile, fault lines within Eritrea have already been targeted by class and political opponents of the new government. The most serious is a Sudan based Islamist movement, Eritrean Islamic Jihad, that has been sporadically raiding western Eritrea almost since the end of the independence war. It has made opposition to changes in the status of women a central organising focus, though it has so far failed to attract a significant following. The question is: how will this affect the unfinished struggles to achieve gender and other forms of social equality?

At this stage, it does not seem to be having any appreciable impact on the gender-related policies and programmes of the new government or its commitments to democratisation. But it is more difficult to measure the degree to which this has a dampening effect on individual women’s willingness to engage the state, or the PFDJ, in active debate over the pace and content of these initiatives. It is also difficult to see the effect it may have on women’s ability to organise themselves with others apart from state and party-sanctioned institutions. Without a compelling reason to do so, such as an about-face over a particular issue or the failure over time to effectively implement gender-sensitive policy, Eritrean feminists appear content to bide their
time. They will continue to work on gender issues within already existing channels, and keep up an informal exchange among themselves over future needs for and possibilities of independent action and organisation.

Women's Rights in the 'New South Africa'

Nowhere in Africa do women have more clearly spelled out legal rights than in South Africa. The post-apartheid constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis not only of gender but also of sexual orientation. The ANC and its other partners in the Tripartite Alliance, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), each has a gender desk or department at the top of the organisation, as well as at intermediate and lower levels, to monitor policies and programmes on gender equity, as did most government bodies. The country's Reconstruction and Development Programme, drafted by the trade union movement, adopted by the ANC and then made official government policy (though steadily watered down in the process of moving from one institutional level to the next) asserts the centrality of women's participation on nearly every page. And the post-apartheid Parliament, presided over by a woman Speaker, Frene Ginwala, boasts the seventh highest percentage of women in the world (up from 141st before the 1994 elections).

Yet, when I toured the country a year after the transfer of power, I found thousands of unemployed women, many of them single mothers, picking over rancid garbage for their single daily meal. They lived in crowded urban townships and burgeoning squatter camps little changed from when I saw them in the 1980s, except that they were bigger. Howling dust whipped through endless rows of makeshift tin-and-cardboard shanties, and open sewage spills across the rutted dirt roads. The ramshackle settlements had the look of hastily constructed refugee camps, and hundreds of families were pouring into them each day from the economically depressed countryside. Worst of all, the vibrant grassroots women's organisations that sprang up in these communities during the fight against apartheid were defunct, and there was little sign of their imminent renewal. The very success of the liberation movement in gaining political power had had the effect of weakening it as a social movement and preoccupying it with other forms of struggle. For most women, the struggle for liberation had barely begun. It was also unclear how and by whom the struggle would now be waged.

Under South African law and according to the Zulu code (still in force in KwaZulu/Natal) married women had the legal status of minors and were under the authority of their husbands. Women comprised 36 per cent of the national workforce, but most were stuck on the bottom rungs of the economy. Women made up 96 per cent of the domestic workers who were paid an average of less than $150 per month, and many more functioned in the country's informal sector, falling outside most statistical analyses. Rural women were the worst off and least represented by political organisations. As a direct result of apartheid, among whose most devastating effects was the systematic destruction of African families, 70 per cent of South African women lived in rural areas where they headed half the households (which is to say, men were absent). In 1994 only 53 per cent of rural people had access to a safe water supply in a country economically ranked in the middle range of nations, just behind Europe and ahead of all of sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to this, every 83 seconds a woman was raped, domestic violence was chronic, and women in most areas could not own or inherit property (Endnote 5).
During the 1980s, several strong and highly politicised women's organisations arose to address women's socio-economic needs, while at the same time mobilising them to support the liberation struggle. Among the most effective were the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW), the Federation of Transvaal Women, and two rival women's groups in the Western Cape – an area long marked by sectarian political struggles. The leaders of these and other legal women's groups were linked with underground members of the ANC and the SACP, but the organisations had a considerable degree of autonomy in their day-to-day activities, and they developed highly participatory methods of work. Their diverse undertakings ranged from literacy training, community choirs and theatre groups to backyard vegetable gardens, candle-making and other income-generating projects. They also ran workshops on domestic and communal violence, developed rape crisis networks and held educational seminars on racism. These activities were planned and developed at rambunctious community meetings where women discussed their needs and problems and were encouraged to decide among themselves what to do. As a result, there was little uniformity in programme from one village or neighbourhood to another. That complicated the work of the facilitating organisation but it gave the projects a dynamism that powered a steady growth in the numbers of women members, many of whom were not affiliated with the underground (Endnote 6).

The South African Women's Movement in Crisis

One of the tragedies of the post-apartheid era is that these extraordinary achievements so quickly dissipated with the ascension of the ANC to power. How this happened, and what to do about it, remains a subject of debate among South African women. By common consent, the independent women's organisations folded themselves into the ANC-sponsored Women's League when the party was unbanned in 1990, perceiving themselves as stand-ins for what one political commentator has called the 'A team' of the liberation movement (Endnote 7). The NOW, the strongest and most highly developed of the women's organisations, dissolved itself in September shortly before the official launch of the long-exiled Women's League within South Africa. 'We thought we were the internal wing of the ANC and would just collapse into it', one former NOW leader told me later. 'This was naive, but we thought we would be betraying the ANC if we stayed independent' (Endnote 8). Soon after this, the League dropped many of the innovative self-help programmes developed by NOW and the other women's organisations in favour of narrowly drawn political tasks, starting with support for ANC negotiations with the white regime, then mobilisation for the 1994 national elections, and later preparations for local elections.

'With hindsight, this was a mistake because those organisations had built up a particular tradition of organising, a very strong working class perspective, and a real community involvement, and this wasn't transferred to the Women's League', said Jenny Schreiner, an SACP organiser who remained inside South Africa throughout the anti-apartheid struggle and who was active in the United Women's Organisation in the Western Cape. Schreiner was one of four women and 26 men elected to the party central committee in 1991, after her release from prison. She won a seat in Parliament in the 1994 elections on the ANC ticket. 'The demands of the negotiating period focused the leadership on the negotiating process and the lobbying and the policy formation. We weren't sharp enough to realise that you need to divide your forces and have a contingent of people to concentrate on that work, which was fundamentally important, and another contingent of people focusing on organising' (Endnote 9).
At the party's eighth congress in December 1991 - the first open congress in three decades - there was a debate over whether to establish a women's section, but the decision was taken instead to set up a gender department within the party that would monitor its political education and its policies and programmes to ensure that gender issues were integrated into all the party's work. This left the ANC Women's League to function as the sole Alliance vehicle to mobilise women as women. 'Our commitment was to build the Women's League', said Schreiner. This debate was repeated, with the same outcome, at the party's second post-apartheid congress in April 1995. 'The issue was one of not wanting to confront the League', said Nosizwe Mdlala, a veteran of NOW, an influential woman in the SACP and, after the 1994 elections, an ANC member of Parliament (Endnote 10).

Thenjiwe Mthintso, also an SACP leader and an ANC member of Parliament, as well as a member of the ANC's National Executive Council, spent much of the apartheid era outside the country. She accepted the decision to fold the apartheid-era women's organisations into the League as the correct one at the time, but she argues that the transition could have been better managed:

When we came into the country, in one way we demobilised these women who had been active in their own right because we had this focus, a serious focus, on rebuilding the ANC, a proud ANC, a strong ANC. But some women were not prepared to go into the ANC. They were prepared to fight on issue-oriented matters, like rape, but they were not about building the ANC. The second thing was that during the days of mass activism, there was always something to do in the streets, so that even your less intellectual women had a role to play. Once you had the ANC Women's League, there was a lot of theorising, and women found that they could not find a role to play, except mobilising for the ANC. When the negotiations started, there was a focus on them, and women got lost because they were not part of the process. The ANC Women's League had to find itself a role, and it identified it as mobilising for the ANC, but it lost out on organising women around issues that were affecting women. It lost those women who were doing that part of the work, the women who were keen on issues affecting women-violence against women, family violence, rape, and so on. It was pre-occupied with the 'political' issues, failing to recognise that rape is a political issue, violence is a political issue, family violence is a political issue (Endnote 11).

'Some people were feeling that the ANC Women's League was an organisation from outside the country that was trying to undermine what was going on before, and many women leaders backed off', said Thandi Sigodi, a party activist who remained inside South Africa.

The perception among women from exile was that those structures didn't have any particular direction, which was true. We didn't have a clear line that we were towing. For instance, if we had police harassing a particular community, we'd all mobilise ourselves around that issue, and you'd find women across political lines. It was just violence against the community, so everybody worked around that issue-women from churches, women from business, women from trade unions. This movement was more unifying than what emerged when the ANC came into the picture and party divisions became more strong (Endnote 12).

The sidelining of all women in the negotiating process was a key factor in motivating women to organise the Women's National Coalition in 1992. Their aim was to draft a charter of women's rights that would be incorporated into the documents and legal structures then being crafted to define post-apartheid South Africa (Endnote 13). At its height the WNC brought together dozens of women's organisations from nearly all the country's political parties, as well as from the trade unions and a wide range of
NGOs and voluntary associations, in a dynamic and highly participatory process. It produced a document, adopted at a conference in February 1994, that had a far-reaching impact on the constitution and on party programmes and, in the case of the ANC, the composition and structure of the slate of candidates for the national elections in April. But once the charter was completed, turf battles nearly destroyed the coalition, according to Sigodi, who was elected its president in July 1995: ‘The ANC Women’s League wanted to shut it down after the charter because they were suspicious that other parties would use it to gain access to rural constituencies in the elections’. When it could not control the coalition, the League dropped out. Without it, and without a clear mandate, or the financing to maintain its national network, provided earlier by foreign donors, the WNC floundered. With its effective demise and with the Women’s League subordinated to the political imperatives of the ANC, its leadership decimated by political infighting (11 of the 25 members of the League’s National Executive Committee resigned in 1995 to protest Winnie Madikisela-Mandela’s alleged misuse of resources and her despotic leadership style), the South African women’s movement lay in tatters.

Engendering the Political Movement

The post-apartheid decline of the South African women’s movement was all the more ironic because it coincided with a decision by the SACP to elevate the fight against gender oppression to a strategic objective, side-by-side with class struggle, for the first time in its history. A strategy paper adopted at the April 1995 congress asserted that ‘there can be no consolidation of democracy, still less an effective advance to socialism, unless we also, simultaneously, overcome patriarchy and actively transform gender relations’. It remained to be seen how this commitment would be implemented at ground level, but the efforts within the party to give it this importance provided a unique insight into the challenges that women faced in re-orienting a national political movement to grasp gender as more than an add-on to its other programmes. Jenny Schreiner described her experiences with gender issues in party leadership to me in Cape Town, where she served in Parliament:

I go in there terrified, out of my wits. I’m now with all the heavies, and I go in there thinking: well, I can sit quietly for three years and learn. It’s about all I think I can achieve on the Central Committee.

What surprises me is the extent to which we produce discussion documents which are gender-silent. And these are being produced by the party boffins! Yet they are silent on gender. And these are people who are extremely well-advanced theoretically—very developed intellectually. So we start staying, ‘Pssst! You left out women’.

Gradually, as your hand goes up, people know that you’re going to say, ‘Women!’ So then you say to yourself: I’m not going to say it. But if you don’t say it, it doesn’t get said, so you start trying to ensure that you’ve spoken about the State first, and you tag on gender at the end of a sentence.

One goes through those difficulties of becoming branded as: ‘Hey, women! Hey, women!’ And then saying: No, I’m not going to speak about women. I’m going to try to speak about other things. You develop the concept that people are going to listen to you, and then they may listen to what you have to say about women, as well.

We got to a stage where the people who were doing the paper-presenting—who, needless to say, were men—would include something about women, but it would be a sub-heading for
women, a paragraph for women. It was not gender being integrated into the analysis. We then got to the stage, from working in the Gender Department [of the party] and feeling a bit more secure in C.C. meetings, of producing a gender critique of any paper that was being presented.

In the discussion, we tried to start from page one and say: ‘In your opening analysis of the South African situation you’ve spoken about capital, and you’ve spoken about racism-class and race are there, capitalism and racism are there—gender relations aren’t there, patriarchy is not there. Anybody would think that, (a), women didn’t exist, and, (b), there was no patriarchy in this country. And the interconnection between the three, the extent to which the classes you’re talking about have gender tensions within them, the racial groups you’re talking about have gender tensions within them, don’t feature.

We’d go systematically through the paper, draw out the implications of excluding gender, and get to the end, saying: ‘Therefore, the concluding things you’re saying about the party are flawed because ... ’ And then we’d try to unpack a strategy that is gender-sensitive, that includes gender transformation and women as part of party leadership.

When we got to that stage, we got responses from the male comrades who had been writing the papers, saying: ‘Shit! I now begin to understand what you’re talking about! I now begin to understand why you’re saying we should include gender’. Prior to that, they just included ‘race, class and gender’ in whatever they wrote. So long as you say that somewhere, put it in somewhere, that’s it, it’s all right.

And then you sit back and look at Jeremy Cronin, Blade Nsimande, Raymond Suttner, Charles Nqakula [who make up the party’s top leadership], and you think, how come they didn’t understand the importance of what we’ve been saying for two and a half years? And you realise that there’s a whole marxist-feminist, socialist-feminist debate that takes place in gender journals. It gets circulated among gender activists, but the material that we use for our training and political education within party ranks is gender-silent. We haven’t managed to take the marxist-feminist, socialist-feminist debates out of the Gender Department and put them squarely on the [party] agenda.

It’s taken us a very long time, but we’re now at a point where we can actually say to the drafting committee for the [9th Party] congress coming up in April: ‘Ensure that those papers are gender-sensitive’. Then a paper gets sent to you, and you say: ‘Please critique this on a gender basis’. And you send it back again, and the person actually sits down and does that work. You end up with a paper that’s discussing the role of the party that from the beginning of the analysis of the present situation right through to what we should be doing is raising the issues of gender, patriarchy, women’s emancipation (Endnote 14).

The opposite was true within the ANC, where gender issues tended to be ghettoised in the Women’s League, which lacked either an analysis of patriarchy and its relationship to national and class issues or a clear and compelling programme for tackling gender inequality in the society as a whole. In lieu of this, it focused on service provision at the community level and affirmative action for individual women, apart from its efforts to build the ANC. ‘Part of the problem of the ANC Women’s League is the lack of understanding of gender as a social construct’, said Mthintso, who accused League leaders of using the organisation to advance their own careers. ‘If you looked at the people who were crying for so many women for certain positions, they knew that if you’ve got to increase the number of women, they would not be left out. It was an affirmative action that did not empower women on the ground, but selected the ones who were already up there’.
While women activists in COSATU had a more developed analysis of gender as a social relationship, they, too, tended to be ghettoised, whether within women's departments or in mixed-sex ‘gender departments’ by male leaders who paid little attention to the issue outside of supporting limited contract reforms targeted at employers. ‘One of the critical issues is having women in particular positions in the unions if you’re going to make progress’, said Chris Bonner, the National Education Coordinator for the Chemical Workers Industrial Union, where women made up less than 15 per cent of the membership and found themselves effectively shut out of the leadership. ‘You have to have somebody to drive it, someone with authority. To work on gender, you need a core of women committed to it. Then you need men to support you, and you have to be persistent’ (Endnote 15). Since women were in a minority in each CWIU workplace, they rarely were elected to be shop stewards, who formed the pool from which leaders were elected. Even in SACCAWU, where women made up some 75 per cent of the 120,000 members, few made it into positions of leadership. ‘All our structures are male-dominated’, said Patricia Apollis, SACCAWU’s Gender and Women’s Coordinator since 1993. ‘There’s something wrong, something that prevents women from coming into the leadership. There’s a wall’ (Endnote 16).

Reconstructing a grassroots women’s movement in South Africa provides a difficult challenge, since any attempt to start a new national organisation – or to restart any of the old ones – is certain to be seen as a provocation by the ANC Women’s League. A plan to convene a reunion of NOW activists in June 1995, billed as a ‘NOW Get Together’ and open to the public, had to be cancelled after the Women’s League accused organisers of trying to reorganise and take over the post-Beijing process (Endnote 17). However, without a grassroots movement, it will be impossible to translate the impressive gains for women at the legal level into a living reality in the communities, especially in rural areas where a major struggle with the socially conservative ‘traditional’ leaders is under way. This is made all the more complicated by that fact that some chiefs who were formally allied with the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle can not easily be dismissed afterward, while others who opposed the ANC (or were anxious about the ANC’s postwar position on their role) are being recruited by the right-wing Zulu nationalist Chief Gatsha Buthelesi. Thus, tampering with the power of the chiefs threatens to open a hornet’s nest of political problems, just as social and political reforms in Eritrea feed the Islamist opposition.

Meanwhile, on a more mundane note, a problem the liberation movement had as a whole was far too many meetings. This arose in part from the overlap in focus and function among the various ANC allied social and political organisations, but it also came out of a political culture of mass involvement developed during the anti-apartheid struggle that was difficult to sustain. As one activist put it, ‘We equate meetings with democracy’. It was not uncommon to find the most engaged organisers attending two and three meetings each day, including plant-based shop steward meetings, COSATU meetings, ANC branch meetings, SACP branch meetings, civic meetings, executive committee meetings and others, often discussing the same issues hour after hour, simply switching hats to do so. This held dangerous potential for fostering exclusivity in the political leadership, especially as it affected women, who remained saddled with the main responsibility for home and family as with the former women fighters in Eritrea, they were working a ‘double shift’, often without the benefit of a supportive male partner. Certainly it has been a factor in obstructing the rise of women to leadership positions in COSATU: most couldn’t afford the time it took to function as shop stewards, the first rung up the ladder.
If the formal commitment to women’s emancipation was to have substance it was necessary to address this issue of competing demands on women’s time. One woman, for instance, on the SACP central committee, was pointedly discouraged from running for re-election in 1995 because she was forced to miss many CC meetings due to other commitments, even though in each instance her reasons were deemed acceptable. Her experience was not untypical. An entire branch of the ANC Women’s League in Johannesburg ended the year before because its members were being pulled in too many directions by competing organisational demands (Endnote 18).

Almost all of us live double standards, said Mthintso. When it comes to relations in the house, you’ll find that there’s no equality. My last partner was a very good theoretician and a communist to the core. He lived and breathed his marxism but when we got home from a central committee meeting, he rushed for the TV and the paper, and I rushed for the kitchen. I led this double standard for a long time. It’s a small thing, but it perpetuates the problem. My current partner, John Gonomo, says to me, ‘Don’t cook if you don’t want to, but I can’t learn to cook at 49. I’m the president of COSATU and there’s so much on my shoulders, please don’t ask me to cook.’ He doesn’t see a contradiction between standing up at a meeting and saying ‘Equality!’ and then coming home and saying, ‘I’m not going to cook, let’s go and buy food from outside,’ when he knows we can’t afford that.

Despite this trend, there were notable exceptions to the trend away from grassroots mobilising that held promise for the future. One of these was the Self-Employed Women’s Union. That was started in the Durban area by longtime ANC activist Pat Horn but it was not sponsored by the liberation organisation. Another, the Rural Women’s Movement, emerged from a loose network of village-based women’s groups doing income-generating and other projects in the late 1980s. It was launched as an organisation only in 1990, just as other regional women’s organisations were folding into the ANCWL. Led by MamLydia Kompe, a charismatic rural woman and former trade unionist, the RWM was initially sponsored by the Transvaal Rural Action Committee, an NGO backed by the South African Council of Churches. Unlike its urban counterparts, the RWM lacked direct ANC guidance, though many of its members were ANC sympathisers. However, according to its post-apartheid leaders (Lydia Kompe was elected to a seat on the Parliament in 1994, after which she spent most of her time in Cape Town), the organisation experienced considerable hostility from the Women’s League. It treated the RWM like unwanted competition, even as the women’s section of the white-dominated Nationalist Party sought (unsuccessfully) to woo it in their direction (Endnote 19). Despite this, by 1996, with more than 50 local women’s groups active in the north-central region of the country (now known as Guateng), the RWM was prepared to detach itself from TRAC and explored the possibility of going national. However, its strength in the area of project development was undercut by its lack of a theoretical analysis or a plan of action, reflecting its NGO roots.

For a popular women’s movement to re-emerge, the most likely scenario would be for organisations like these to develop around specific community issues, such as housing, employment, health care, education, fresh water or sanitation, as well as concerns over domestic violence and rape. These efforts might intersect with feminist initiatives aimed at structural change at specific points, in much the same way that the strong grassroots women’s movement developed in Brazil in the 1980s around ‘practical gender interests’ (Moser, 1993; Alvarez, 1990). The issue-based groups could launch campaigns and alliances around common objectives. These might build coalitions made up entirely of groups with a grassroots constituency and leaving out
the political parties and the women’s groups they sponsor, (though including party women as individuals) as in the case of the National Land Commission that formed to influence government policy on land reform. For this to work to the benefit of the political movement, however, the ANC Women’s League would have to loosen the reins on its chapters and open itself to co-operation and collaboration with groups not under its thrall.

Meanwhile, the proliferation of foreign-funded, single-issue NGOs exerts pressure in the opposite direction, toward the compartmentalisation of particular needs and problems and away from a movement-building approach to social change. With the state moving far slower than anticipated on reconstruction and development projects at the community level, and with impatience developing there over the pace of change, the future of the political movement will rest in part over how it adapts to these challenges. If the ANC Women’s League continues to fail to respond effectively here, it will leave a vacuum which other organisations will surely fill and in the process, for good or ill, define the character and direction of a re-emergent women’s movement.

**Sustained Change Needs Pressure From Below**

The experience of women in Eritrea and South Africa is dramatically different. Yet there are common threads. In both, the political parties have clear positions on gender relations, and the state is taking the lead in law and policy, while grassroots struggles are largely left to weakened women’s organisations that are not disposed toward public advocacy outside party frameworks. The Eritrean women’s union, which is over-centralised, over-extended and still too much under the thumb of the ruling party, nonetheless provides a powerful base with its 200,000 members for the difficult confrontations women are waging at the local level with ‘traditional’ power, and it also functions as an effective lobby with government and within the party. So, too, does the ANC Women’s League, which retains the respect if not the active participation of many women for its role in the anti-apartheid struggle, though this is bound to fade if the League cannot produce results. In South Africa, where the power of the chiefs has not yet been dealt with, women’s main strength lies not with a mass organisation but inside the government, which, like the parties that control it, has a Gender Commission at nearly every administrative level, and within the two interlocking national political parties—the ANC and the SACP. A key test for South African women lies with whether these parties are able (and willing) to challenge the power of the chiefs and tackle ‘traditions’ that continue to hold women in virtual bondage, when such a move could play into the hands of their political opposition.

In both Eritrea and South Africa, women made major gains inside their liberation movements, but South African women have moved further to establish their own independent voices within their political organisations since then, albeit at the expense of the popular movement. There is an informal women’s caucus within the ANC that includes many women not also in the SACP. The SACP, for its part, has no formal caucuses and no mass organisation of women distinct from the ANC Women’s League, but it does have (and tacitly supports) considerable informal networking among activist women in the leadership and substantial public debate over these issues. In Eritrea, the PFDJ, like the EPLF before it, does not permit organised caucuses or encourage public criticism of its policies. And there is no counterpart to the core of women in the SACP who have risen to the top leadership and now, as a group, directly influence the way the men in the leadership think about gender. Though a
number of women have influence over the course of events in Eritrea - at the end of 1997, there were three women in the PFDJ's 19-member Executive Council including NUEW head Askalu Menkarios, there were 21 women in the National Assembly, the Attorney General was a woman, and the NUEW served a watchdog function similar in some respects to South Africa's various Gender Commissions - the over-arching changes there are not woman-led. Eritrean women have access to the top and they influence decisions made there, but they lack the organised representation in the inner circles that women in the SACP have. In both cases, however, women lack the external base of a genuinely autonomous and activist women's movement to push the state (or their own parties) from the outside.

While nothing in the present situation suggests any wavering on gender issues in either country, the weakness of women at the popular level means that there is little pressure-and limited capacity-to implement the far-reaching policy decisions in the society at large after they are taken at the centre. Nor is there ultimately any stability for women in this, no guarantee that a sudden crisis will not result in the ongoing and far-from-complete struggle for gender equity being put on hold, even if not actually set back in the name of competing national priorities.

Nevertheless, what these countries have in common, though they may differ on everything from strategies and tactics to forms of organisation, are dynamic processes of change that are drawing more and more women into direct participation in the economic and political life of their societies. As these countries move further into the democratic transition and a second generation of women leaders emerges at the community level to tackle the massive social and economic problems there, a better balance between activism within the state and in the community may be restored. The danger is that current political leaders will rely over much upon quantitative changes in the society, increasing rates of female literacy, access of women to jobs and so on, to translate automatically or easily into the evolutionary dismantling of unequal gender relations, a qualitative outcome that experience elsewhere does not support. Such developments may set the stage for social change, but in the end organised and sustained pressure is needed to consolidate and defend it, as the post-war experience of women in both societies already demonstrates.

Meanwhile, with the continuing mobilisation of women into more active public roles, driven in part by the openings mandated in the political sphere by the liberation movements, come new demands on the parties. These are not only for programmatic change but for organisational change, not only for more women in positions of leadership, but for different ways of training and selecting leaders and for making decisions. In this respect, women are emerging as a force for increased democracy within their political movements, as well as in their societies. The questions women are raising about their own rights and socially constructed identities and roles inevitably have wider implications for the prospects for social change. Whether these women are outside, inside or working alongside political parties, they will have a growing impact on the political arena. They will propel the national discourse and the party agendas in a feminist direction, while at the same time contesting the relationship between what are often narrowly defined as ‘political’ issues and those typed as ‘social’.

Predictably, this emergent women's power and influence meets resistance. The most common refrain from those who oppose gender transformation used to be: 'We can't do it now because this would weaken the national movement'. What one hears now, in Eritrea and South Africa as elsewhere, is that the particular culture in question is
uniquely resistant to changes in gender relations and, for that reason, the political movement must go slow on women's issues. There is some truth to this, insofar as it testifies to how deeply entrenched male domination is, but it is hardly unique to any one culture, as women are finding out quickly through increased international networking.

It is precisely these ubiquitous cultural hurdles that make independent political organising both vital and viable for women across the third world. As even the Eritreans and South Africans are seeing, a government or a party that is still overwhelmingly male at top levels cannot exercise sustained leadership on gender transformation without organised women interpreting the reality in which they live, articulating strategies for change, and, at key junctures, pushing for action as well as understanding. Without strong popular organisations of women, all the principled positions and official policies in the world, however well-conceived, are not enough to guarantee follow through on the ground in patriarchal societies rooted in gender inequality. These national political movements, still led by men, are struggling with varying degrees of openness and creativity to cope with the increased strength and presence of women. The future of the democracy project with which each is now engaged is likely to turn on how they respond, not only to this as a challenge, but to the opportunity it offers to bring in fresh vigour, vision and leadership.

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Endnotes

1. By custom, most Eritreans use their first name as a formal self-designation, as no surname is inherited. Their second name is their father's first name, the third name their grandfather's first name, and so on.

2. These statistics were provided by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice in August 1996.


4. These points, together with the issues raised at the 1994 NUEW workshops referred to below, were described in an NUEW report, excerpted in Eritrea Profile, 20 August 1994.

5. The information in this section is drawn mainly from a statistical summary compiled by the Women's National Coalition in 1994 and from an unpublished paper by Lydia Kompe and Janet Small, 'Demanding a Place Under the Kgotla Tree: Rural Women's Access to Land and Power', provided to the author in January 1996 by the Transvaal Rural Action Committee.

6. Interview with former NOW leaders in Durban on 21 February 1995.

7. The decision to fold the women's organisations into the Women's League was taken by leaders of these organisations at a conference with ANC representatives convened in Amsterdam in 1989 and dubbed Malibongo, shortly before the official unbanning.

8. Interview with the author, Durban, 21 February 1995.

9. Interview with the author, Cape Town, 10 March 1995.

10. Interview with the author, Cape Town, 21 January 1996.

11. Interview with the author, Cape Town, 17 January 1996.
12. Interview with the author, Johannesburg, 15 January 1996.


15. Interview with the author, Johannesburg, 17 January 1996.


17. Author's interview with a former NOW organiser, February 1996.

18. This account was provided to me that year by Shamim Meer, one of the branch's organisers and a founder and former editor of *Speak* magazine, which also shut down then.

19. Author's interview with RWM leaders in Johannesburg, 17 January 1996.

**Bibliography**


Observations on Some Theories of Current Agrarian Change

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This article deals with the main theoretical approaches to the agrarian question in Globalising Food: Agrarian Questions and Global Restructuring edited by D Goodman and M J Watts. I argue that the approach proposed by the Actor-Network Theory (ANT), although offering valuable insights, is problematic. The tradition of (agrarian) political economy, however, is still a rich source that can accommodate the concerns of ANT in particular, and postmodernism in general, as is the case with several articles in this volume. Class, in this effort, should remain a category of central importance. I conclude by noting the relevance and the absence from this volume of household level analysis as well as an analysis of food security.


Introduction

The 'agrarian question' occupied a central position on the research agenda of the social sciences over a period of well over a decade beginning with the late 1960s. The 'question', as it was perceived to be then, was the relation of the peasantry to capital. A wealth of literature flourished from a debate, which, inter alia, was most crucially about whether mechanisms within peasant households ensured the latter's survival in face of encroaching capital, or whether the polarization of the peasantry into classes was inevitable. The debate has been rich not only in terms of its theoretical and empirical depth but also in its scope, covering analyses of historical and contemporary cases ranging from the peripheral political economies to those of advanced capitalist social formations. Among the most significant reasons behind the concern over the 'agrarian question' was the crucial and unforeseen (by orthodox marxism) role played by the peasant masses in the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions and the widespread presence of peasant agitations in the third world.

In the course of the 1980s, the agrarian question lost its central position in the academic agenda. I believe that one of the most important determinants of this 'marginalization' was the global resurgence of the neo-liberal agenda. The latter affected drastic changes in the political economic contexts of agrarian structures via, for instance, the implementation of structural adjustment programmes. This, of course, by itself transformed the conditions of existence and the definition of any agrarian question. But an equally important and, perhaps, more sinister consequence of neo-liberalism has been on the intellectual plane. Heterodox analyses, especially those of marxist persuasion, once again faced pressure, institutionally as well as existentially, particularly in the aftermath of the collapse of the existing socialisms. In
this sense, the retreat from the ‘agrarian question’ and that of heterodox analyses took place simultaneously.

In this era of marginalization, the ‘food question’ has been one of the more active areas of research within political economy (Friedmann, 1982, 1989, 1993; McMichael, 1995; Bernstein et al. 1990). One of the main reasons for this concern has been the contradictory consequences of global restructuring in the 1980s. A number of countries in the third world have experienced declining food security as a result of structural adjustment policies promoting export production. This decline has not been experienced merely at the national level but also differentially among social strata, as neoliberal policies skewed the distribution of income in different parts of the world. If the food question remained on the agenda of agrarian studies, that was in part due to its political potency of enhancing as well as undermining the legitimacy of state power. Perhaps, it is precisely this political potential of the food question that renders it fertile ground for the rejuvenation of the agrarian question. And, it is precisely such political import that renders food an important focus of analysis that links global economic, political and cultural processes with local ones.

*Globalising Food: Agrarian Questions and Global Restructuring,* edited by David Goodman and Michael J. Watts, perhaps heralds a change of tide in agrarian studies that attempts to redefine (the) agrarian question(s) in the contemporary global context. The book comprises articles and commentaries on the transformations of agrarian political economies across countries in the post-World War II era. The range of conceptual issues covered is very broad; so is that of the theoretical perspectives deployed. It is thus very difficult to give a brief description of what this collection is about; nevertheless there are unifying themes that permeate the body of work.

It is argued throughout, directly or indirectly, that capitalism, and by extension globalization is a ‘many-headed beast’ which has developed not in any unilinear fashion but, rather, has exhibited multiple, local trajectories. In other words, capitalist transformation is uneven. If the manifestations of globalization have been many, that is in part because globalization comprises economic, political and cultural processes that mutually constitute (shape and impact on) one another. Another unifying theme in the collection is the nature of this mutual constitution. The collection, on the whole, questions orthodox accounts of the determination of subjectivity. Just as the trajectories of globalization have been many, so have been the forms of subjectivity. Some authors argue further that forms of subjectivity are not merely given by one’s position in the economy (the definition of which is broadened) but that forms of subjectivity, in turn, affect the economy as well as other processes. In that sense, globalization is also a politically contested arena. Finally, there is the overarching concern about the political implications of these fundamental theoretical questions, which not only raise the question of state/civil society relations but, deriving from the notion of plurality of subjectivities, touches on the nature and future of coalition building.

Given the diffuse nature of this book, the assessment which follows is necessarily selective and no doubt reflects the priorities of the reviewer. The discussion here focuses more on the theoretical approaches adopted in the volume and is more informed by economics, sociology and cultural studies, rather than by economic geography which figures prominently in the contributions. The following section is a summary of the book and is then followed by two sections comprising my commentary. In the final section I point to some areas of concern which, despite their relevance and importance, have been marginalized in this collection.
‘Globalising Food: Agrarian Questions & Global Restructuring’: A Summary

The book comprises six sections organized around a theme or a set of themes each containing two (exceptionally three) articles followed by a commentary. The first section of the volume is entitled ‘Institutions, embeddedness and agrarian trajectories’. The articles in this section in part explore the dynamics of local agrarian transformation in the process of rural industrialization (Hart and Chari) and early process of modernization (Wilkinson). Hart’s (1997:56-78) analysis focuses on the differential trajectories of ‘dispossession, industrialization and local politics’ in two towns in northwestern KwaZulu, Natal. Chari (1997:79-105) traces the agrarian historical roots over the last quarter century of an industrial boom town in Tamil Nadu State in India. Wilkinson’s (1997:35-55) analysis is a reflection on alternative development strategies in southern Brazil, taking on the arguments about the competitiveness and efficiency of family farms. Hart, critical of both the industrial structuring literature, for being inadequate for understanding agrarian transformations, and of the new institutional economics which abstract from practices of power, and Chari derive their main theoretical inspirations from the tradition of classical agrarian political economy. In both papers, but in particular in Hart’s, there is an explicit attempt to situate politics in the broad context of social transformation. Hart’s analysis reveals that the multiplicity of trajectories taken by industrial decentralization is not explicable merely in terms of patterns of investment but must also simultaneously take into account the nature of political struggles. Chari, on the other hand, traces the historical roots of both farmers’ and labour movements in the Coimbatore district to the particular cultural setting of the area. Here, of greatest significance were the social constructions of caste which, among other things were translated into political movements that were at once mass and class based.

Some of these themes flow into the articles that make up the second section of the book entitled ‘Restructuring, industry and regional dynamics’. Raynold’s (1997:119-132) analysis, in important ways, is reminiscent of Hart’s, revolving around the theme of multiple capitalist trajectories. Her concrete study is the recent restructuring efforts by two multinationals, Dole Food Corporation and Chiquita Brand International in the agro-food sector of the Dominican Republic. She finds that firms deploy a diversity of strategies to sustain profitability in the face of changes brought about by the neoliberal agenda such as GATT and NAFTA – and in the political climate ruling in the aftermath of these changes (for instance, US perceptions of European trade after the country’s entry into the Lomé Convention). A very important aspect of the current wave of restructuring, she argues, is the casualisation of the labour force. This creates a ‘flexibility’ made possible by increasing reliance on the most vulnerable sectors on the population. Page (1997:133-157), too, discovers how agro-industrial structuring, more specifically vertical integration, has followed divergent paths in pork production in the midwestern and southern United States. Both analysts argue the centrality of politics in the process of restructuring. Page, claims that the family-farm based agrarian ideology is a realm of strong resistance that competing firms need to take heed of. Raynold’s analysis, makes the theoretical point that restructuring is a politically contested arena the outcome of which is uncertain – although it is difficult to see a substantiation of this point in the main body of her analysis other than around the axes of state policy. Both analysts criticize the industrial structuring literature, without rejecting it altogether, arguing that the latter has a lot to learn from the agrarian political economy literature.
The third section, entitled 'Globalisation, value and regulation in the commodity system' explores the implications of changing power in global commodity chains. For Marsden (1997:169-191), three concepts, those of quality, regulation and consumption operate crucially in defining the 'distinctiveness of recent agrarian developments'. Based on case studies from Europe, the Caribbean and the Sao Francisco River Valley in Northeastern Brazil, he problematises the notion of the 'marginalization of agriculture' by arguing that the accumulation process in agriculture in general and in food in particular has become more distinct where the post-farm parts of the food networks are becoming more important in the construction of value. He also uncovers the uneven character of the shifting foci of power in food networks. As the spheres of consumption (via considerations of quality, health and safety of food) and retailing (partly by dictating these considerations in the production of foods) play an increasingly important role in the determination of value, the southern producers of food are increasingly becoming disintegrated from their national agrarian systems as a result of catering to these dictates from the North as well as from within the sharpened social polarization in the South. Marsden examines his concerns within the theoretical framework of food networks inspired by Foucault's analysis of 'networks of power'.

Some of his concerns are shared by Boyd and Watts (1997:192-225) in their analysis of the post-World War II US broiler industry although the latter is conceived in a theoretical framework much more in the tradition of agrarian political economy. The genesis of a flexible agro-industrial production complex in the US south, they argue, shows that this so-called flexibility rests more on insecurity and lack of trust than on stability and cooperation between the farms that produce the chickens and the contracting firms. Furthermore such flexibility, although the basis of the tremendous postwar growth of the industry, has not addressed the chronic problem of overproduction. For Boyd and Watts, as for Marsden, the concept of 'quality' is crucial in understanding the transformations of the industry and is as much a matter of the 'political power' of the integrating firms as it is of the capacity to 'design' healthy chicken products. Finally, in these works the spatial implications of the restructuring of capitalism are of significance to understanding the dynamics of the particular agro-food industry in question.

The theoretical differences in this section become more pronounced in the next one entitled 'Discourse and class, networks and accumulation'. Lowe and Ward (1997:256-272), analyze recent developments in the study of farm pollution in Britain, using 'actor-network theory' – developed from the pioneering work of Latour – which is heavily influenced by poststructuralist discourse analysis and which takes a critical stance against what is termed 'ostensive' definitions of society and social change, where everything is explained, it is claimed, by structures. They focus on the historical and discursive conditions of existence of the problem of farm pollution, how it came perceived to be an issue in the first place and how different actors, the farmers and the 'field-level bureaucrats' in this discourse, have different constructions of it. The implications of these differences are significant in that they translate themselves into a 'moral economy' out of which the farmers develop different forms of resistance.

In perhaps one of the most interesting pieces in the volume, Wells (1997:235-255), also investigates different social constructions of restructuring through sharecropping in the contemporary Californian strawberry industry. In contrast to Lowe and Ward, however, she employs class analysis to great effect, to show how the restructuring of
the industry from wage labour to sharecropping (and finally back to wage labour) was, in part, dictated by the nature of class relations. She, too, is inspired by the insights of discourse analysis in understanding the different perceptions of the sharecropping relation by the parties involved but, for her, these differences are rooted in the class positions of the sharecroppers and the growers and, to a degree, in relations of ethnicity. The ramifications of such differential understandings of the same system are important in that they resulted in an important legal battle regarding the status of the sharecroppers (that is, whether they were independent contractors or employees) which led to the eventual demise of the system. In terms of the theoretical framework used, Wells is in the same company as Hart, Chari, Boyd and Watts and, to a degree, Gouveia, but, her explicit reference to class (about the absence of which Winson (1997:324-332) warns us in a commentary) distances her work from these, and all others in this collection.

The theoretical tensions which we have noted between the work of Wells, on the one hand, and Ward and Lowe, on the other, manifest themselves once again in the next section, entitled 'Transnational capital and local responses'. Whatmore and Thorne (1997:287-304) derive their primary theoretical inspiration from the work of Latour (1986, 1993) and Law (1986, 1991, 1994) in their analysis of the Cafédirect consortium, created by the UK fair trade NGOs in collaboration with a coffee-exporting farmer cooperative in Chiclayo in northern Peru. In their analysis, the Cafédirect experience is conceived as an 'alternative mode of ordering of connectivity' where the narratives that are woven are of partnership, cooperation and fairness, seeking to empower the disenfranchised whether human or non-human. The authors take aim at what they call the 'hyperstructuralism' of the orthodox versions of globalization analysis. The latter, they claim, is not only economistic but also nullifies human agency and has a very limited, if any, notion of space. By arguing for an alternative conceptualization of global networks that are at once collective, hybrid, situated and partial they attempt to rethink and widen the theoretical spaces opened up by political economy. Theirs is, along with work such as Ward and Lowe's, an attempt to 'liberate' us at once theoretically and politically from the oppressive dictates of 'structures'. Gouveia (1997:305-323) doubtless does not disagree with this noble aim but, nevertheless, does question the theoretical implications of actor-network analysis. Her analysis of the recent restructuring of the Venezuelan agro-food sector according to the imperatives of neoliberalism points to the theoretical necessity of keeping structures, global and local, as important analytical tools. She believes that the recent objections raised against political economy in actor-network theory in particular (but postmodernism in general) are overstated and are in danger of doing away with any notion of social pattern at all. Such omission, among other things, seriously risks neglect of the political by overstating the power of individuals (actors). She ends her analysis by pointing to the contemporary relevance of 'structuralist' analysis offered by some of the important thinkers of modernity, especially Marx.

In the final section of the volume, called 'Nature, sustainability and the agrarian question' the focus of both articles is the politics of sustainable development. Redclift (1997:333-343) surveys the existing discourses on sustainability and finds them lacking in crucial aspects. He argues that these discourses ignore the question of how societies arrive at sustainability – which also embodies the question of transformation of consciousness about sustainability. As for the matter of how societies arrive at ways of valuing environmental gains and losses, he asserts that the answer mostly given by economists is to establish how much people would be willing to pay for them. For Redclift, this approach, typical of orthodox economic analysis, ignores the
issue of whether or not the valuation criteria reflect real societal preferences. In his search for theoretical foundations for an alternative politics of sustainability, he draws inspiration from the work of Beck, in particular Risk Society (1992). However, although he finds Beck's work breaking new ground through the concept of 'incomplete rationality' of modern industrial society, he finds it inadequate in answering some of the questions it poses in the first place. His analysis ends on an open-ended but optimistic note that, despite their heterogeneity, sustainability movements overlap in their fundamental concern for an end to alienation and for empowerment. The same concerns, he notes, that were at the heart of Marx's writings over a century and a half ago. Buttel (1997:344-365), like Redclift, asks the question of how we can transform existing social movements into (an) effective political force(s) starting with an historical analysis of the international farm crisis. He argues that we are witnessing the increasing exposure of farms and agri-business to 'naked global forces'. His gloomy perception of the future as a continuation of what there is now is tempered solely by his observation that it is only the social movements that can counteract the iron logic of the waves of global restructuring. Drawing up a typology of current sustainability movements, he, too, reveals their diversity. Although such diversity is not undesirable, in and of itself, his optimism is perhaps more tempered than Redclift's; thus he notes how the same diversity of sustainability movements can make effective mobilization difficult – especially as the concerns of these movements are often far removed from the everyday concerns of people.

The summary above indicates, as I mentioned at the outset, that the collection covers a very broad range of issues from a variety of different theoretical perspectives. The following commentary therefore is by necessity selective.

Globalization and the Actor-Network Theory: A Critique

As we approach the end of the century the influence of poststructuralism/postmodernism can be felt in all social sciences, including economics, where the resistance of the orthodoxy has been very strong. The volume edited by Goodman and Watts testifies to this influence. The essays here, almost without exception, challenge what they perceive to be orthodoxies including traditional marxism. They do this, implicitly or explicitly, by criticizing reductionism, decentering totalities and subjectivities. The articles in the collection use or assume non-reductionist views of globalization by bringing in its political, cultural and biological aspects as equally important dimensions for consideration, both theoretically and politically. This decoupling of economy and globalization (or, more broadly capitalism) opens up the theoretical space for imagining multiple trajectories of globalization. Such a critical stand is taken further by some authors than by others through an explicit rejection of any telos in the developmental trajectories of capitalism. Not only are the paths of globalization multiple, they are also indeterminate and that indeterminacy is best understood in terms of the complex manner in which the economic, cultural and political aspects of globalization constitute (rather than interact with) one another. And if there is indeterminacy (and multiplicity) to this constitution, that is, in part, because each and every aspect of society is constantly contested by a plurality of subjects.

Nevertheless, postmodernism covers a very broad range of theoretical positions. What unifies it is more what it is critical of, rather than what it positively stands for. There are theoretical positions within poststructuralism which are united on epistemological grounds but incompatible on political grounds. This volume carries
within it the theoretical tensions that postmodernism embodies and nowhere are they clearer than between the pieces written within the framework of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) – inspired by the work of Bruno Latour and John Law – and those written more within the agrarian political economy tradition. ANT as a distinct approach to power and a rejection of positivist epistemology, is used by Lowe and Ward, Whatmore and Thorne, and by Long in a commentary in this volume. As its use is justified as an alternative approach to the study of agro-food systems and globalization it merits a closer look.

ANT is founded on a crucial distinction between what is termed the ostensive and the performative definitions of society. Latour (1986) draws out a typology of these definitions based on their fundamental principles. Ostensive definitions of society start from the belief that, although in practice it may be difficult, it is possible to discover properties that make up life in society. Social actors are actors in society and their activity is limited or constrained by the larger society. The second point has implications for the production of knowledge at large and for social sciences in particular. In ostensive definitions of society, Latour claims, actors are useful informants, but since they are only part of a society, they never see the ‘whole picture’. Therefore, with the appropriate methodology social scientists can find out about the beliefs, opinions and behaviour of actors. The production of (social) science, then, is the process of putting the pieces together in order to arrive at the ‘whole picture’ (Latour, 1986:272).

In what is termed the performative definitions of society, it is in principle impossible to list of properties that define a society although in practice it may be possible to do so. Actors define, in practice, what society is, the whole of it and its parts, ‘both for themselves and for others.’ There is no necessity about whether an actor knows more or less than others. What is constantly being contested is that ‘whole picture’ defined in practice by the actors. Therefore, social scientists raise the same questions as any other actors, but find different ways of enforcing their own definitions (Ibid., 273). So, according to the performative definitions of society, society is not a given but is an outcome of the actors' constant efforts to define it. What is also distinctive about the performative definition is the levelling of discourses that is characteristic of postmodern thought.

As is clear from Latour's typology, performative definitions of society rest on the postmodern 'levelling of discourses' where it is neither possible, nor necessary, to distinguish between 'better or worse' (or 'superior or inferior') forms of knowledge. Rather than such 'privileging', the comparison of knowledge in performative definitions is made on the basis of differences (and, by extension, of the political implications of such differences). Such rejection of positivist epistemology has implications for research. As Lowe and Ward state, the comforting distinction in ostensive definitions between the social scientist's 'correct' or 'complete' and the actor's (the 'observed') 'mistaken' or 'incomplete' notions give way to finding out how society's different attributes are settled in practice (Ibid., 270).

What inspires the article by Lowe and Ward in their work is more the epistemological stand of ANT. In their field work on the issue of farm pollution they put into practice the anti-positivist epistemology of this theory and thus treat the different agents, the farmers and the 'field-level bureaucrats' as participants who have different, not mistaken or correct, notions of a situation. In fact, what is at stake here is exactly what 'the situation' is according to the different perceptions of the 'actants'. It is precisely this belief in the discursive formation of reality that induces them to discuss 'the
problem' from the point of view of the bureaucrats, as well as that of the farmers. And, the differences of perception, the different knowledges of a situation are acted out in the daily lives of the participants. This is how they explain the moral economy of the farmers, their 'everyday forms of resistance' where the former attempt at rendering real what they believe to be the situation. In short a situation never is, it always is becoming as it is always a process of contestation.

The paper by Whatmore and Thorne develops the analysis of the Cafédirect experience mentioned above around the concept of (global) network. Networks, unlike systems, they claim, rely on people, machines (things) and codes (narratives). They are collective, that is their durability and length are conditioned by the 'capacities and practices' of the actants. They are hybrid; they combine people, other living and inanimate things. They are situated; they inhabit particular 'sites and nodes' and, following from this last characteristic, they are partial, in that they 'embrace' rather than cover surfaces, even when they are global (Goodman and Watts, 1997:301-302). The authors then develop a narrative of the Cafédirect experience through the conceptual entry point of networks.

In both works, the authors use ANT to construct an alternative conceptualization of globalization. The alternative is considered to be a more empowering one in face of what they deem to be the ostensive (orthodox) definitions of globalization. Conceptualizing globalization as networks opens up the space to consider theoretically the coexistence of multiple forms of networks of different 'length and durability.' Within this coexistence, multinationals are but one kind of a multitude of networks that have the capacity for global reach. Such theoretical recognition is a mere beginning to considering alternative forms of political struggle. If the world is not made up of surfaces 'filled-in' with the invading force of capital then, perhaps, we are more (or other) than its mere 'victims'. As Long notes in his commentary on the pieces by Hart and Chari, '[...] there are no given or a priori sets of driving forces' (Ibid., 109) The anatomy of Cafédirect attempts at producing this 'liberating' effect.

Let us remember, however, that this effect is theoretically possible only if one accepts anti-positivist epistemology. As I mentioned earlier, one of the key insights of poststructuralism/postmodernism is the discursive formation of reality, that is to say that what reality is, is in part determined by the particular discourse being used. In fact, the epistemological concerns of the works written within the ANT framework are shared by the majority of authors contributing to this volume. However, despite this agreement on anti-positivist epistemology, many of the other accounts in fact produce rather different conceptualizations of globalization and agro-food systems. This difference has to do, I believe, with the particular conceptual entry points that are used. These entry points, in most essays are those of agrarian political economy to which I will return shortly.

The recognition of the importance of epistemology in the ANT analyses of globalization and agro-food systems is commendable indeed, for theoretical as well as political reasons. Nevertheless, there are questions that need to be raised against this framework. One question is about the notion of network. If there is a multiplicity of networks, the differences of which are given by their durability, then the first question that comes to mind is what the determinants of these are? The Peruvian producers in the Cafédirect network and top executives in Dole Food Corporation are all actants in their respective networks, but surely are so with, among other things, very different powers. If there is a difference in power, would not class be an
important determinant of difference? Gender and ethnicity likewise can effect these differences. It is not only individuals who are actors. Groups, the identity of which can be determined by class, gender and ethnicity, too, can be actors in networks. What needs to be pointed out, contrary to what the ANT argues, is that the categories of political economy are not by necessity ostensive categories. All these categories can be looked at as (in part) discursively constituted categories which, like every concept, are being constantly contested by actors. If this point is not conceded, then what is left of the ANT is a sophisticated variant of empiricism, where social scientists look at a constantly changing reality to find the concepts of relevance. It follows from this that if ANT does not take into account the constitution of actors, then it has to concede to methodological individualism – as is rightly noted by Walker in his commentary (1997:273-284).

Furthermore, just as society is constantly being made by actors, so actors are constantly being made by society. Political economy is still a rich theoretical source for understanding the (changing) nature of this constitution. Some of the theoretical insights of ANT can be accommodated, I believe, by the tradition of political economy and this is precisely the project of some of the other authors such as Wells, Hart, Chari, Boyd and Watts and, to a degree, Marsden.

Political Economy and the Agrarian Question: A Defence

That the paths of capitalist development are many is no longer a novel idea in the realm of political economy. What determines such diversity are, in part, the cultural processes which, broadly defined, are processes of construction of meaning, and political processes. In this respect, by questioning the logic of capital developing in any linear way, and invading all available surfaces, the articles in this volume draw up a picture of capital’s uneven development. Page, in his analysis of hog production in Iowa, points to the different forms of industrialization in different stages of the commodity chain from production on the farm to meat retailing. Raynolds, likewise, notes the different forms of structuring pursued by two international agro-food complexes Dole and Chiquita, in the Caribbean. Hart, in her study of two South African towns, and Wells, in the case of the restructuring of the Californian strawberry industry, trace the historical development of different local trajectories. Their historical analyses, along with Chari’s account of rural industrialization in Tirupur in India, are exemplary in the way in which they synthesize the key concepts of political economy in agrarian studies with the insights of postmodernism.

Hart’s historical analysis of decentralization in two South African towns and their adjacent townships, Ladysmith-Ezakheni and Newcastle-Madadeni, focuses on what she names ‘divergent local trajectories.’ There are many similarities between the two towns in terms of the reasons for their establishment (colonial-military outposts), the economic characteristics of their surrounding areas (African freeholding and white-owned farms) and of their inhabitants (Africans disposessed through waves of evictions in the 1960s and the mid-1980s). Yet, despite such similarities, the histories of dispossession and industrialization have been constituted very differently in these two localities. These differences, for her, display themselves most clearly in patterns of political struggle, ranging from the histories of resistance to dispossession to the contemporary struggles and resistance to the current industrial structuring taking place in both places. Hart argues that a key arena of contestation in these divergent trajectories has been local government and the relation of local bureaucrats and politicians to different branches of capital (Ibid., 68).
Wells, like Hart, relies on the significance of local factors in explaining the different forms of restructuring in strawberry production in California. Sharecropping was adopted by strawberry growers in California in the aftermath of union mobilization during the civil rights movement. With the adoption of the sharecropping system, the capital-labour relation was restructured as the recruitment of labour was now undertaken by sharecroppers, former wage labourers. The cultural perception of sharecropping by the sharecroppers as a step in the ladder leading to independent farming sustained the system. What ultimately lead to the demise of sharecropping in California was the contestation and negotiation of this perception by different actors including the Californian legal system (hence the state) and the growers.

Hart moves her study more along the lines of histories of primitive accumulation, the different trajectories of social differentiation along class (as well as racial) lines in the two South African townships, whereas Wells’s work is a study of the class dynamics of sharecropping in Californian strawberry production. The concepts of (primitive) accumulation, class differentiation and class relations are central in these three analyses. However, they all challenge and extend the framework of agrarian political economy by proposing, in essence, a non-reductionist class analysis. The notion of class is non-reductionist, in the sense that class is not reduced to an economic process, but is conceptualized in terms of the cultural and political conditions that play equally important parts in its constitution. I believe it is exactly this kind of class analysis that, as well as enriching the debate on the agrarian question can also take on the theoretical challenges of the ANT specifically. Here are a few suggestions inspired by a group of theoretical positions based on a particular reading of Marx (Endnote 1).

Class can be defined as the processes of surplus labour appropriation and distribution. These processes are overdetermined by a multitude of cultural, political and other economic processes. Class therefore cannot be reduced to a single process (Resnick and Wolff, 1987). This non-reductionism is connected to another one that postulates that class is one of many processes that constitute society; neither the only one, nor the most important one. One answer to ANT’s fears of ostensive definitions can be found in the (over)determination of class; if we define cultural processes, as processes of meaning attribution, then class is, in part, discursively constituted. To translate this into ANT terminology, class can be defined performatively. It is that contestation, the differential understandings of class by the sharecroppers, the growers and the state that culminates in the famous Real vs. Driscoll Strawberry Associates Inc. We can use the concept of class as our theoretical point of entry into the agrarian question and allow for different perceptions of this process. But these differences still need to be explained and in our search for such explanations, class can still be one of the determinants (Endnote 2).

One other theoretical possibility that emerges from the framework I have outlined very briefly is that of the multitude of class processes on the social landscape. This possibility furthers the challenge to the vision of a capitalist world economy, even if capitalism is conceptualized as a multi-headed beast. If, as in the imagination of ANT analysis, capitalist class processes embrace rather than fill in surfaces, why can we not think of the existence and future of non-capitalist class processes? (Endnote 3). A fertile arena that can reveal such class diversity is, I believe, the notion of ‘flexibility’. For example both Raynolds and Boyd and Watts in their study of the genesis of the ‘just-in-time’ in the post-World War II US broiler industry, notice the emergence of a flexible labour force, a docile, cheap and casual labour force relying on the more vulnerable parts of the population marginalised by gender and/or by ethnicity. Isn’t
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It possible to deconstruct this notion of flexibility that encompasses anything from contract farming to casual daily labour in terms of different class arrangements? Finally, couldn’t the revelation of such diversity be a liberating one against the gloomy visions drawn by the more orthodox versions of globalization?

An essential component of the success of neoliberal discourse has been the consent it has created around the ideological conflation of market experiences with the experience of capitalism. Such consent can be undermined by revealing the diversity of capitalisms as this volume does. Perhaps, we should also take on this challenge by also revealing the multiplicity of class forms, capitalist as well as non-capitalist.

Concluding Remarks

This volume edited by Goodman and Watts covers a wide range of issues covered from a variety of perspectives. It is a very welcome contribution to the literature on the analysis of agro-food structuring where the existing theoretical frameworks are challenged and extended. The theoretical tensions in the book are fruitful for rethinking the agrarian question and studying the contemporary analyses of agrarian dynamics. Although I am critical of the Actor-Network Theory, in particular, as a representative of postmodern thinking, it does offer theoretical challenges to existing analyses, including those within the political economy tradition. Several papers in this volume show us how the tradition of political economy can be enriched by taking on board the insights of postmodernism. One wishes to see more such analysis. It is important to conceptualize, as we do in these works, the multiplicity of agrarian transitions without jeopardizing the crucial analytical category of class.

Almost without exception, the contributions to this volume indicate the relevance and, in fact, the centrality of the nation-state in understanding agrarian questions. Here, I will not challenge the idea that neoliberal restructurings have undermined the political capacity of nation-states. The issue remains that neoliberal experiences have been made possible by a proliferation of state discourses legitimizing such experiences. Recognition of this alone renders the state as an important object of analysis and a very important arena of political contestation, especially in view of the diversity present in the contemporary social movements analyzed by Buttel and Redclift in this collection. This diversity can be enabling as well as undermining. At times the current waves of restructuring have been carried out under repressive state regimes such as in Turkey and Egypt. Under such antidemocratic circumstances the politics of coalition building become all the more important and problematic.

Despite the contribution of this volume to the debate on agrarian questions, I am left with several question upon reading it. The book’s subtitle is ‘Agrarian questions and global restructuring.’ As have been noted, a large part of the volume is dedicated to works written from the agrarian political economy perspective. An important part of the agrarian question, historically, has been the relation of the peasantry to capitalist development. What I find largely missing from this volume is the class analysis of rural households – which is telling, given the overall theoretical commitment of the editors.

There are several reasons as to why this is still a relevant line of analysis. First, in the introduction to the book the editors acknowledge the relevance of Kautsky’s analysis in the context of contemporary globalization and restructuring of agro-food systems. Kautsky’s analysis relied crucially on the survival dynamics of the family farm in face
of encroaching capitalism. This, in turn is also a reminder of the contemporary relevance of Chayanov’s analysis. Second, it is acknowledged by a variety of contributors such as Marsden and the editors themselves that the contemporary restructuring of agro-food systems depend on the differentiation between the economies of the North and the South, as well as social differentiation within the rural landscape and the society at large. The rise of the fresh fruit-vegetable complex in parts of the third world can be explained, in part, by changing middle class tastes. In countries, such as Mexico a significant aspect of this rural transformation has been the increasing marginalization of a very large number of rural producers, such as those producers specializing in traditional food crops of maize and beans. We need to be warned against an exclusive focus of analysis on agro-food industries at the expense of the marginalised rural populations.

I would like to end this review by pointing to another ‘absence’ in this volume. The editors themselves note that although presently the rate of growth of food production outstrips population growth, a crucial characteristic of contemporary agrarian reality is increasing food insecurity. If the nature of restructuring of agro-food systems largely defines the variety of agrarian questions, then the seeming paradox of growing food insecurity deserves more emphasis in a volume such as this than its contributors have given it.

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Endnotes

1. The reference here is to the work of the group around the journal Rethinking Marxism which worked on combining marxist class analysis with an anti-positivist epistemology.

2. Marsden’s analysis, too, is an example of discursive constitution of another category of political economy. His work relies heavily on the contestation of the category of ‘value’ by different localities and how this contestation plays itself out in the production of the commodity in food networks.

3. For a critique of the globalization discourses along these lines see Kayatekin and Ruccio (1998) and Gibson-Graham (1996).

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Misunderstanding African Politics: Corruption & the Governance Agenda

Corruption has become an African epidemic. It is impossible to overstate the poisoning of human relations and the paralysing of initiative that the corruption on the African scale brings.

- Matthew Parris, *The Times*, 8 August 1997

And they beat each other’s heads all bloody
Scuffling over booty,
Call the other fellows greedy wretches,
They themselves but do their duty.

- Bertolt Brecht, *The Song of the Waterwheel*

The plundered
Point to you with their fingers, but
The plunderer praises the system ...

- Bertolt Brecht, *Germany*

Political corruption – the misuse of public office or public responsibility for private (personal or sectional) gain – has been an important theme of the neo-liberal policies of adjustment, conditionality and democratization in Africa. Having identified the state as ‘the problem’, and liberalization and democratization as ‘the solution’ to that problem, it was inevitable that efforts to eradicate and control the widespread corruption characterising post-colonial politics would be given a high priority by ‘the donors’. From the outset, proponents of structural reform linked political corruption to authoritarianism as an explanation of developmental failure, thereby identifying the arguments for democratization and ‘good governance’ with those for liberalization. This paper explores the way in which corruption has been understood in this ‘governance’ agenda and the efforts that have been made to control it by improving institutional performance and policing – greater transparency and accountability, more effective oversight and punishment – and by building a political culture intolerant of corruption. In general, however, legal and administrative reform has produced disappointing results and corruption has flourished and even increased. Failure has compounded cynicism and weakened faith in democratic change. Such failures suggest: firstly, that the anti-corruption strategies pursued by international donors and imposed on African debtors are inadequate because of weaknesses in their conception of the state; secondly, that the
reforms introduced through liberalization (a weakening of the state, deregulation and privatization) create new conditions in which corruption can flourish; and, thirdly, that fundamental features of African politics will need to change before such anti-corruption measures can hope to succeed.

Corruption has become an increasingly important issue for most countries in the aftermath of the cold war. Once complacently viewed in the West as ‘being virtually the preserve of authoritarian or “developing” nations’, the perception has grown, in the last decade, ‘that the phenomenon has spread to new areas: no state any longer seems safe, not even the most mature democracy’ (Heywood, 1997:1,2). The evidence for this changing perspective has been accumulating fast. Even in Italy, where corruption has been a normal feature of all levels of the state, there was still shock at revelations that a Masonic order (P2) – including many leading political, administrative, military, judicial, business and media leaders – ran a ‘secret’ or ‘parallel’ state involved in widespread corruption, criminal activities and violence (Chubb and Vannicelli, 1988). The scandals also touched the Vatican and linked the political class directly to organised crime. One former prime minister was convicted in absentia of serious corruption offences, another was accused of being a longtime servant of the Mafia. Scandals pointing to high-level corruption in Greece, Spain, France (where the most senior judge is presently under investigation), Germany, Austria and Belgium dominated the headlines in the nineties. In the United States, the Clinton administration has been besieged by a range of accusations of sexual and financial impropriety. In Britain, a succession of scandals – involving gerrymandering, MPs taking money in return for asking parliamentary questions, abuses of office, bribery, and the usual crop of sex frolics – required the appointment of a commission to redefine standards of public morality (Doig, 1996a & 1996b; Oliver, 1997; Ridley & Doig, 1997). Altogether more sinister events, involving arms sales to Iraq and the unlawful diversion of budgeted aid to provide sweeteners for arms sales to Malaysia (the so-called Pergau Dam affair) and Indonesia were reviewed by the Scott inquiry which (despite an 1800 page report calculated to obscure rather than reveal) nevertheless found clear evidence of government misconduct (Norton-Taylor et al., 1996). The issue of secret financial contributions to political parties remains to be tackled.

In Asia, corruption has hardly been out of the headlines either. In India, the Jain hawala scandal in 1995 and 1996 implicated a number of politicians of involvement in systematic receipt and extortion of funds from local and foreign business, of accepting bribes in return for tailoring policies to the needs of contributors and of other major abuses of electoral and criminal laws. The scandal touched politicians in opposition as well as in government and ultimately claimed the then Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao. In the wake of the hawala scandal, evidence emerged of other cases of serious looting of public resources – most notably in Bihar, where the state administration purchased expensive stock-feeds for extremely hungry animals which apparently required up to forty years of normal feed each month – despite the fact that many of them did not actually exist. In South Korea, recent democratic reforms have resulted in the prosecution of former senior government officials, including two former presidents, on charges of having received bribes totalling hundreds of millions of dollars while in office. And in China, White (1996: 41) observes that by late 1993

one of the main officials in charge of countering corruption ... admitted that corruption 'is now worse than at any other period since New China was founded in 1949. It has spread into the Party, government administration and every part of society, including politics, economy, ideology and culture'. US and European business people interviewed in Hong
Kong in 1995 ranked China's 'business corruption performance' as Number 1 in Asia along with India and Indonesia (with Japan and Singapore ranking the lowest).

The seal of relative honesty bestowed on Japan will no doubt be a welcome surprise to a citizenry buffeted by a chain of high-level corruption scandals – Lockheed and Recruit among them – stretching back to the seventies. Similar instances could be cited for Latin America (Little, 1996; Little & Posada-Carbo, 1996). In Russia, the wholesale plunder of the carcass of the old Soviet economy and state has become a thing of wonder. The result, everywhere, has been an increase in public distrust of the state, politics and politicians.

Set against corruption on this scale, Africa’s experience of the problem seems relatively modest. The scale of the examples mentioned above far exceeds what is possible given Africa’s meagre resources. Indeed, those looting the African state can only envy the size of the ‘pot’ available to those in other countries. So it is perhaps the more ironic that it is in Africa that corruption is widely regarded as posing the most serious threat to both development and stability. It is in Africa that corruption (along with ethnic conflict) is seen as ‘the political disease’ by indigenous and foreign observers alike.

There is a pervasive cynicism in many international circles about the corruption of African states, a view that it is in the nature of things African, that there may even be ‘a culture of political corruption’ (LeVine, 1993:274) in which corruption is the normal stuff of politics. It is reflected in the comment, quoted at the start of this article, from the former British Tory MP, Matthew Parris, which appeared under the subheading: ‘Corruption is so widespread that African leaders no longer disappoint us; we no longer expect anything’. And mirrored, too, in the comment attributed to an American diplomat that ‘you can no longer buy an African state, you can only rent one by the day’ (Charlton & May, 1989:13). And in popular belief among ordinary people throughout Africa, too. And in the way in which many public officials seem almost to believe that this is how they should behave, this is the way it is done, while they are in office: it is difficult to think of a military coup or a political movement which did not accuse their opponents in government of corruption (or later themselves not face – and merit – similar charges). This, perhaps, is why Bayart’s book (1993) – with its tendency to reduce African politics to personal accumulation and patronage, devoid of ideals, struggles for justice, notions of equality, and so on – has been so influential. It is also why the donors have been so quick to include anti-corruption measures among the conditionalities required for aid and balance of payments support. External intervention against corruption was not invented in Africa; the ‘war on drugs’ and efforts to stem international money laundering (see, for instance, Gilmore 1995) have a longer history. But it is in Africa (not Korea or Venezuela or India) that attempts have been made to use aid to press and even force governments to take steps against general public office corruption within their own administrative structures.

**Corruption and the ‘Governance’ Agenda**

From the start, therefore, political corruption has been at the forefront of the issues raised by the economic restructuring of the last 25 years and the (more marginal) tide of democratization of the last decade. It has been an issue on which all Africa’s creditors (or ‘donors’ as they prefer) could agree. Those primarily concerned with debt repayment and economic reform (especially the IMF and World Bank) regarded corruption as a threat to good governance because of its potential to ‘redirect’ aid,
subvert policy reforms and undermine market institutions. And those more interested in using conditionality to foster democracy and human rights (such as the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and, since 1997, Britain) focused on the role of corruption in the abuse of power, the unfairness of resource distribution and the negation of citizenship rights. For both, a bloated, unaccountable and authoritarian state promoted endemic corruption.

This view also helped to link the donor agenda to the demands of African democratic reformers in the eighties and nineties. The idea that corruption flourished in one-party or military regimes where accountability was lacking and, in turn, produced inequality, dishonesty, stagnation and debt was a constant theme of critics of the old oligarchies. Economic liberalization and multi-party democracy were presented (by donors to African elites and by elites to voters) as the most effective means of combating corruption. It was the means to remove and punish those who lined their pockets and abused their power and also to prevent their successors from getting their own snouts too deeply into the trough. The proposition that democracy can limit the worst excesses of corruption by making it easier to scrutinise and regulate the operation of the state – because public institutions are more responsible, transparent and accountable and because political and legal costs are more easily imposed on corrupt officials – is the core language of conditionality, liberalization, good governance and democratization, of donor and local democrat alike.

These themes were clearly set out, for example, at a 1992 conference in Washington on Limiting Administrative Corruption in the Democratizing States of Africa – some of the papers being published in a special 1993 issue of Corruption and Reform, edited by Robert Charlick, a senior adviser to the Africa Bureau of USAID. In a keynote paper (1993:177), Charlick observed that:

With the end of the Cold War in Africa international donor agencies have begun to say openly what they could previously only mutter – that corruption, rent-seeking, or other such euphemisms, is a major impediment to the economic development of many African countries. Perhaps, just as important, it is a threat to donor programs as well. Not only are taxpayers and their representatives displaying an increasing impatience with the waste of public resources which systematic administrative corruption entails, private sector actors are decreasingly willing to tolerate the high cost of doing business in societies where the 'informal' transaction costs are so steep.

**Corruption and Rent-seeking**

'Rent-seeking' has indeed become a euphemism for 'corruption' among many political scientists. But for multilateral donors and their economists, 'rent-seeking' is more than a euphemism; it is at the core of their critique of the role of the state. Paolo Mauro, an IMF economist, explains economic rent as 'the extra amount paid ... to somebody or for something useful whose supply is limited either by nature or through human ingenuity' (1997:2), that is, the incremental price that has to be paid for scarcity or monopoly of supply. Some rents are 'natural' in that they derive from the unique talents of their producers (for Mauro, interestingly, it is Mike Tyson's purse that comes to mind). Other rents are 'artificial', the result of manipulated shortages created, for instance, by import restrictions. At the heart of these artificial rents is the capacity of government to interfere with the market: 'every day private firms spend vast amounts of money attempting to convince legislators to grant monopolies or otherwise restrict competition so that some industry or individual can
realize a rent'. Moreover, it is in the nature of the state that public officials will use this capacity to extract rents for themselves:

*Throughout the world bureaucrats and people in authority are indefatigably manoeuvring to position themselves in a tiny monopoly where they can be bribed for issuing a license, approving an expenditure or allowing a shipment across a border.*

For the World Bank (1998: 4) corruption is a function of the capacity to seek rents:

*The dynamics of corruption in the public sector can be depicted in a simple model. The opportunity for corruption is a function of the size of the rents under a public official’s control, the discretion that official has in allocating those rents, and the accountability that official faces for his or her decisions.*

The concept therefore neatly links state regulation to corruption. The rent-seeking behaviour of the state is deemed objectionable because it imposes economic and social costs – whether the rents are extracted legally or corruptly. For the Bank, corruption flourishes where ‘institutions are weak and government policies generate economic rents’. For Mauro its causes are found in trade restrictions, subsidies, price controls, multiple exchange rates and foreign exchange allocation schemes, which permit rents to be extracted, and in low civil service wages which encourage rent-seeking activities. Two other sources of rents and corruption which he identifies are especially interesting for Africa: resource rich economies where high rents can be extracted by the regulation of exports; and societies where ethnic and linguistic divisions which encourage public officials to favour their own group. As for the consequences of these activities, the Bank argues that corruption will reduce macroeconomic performance, undermine fdi, harm small business and the poor and endanger the environment. Mauro suggests that rent-seeking and corruption are likely to lower investment and retard growth, to direct skills towards rent-seeking activities, to reduce the effectiveness of aid flows, to reduce tax revenue and hence state capacity, to lower the quality of infrastructure and public services and to distort the composition of government spending by encouraging officials to favour activities where the pickings are high. The implications are clear – the alternatives to corruption and rent-seeking are the same, namely, deregulation, less state and more market.

It is not surprising, then, that the international financial institutions concerned with adjustment and restructuring should be concerned about corruption. In 1996 the managing director of the IMF called on governments to ‘demonstrate their intolerance for corruption in all its forms’ (Mauro, 1997:1) while the president of the World Bank, James D Wolfensohn, spoke of the need to ‘deal with the cancer of corruption’. He went on to issue this call to arms:

*In country after country, people are demanding action on this issue. They know that corruption diverts resources from the poor to the rich, increases the cost of running businesses, distorts public expenditures, and deters foreign investors. They also know that corruption erodes the constituency for aid programs and humanitarian relief. And we all know that corruption is a major barrier to sound and equitable development. Solutions can only be home-grown. National leaders need to take a stand. Civil society plays a key role as well. (World Bank, 1997: http://www.worldbank.org/html/prddr/trans/so96/art3.htm)*

The theme is further developed in the Bank’s 1997 *World Development Report:*

*The state’s monopoly on coercion, which gives it the power to intervene effectively in economic activity, also gives it the power to intervene arbitrarily. This power, coupled with*
access to information not available to the general public, creates opportunities for public officials to promote their own interests, or those of friends or allies, at the expense of the general interest. The possibilities for rent seeking and corruption are considerable. Countries must therefore work to establish and nurture mechanisms that give state agencies the ... incentive to work for the common good, while at the same time restraining arbitrary and corrupt behaviour ... (World Bank, 1997:98).

**Corruption and Democratization**

So the 'cancer of corruption' is identified as threatening economic restructuring and as stemming from 'unrestrained' state power. For the donors, therefore, liberalization requires also a democratization strategy to restrain state power: the liberal economy needs a liberal state (1). The main concern of the 1992 Washington conference mentioned earlier was to identify ways in which corruption might be limited by democratic change. Corruption, over-regulation and economic crisis were seen as characteristics of authoritarian regimes and their ultimate unpopularity had paved the way for political reform. As Riley (1993: 258) noted:

> A major impetus for change has been the economic, social and moral costs of the administrative corruption involved in the single-party regimes presided over by aging nationalist figures. High levels of administrative corruption have been associated with authoritarian politics in many, but not all, of such regimes.

Others were more categorical. Thus, Alison Rosenberg of USAID (1993:173) observed that:

> Thirty years of highly centralized, one-party authoritarian regimes wielding major discretion over the personal and economic lives of their citizens ... have created deep frustration among many Africans. Centralized controls over the economy, a lack of transparency and accountability, and flawed judiciaries have made Africa a breeding ground for corruption ...

Conversely, democracy – understood as political pluralism and multi-party electoral competition – was simultaneously the antithesis of single-party or military oligarchy and of dishonest and incompetent authority. Thus, LeVine (1993:271) suggested that

> ... while administrative corruption cannot be eliminated, it can be limited in [democratic] states. The operative consensus [of the conference], with which I agree, is that attempts at limitation are more likely to succeed the further the country is along the democratization path. The more democracy, the more likely that mechanisms will have been put in place to monitor the performance of administrators and bureaucrats ...

And, despite entering several important caveats about factors which might weaken the capacity of reform to reduce corruption, LeVine held firmly to the central proposition that more democracy meant less corruption. Indeed, the persistence of corruption was an indication not of democratic failure but rather of incomplete democratization, arising from the need to 'wipe the old states clean' and eradicate old vested interests:

> It may well be that a nation can have many of the appurtenances of democracy ... yet have to put up with a sclerotic administrative system, pervasive corrupt practices, and massive resistance to reform, as the case of the Soviet Union since 1985 amply reveals. It may also be that a government with a massive electoral mandate, such as Lee Kwan Yew's ... in
Singapore in 1965 ... could use that mandate to institute a complete overhaul of the administrative system and sack half the country's bureaucrats. But that is a risky strategy, simply because African bureaucrats, when threatened, have already demonstrated impressive capability to defend themselves ... (Ibid. 272).

The survival of these 'residues' of the old order thus make corruption a threat to the process of democratization. Hence, alongside the proposition that democracy and the market can combat corruption effectively, is placed another hypothesis, its seeming opposite: unless corruption can be tackled effectively, it will inevitably threaten the consolidation, even survival, of reform and democracy. Given the claims made for pluralism and the liberal state at the start of this decade, this is a significant irony. Yet it is no more than a recognition of the reality on the ground and of the accumulating evidence that 'good governance' made little headway against systematic private appropriation of state resources. In turn, this has intensified concern about corruption and the need for effective counter strategies.

Attacking the Problem: The Governance of Corruption

It is all a far cry from the rather cavalier attitudes of western governments and academics towards corruption in the sixties. Then, apologists for corruption were occasionally rather derisive about those 'moralists' who condemned corruption as invariably against the public interest and as harmful of political stability, efficient development and administrative capacity. For Huntington (1968) corruption was sometimes a symptom of 'modernization', of efforts made by enterprising strata to circumvent the stultifying dead weight of oppressive states, to 'cut red tape'. In certain circumstances, especially where elites reinvested the proceeds of corruption (in contrast with lower level corruption which was invariably consumed) official dishonesty might even generate private investment (Leff, 1964). And even where it did not do so, corruption might play a role in redistribution (for instance, redressing low tax revenues raised by the state) or in making the state accessible to otherwise excluded groups (Huntington, 1968; Bayley, 1966). While, for the most part, the literature on Africa and Latin America viewed the consequences of corruption negatively, research in Asia – in those countries of the Pacific rim where rapid growth was matched by high levels of corruption – tended to hold open the possibility that corruption might have positive consequences for development. It was a matter of keeping an open mind and adopting a cost-benefit analysis of the process (Nye, 1967).

That was then. The world has changed. In part this is because renewed concern with corruption in the west, to which we referred at the start of this essay, has made observers more sensitive to its consequences. In particular, the decline of political trust experienced in Britain, Italy, Spain and France (where the far-right gained political ground because many voters agreed with LePen's slogan that 'they're all at it') caused widespread concern. For Della Porta and Meny (1997:5-6), corruption undermines institutions and 'by striking at the very roots of democracy, compromises the values of the system'. It 'substitutes private interests for the public interest, undermines the rule of law, and denies the principles of equality and transparency'. In Italy, Della Porta sees corruption as central to a series of 'vicious circles' which sustain clientelism, electoral fraud, administrative inefficiency and criminal activities (1997:36-44).

In part, it is also because corruption is no longer viewed as something predominantly aimed against a collectivist, authoritarian state. During the cold war there was a
temptation for some to see corruption in the Soviet Union or in an African one-party state as an act of defiance, an assertion of individualistic entrepreneurship rather than an instance of furtive dishonesty. If the ‘entrepreneur’ used corruption to jump to the front of the queue that had been set up by the bureaucrats, that was a reward for enterprise and tough luck on those pushed to the back of the line. Now the boot is on the other foot and corruption has lost much of its buccaneering charm. If it is an act of political defiance, it is one exercised against the conditionalities of the donors. The price it imposes is levied not only on the hapless African citizen but also on western businesses, donor aid and free market aspirations. Not surprisingly, then, it is now condemned as a threat to development and democratization. If a few voices still hold open the possibility of positive consequences (Hutchcroft, 1997) most do not.

The World Bank is clear that ‘while costs may vary and systemic corruption may coexist with strong economic performance, experience suggests that corruption is bad for development’ (1998:1). And while recognising that private sector fraud can undermine confidence in privatization and financial markets, it asserts that ‘public sector corruption is arguably a more serious problem in developing countries, and controlling it may be a prerequisite for controlling private sector corruption’ (Ibid. 3). Concerned to shape a ‘market friendly’ environment for business, it has no doubts that corruption seriously undermines its project:

A survey of 3,600 firms in 69 countries carried out for the 1997 World Development Report provides further evidence of the widespread existence and negative effects of corruption. As noted in the report: the survey confirmed that corruption was an important — and widespread — problem for investors. Overall, more than 40 percent of entrepreneurs reported having to pay bribes to get things done as a matter of course. ... The consequences of corruption often do not end with paying off officials and getting on with business. Government arbitrariness entangles firms in a web of time-consuming and economically unproductive relations ... (Ibid. 8).

One area towards which aid (particularly from bilateral donors) has been targeted is institutional development capable of improving monitoring and policing of corruption. Some of these initiatives go back to the early days of debt rescheduling and conditionality. In the eighties, for instance, Britain gave financial and expert assistance to the creation of an Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in Zambia. After 1991, when the MMD came to power, there was some suspicion of the ACC among elements of the new government as a result of its institutional position within the Office of the President from where it had been used to harass political opponents. In 1993, there was talk of downgrading it by merging it into the Police. Its survival owed much to strong support by Britain’s ODA and political conditionality. Instead of its marginalization, the MMD government has given it independent statutory powers alongside a Drug Enforcement Commission and a Human Rights Commission. While these reforms were accompanied by a degree of donor pressure, there was also appreciation within government that the pressure had been exercised in a way that was helpful (Interviews, 19 and 21 January 1998). Similarly, elsewhere donor sponsorship of police training and aid for increased facilities for the judiciary and legal system are not generally controversial.

In addition to institutional reform of this kind, there has been a strong emphasis on creating an international climate of intolerance of corruption through anti-corruption conferences and through international exposure. The compilation and dissemination of material about corruption is taking place on an unprecedented scale. In addition to the efforts of USAID and the IFIs in sponsoring meetings and in putting out material
(notably on the internet), the Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector at the University of Maryland (IRIS) has been prominent in sponsoring a conference and, more permanently, producing a practical handbook on combating corruption (IRIS, 1996). Most significant of all, however, has been the emergence of Transparency International (TI), an NGO based in Berlin and dedicated to 'curb corruption through international and national coalitions encouraging governments to establish and implement effective laws, policies and anti-corruption programmes', building public support for anti-corruption programmes and encouraging 'all parties to international business transactions to operate at the highest levels of integrity' (Mission statement, 21 July 1997). Working closely with aid agencies and the World Bank (which commends its 'integrity workshops' and the building of an 'integrity infrastructure' to combat corruption as set out in the TI Source Book – World Bank, 1998:9). TI has produced a Source Book (1997) which seeks to serve as a manual of institutional measures that can be mobilised to reduce corruption. It has also created an international network of TI chapters throughout the world (there were 18 in Africa and 72 worldwide in mid-1997) bringing together concerned political, professional and business people (some of them connected with wider human rights issues). Its most prominent British figure, the retired businessman George Moody-Stuart has produced a most readable popular manual (1997) of the way in which 'grand corruption' (that is, high-level corruption) works and the way in which business and government leaders feed off each other in a mutual dance of bribery and extortion. Ultimately, like most contributions from TI, it seeks the use of moral pressure and institutional oversight to check the cycle of abuse. The use of public pressure has been a major feature of TI's work – in May 1997 it called for Mobutu's assets in Europe to be seized and also gave prominence to the call by prominent European corporate executives for tougher international curbs on bribery.

Most interesting has been the creation of an annual international Corruption Perception Index ranking countries according to their levels of corruption, produced by TI in collaboration Gottingen University in Germany (http://www.transparency.de.press/1997.3.1.7.cpi.html). The index is compiled from a number of other indices produced from surveys undertaken by a number of polling organisations and business risk consultancies. It is not exhaustive – it does not cover all countries – and not all countries are given scores each year. In 1996 and 1997, Nigeria rated worst of the 54 countries ranked and Kenya was third in 1996 but not recorded the next year. Cameroon was 6th in 1996 but also missing in 1997. South Africa was 32nd in 1996 but had worsened relatively to rank 20th in 1997. Essentially the index codes the responses of businessmen, diplomats and journalists who travel and work in various parts of the world. It therefore presents the perceptions of an element of the western capitalist and state elite and it is likely that it suffers from the biases and cultural distortions which its sources make inevitable. But as an example of the process of putting pressure on the South to conform to the new 'global' standards being imposed through governance and restructuring, it is an impressive case of 'naming and shaming'.

An important part of this effort by agencies and NGOs has been the sponsorship of anti-corruption conferences. In 1997, for instance, TI organised conferences in Pakistan, India and Peru and had a role in a number of others. As for Africa, in Cotonou in September 1993 and in Entebbe in December 1994 conferences were held on 'Corruption, Democracy and Human Rights' (in West Africa and in East and Central Africa respectively). They were organised by the Africa Leadership Forum (ALF) in collaboration with TI (the ALF chair is General Obasanjo who is also an
advisory member of Transparency International) and sponsored by the European Commission. In March 1996, a seminar on ‘Good Governance and the Economy in Francophone Africa’ was held in Dakar sponsored by USAID/Senegal and by IRIS. In 1997, a conference on public sector ethics and governance was staged in Windhoek by the Namibian government in collaboration with Transparency International.

The emphasis at these meetings has been on reinforcing the anti-corruption agenda and focusing policy makers on the measures which can be taken to control corruption. They have provided opportunities for discussion between experts drawn from academe, the World Bank, USAID, IRIS and TI (such as Robert Klitgaard, Susan Rose-Ackerman and Patrick Meagher) and African leaders concerned about corruption. For donor representatives, they have been an opportunity to restate the main governance concerns. In the foreword to the proceedings of the Dakar conference, for instance, Anne Williams, the USAID Mission Director in Senegal, observes that

_Africans today are beginning to talk openly about ... ‘the climate of corruption’. ... From the highest levels where substantial bribes and Swiss bank accounts are a way of life, to the lowest levels where obtaining simple documents requires a cadeau, Africans see public officials using their offices for private gain. ... For Africa to move into the global economy of the 21st Century, it must develop a different climate, one of good governance, where transparency and effective management become the rule of the day_ (http://www.inform.umd.edu/iris/tlktfore.html)

And to the extent that Africans have been able to speak at these conferences, they have tended to be no less critical of corruption in Africa than the donors. Aderinwale’s report of the Entebbe conference notes that the effects of corruption on development, democracy and human rights ‘have been particularly pernicious’ (1994:6) and that ‘corruption across the board is systemic in many African countries, arising from the corruption of leadership’ (Ibid. 9). And among the conference’s recommendations was a call for the state in Africa to be ‘restructured’ (Ibid. 13). Yet sometimes these interventions have been sharply critical of western behaviour and intentions. The Entebbe conference was critical of the effects of adjustment policies on governance and condemned the role of the North in fostering corruption in the South. Obasanjo, for example, took up the question of foreign companies using bribery to do business in the South and was critical of the way they were able to claim tax exemptions at home on bribes as business expenses (Aderinwale, 1994:59-60). Interestingly, this issue was taken up in March 1995, at an OECD Symposium on Corruption and Good Governance held in Paris, where Robert Klitgaard urged OECD members to make corruption abroad illegal in their home countries (something only the United States has done with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act) as a means of reducing both the cost of corruption to international business and, more pressingly, the systematic corruption of legal systems, economic management and public service delivery which this created.

Yet not all interventions have been as co-operative and amicable as these – along with carrots there have been sticks. Concerned about the immediate problem of corruption in subverting democratic reforms and siphoning off aid into private pockets, the donors have sought to attach anti-corruption measures to the conditionality package – specifically by making some aid provision, balance of payments support (and hence debt rescheduling) conditional on the implementation of such policies by African governments. As noted, bilateral donors have directly tied aid to democracy, governance (D/G) and human rights policies which include anti-corruption programmes, whilst the World Bank and IMF have encouraged or demanded action
against corruption to ensure that financial support goes where it is supposed to go and that debts are repaid abroad rather than recycled locally. Over time, attitudes have hardened in cases of perceived non-compliance by debtor countries and aid support has been withheld in some cases. The annual Consultative Group meetings in Paris, at which the donors review progress and determine the level of aid to be disbursed, have made governance issues a key – and controversial – item of the agenda.

Perhaps the most startling and dramatic instance of corruption being used as a condition for aid came at the CG meeting of December 1993 when the donors 'expressed concern' about 'drug-trafficking in high government circles' in Zambia. The Zambian government delegation to Paris made the content of these discussions public, as a result of which three members of the government resigned pending an investigation (The Post, Lusaka, 12 May 1995). In 1994, in an interview with the BBC, the government promised a commission of inquiry into the allegations but none has been appointed. The episode embittered relations between the government and the donors, with the former feeling that debt relief had been used to make an unwarranted intervention in internal political matters lying outside the remit of CG meetings. In 1996, after elections, the President expressed bitterness that donor pressure had not permitted the reappointment of the three individuals. The matter also poisoned political relations within the ruling MMD with the ousted leaders feeling that they had been the victims of a tribal 'mafia' (namely, the ministers who had attended the Paris meeting) and also that the CG meeting had been highly selective in its moral indignation, ignoring the corruption of others (presumably including those they felt had accused them). The complaints were combined when one of them reportedly addressed a meeting of the National Executive Committee of the MMD on 22 April 1995, thus:

For better or for worse, there is a public perception that we as leaders have been accepting bribes and that we have become very rich through land issues, tenders, contracts and other transactions. The donor community have been talking about corruption and when the issue of corruption and drug-trafficking was raised in Paris the main focus by those who made the accusations from our government was on drugs, almost to the total exclusion of corruption which was conveniently sidelined. ... I am not saying that the allegations of corruption in the government are necessarily true, but it is important to understand that in politics, public perceptions matter more than reality. This perception will simply not go away in the absence of an explanation as to how certain leaders who entered the government poor all of a sudden become affluent on their meagre salaries and allowances (The Post, 12 May 1995).

The drug scandal undermined what had previously been a collaborative relationship between the Zambian government and the donors. It marked the start of a steady deterioration in relations culminating in the suspension of balance of payments support in 1996 as a result of concern about the integrity of voter registration and allegations of electoral fraud (at the time of writing, major debt service obligations loomed but there had been no resumption of support after 18 months and CG meetings had been twice postponed). Both donors and government leaders agreed that it was issues of 'governance' rather than 'economic reform' which blocked disbursement of support (Interviews, 15, 16, 19 and 21 January 1998). Similarly, in Kenya, allegations of corruption and abuse of power led to a suspension of balance of payments support in 1996 and widespread concern about electoral fraud during the 1997 election campaign threatened to influence future dealings over debt servicing and aid.
The linkage of anti-corruption measures – albeit as one of several democracy and governance issues – to aid is particularly interesting in the Zambian case because it can be regarded as something of a ‘showpiece’ in the recent wave of democratization in the continent (2). Whereas political conditionality has been imposed on many governments against their will and despite their open resistance, Zambia represents one of a small number of countries where democratic reform has been initiated from within rather than imposed from without (Namibia, South Africa and Uganda also come to mind). Moreover, in the Zambian case, the constitutional agenda adopted by the MMD was almost a textbook model of liberal democratic reform. Thus the standards by which the donors judge D/G performance (including controlling corruption) are ostensibly those laid down in the MMD manifesto of 1991 and the concerns of the donors about corruption and other abuses of power have increasingly made them the keepers of the MMD’s conscience. In addition, the institutional reforms since 1991 have been significant – not least in the creation of independent anti-corruption, drug enforcement, human rights and electoral commissions. The government thus felt aggrieved by the sanctions imposed over governance because, it believed, its record compared favourably with other African countries (Interviews, 19 and 21 January 1998).

This brings us to the heart of the dilemma facing the agencies and governments seeking to promote the liberal democratic agenda in Africa. There can be no doubt that anti-corruption pressures have had a significant effect. They have produced or facilitated a degree of institutional change, not least in the proliferation of anti-corruption and drug enforcement agencies around the continent. They have publicised the problem of corruption and disseminated the values of open and accountable government throughout Africa. This in turn has encouraged scrutiny by emboldened journalists, human rights organizations and the political opposition. The linkage that has been established between corruption and aid constrains what the political class does (or, at least, appears to do), something politicians must include in their calculations in dealing with the outside world. Yet these efforts are more noteworthy for their limits than their successes. Where governments have had been determined to ignore conditionality, as in Nigeria, conferences and moral sermons have had little effect and private capital has negated official sanctions. Even where dependency has given the donors a great deal of leverage, as in Kenya and Zambia, government resistance to imposition has produced an impasse which brings the efficacy of the whole governance strategy into question. Most importantly, despite all the conferences, commissions and conditionalities, corruption has continued to flourish and even to grow. In the nature of the subject, evidence is necessarily anecdotal and impressionistic but no one claims that corruption is less of a problem in 1998 than it was in 1990, and most would consider that it has increased in frequency and scale.

Misunderstanding the State: the Corruption of Governance

Partly, this dilemma was, and is, inevitable. It was never going to be possible to make a major impact on the problem in the space of a few years. Anti-corruption measures need to contend with entrenched interests and existing lack of capacity. Investigating corruption is one thing, bringing miscreants to book quite another. A bloated bureaucracy is likely to resist attempts to reduce its share of the social surplus. Nor is it surprising, given low salaries and rapid inflation, that petty corruption is widespread among rank-and-file civil servants, a problem worsened by continuing economic crisis. For example, in August 1997, the estimated cost of the monthly ‘food basket’ (excluding rent, clothes, transport, etc.) for a family of six in Lusaka was
K172,800, while the highest General Professional Scale salary in the civil service was K152,107 and the highest General Administrative Scale was K149,488 (The SAP Monitor, July/August 1997, Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice, Lusaka, p.6).

In such circumstances, low level corruption should surprise no one and whether there is a multi-party or single-party state, a market or command economy, is not likely to make the slightest difference.

In part, however, the resilience and increasing scale of corruption, particularly high-level corruption, owes something to the disruptive nature of the reforms being imposed on African countries and the weakness of the remedies against corruption which these reforms embody. Seminars, handbooks and education are important and uplifting, and economic sanctions worrying for governments, but they are unlikely to influence individuals being offered thousands of dollars by multinationals or by drug dealers. More importantly, structural adjustment, liberalization and even democratic reforms have played a significant part in weakening the regulatory capacity of the state by removing oversight capabilities. By reducing state funding and excluding it from various areas of activity, adjustment programmes have undermined the possibility of improving auditing, investigation and enforcement. Governments trying to meet CG conditionalities have to meet demands for improved standards of public conduct with fewer resources.

In particular, deregulation has weakened the capacity of the state to control corruption while privatization has created a host of opportunities for personal accumulation. Deregulation – almost by definition – reduces the capacity of government to tighten rules governing government-corporate relations. In Africa, where the rules have traditionally been poorly observed and enforced, deregulation reduces government capacity still further and makes it particularly difficult to control interactions between private interests and public officials. It also creates opportunities for public figures to use their positions to obtain privileged access within the marketplace. Privatization of agricultural marketing, for example, ends the opportunity of officials to loot state marketing boards but it creates new opportunities for private contractors, either selling inputs or buying output, to defraud peasant producers and allows politically well-connected transporters and distributors to make profits from the import of food (sometimes even of drought or famine relief). In the last decade or so, there has also been the emergence of what might be called ‘political banks’. Deregulation of the financial sector opens up new opportunities to set up private banks which, in some cases, can use political connections to obtain public sector accounts, such as payrolls previously lodged in state banks, which can then be used for personal investment. Privatization, one of the central tenets of adjustment programmes, has also produced opportunities for acquiring public resources. Instead of a programme of commercialization of run-down state corporations before privatization, adjustment conditionalities and donor deadlines frequently forced a rapid divestment of physical assets at knockdown prices. This permitted politicians and officials to use their ‘insider’ positions to buy them up. It has generated a great deal of resentment about high-level corruption; it has managed both to encourage corruption and reduce the legitimacy of democratization.

The problem here is that the donors proceed from the ideological assumption that political corruption is simply the product of growing state intervention (Heywood, 1997:12, quoting Rose-Ackerman). There is much to this, of course. It would be ridiculous to pretend that one-party states and parastatal companies did not provide officials with a whole host of opportunities to treat public resources as their personal property. But it is also clear that liberalization creates a set of new problems while not
always eradicating the old sources of dishonesty. The use of patronage and bureaucratic ‘rent-seeking’ have not been ended by market reforms; rather they have been joined by new kinds of graft. Heywood notes that changes in regulatory mechanisms often move oversight functions out of government and hand them over to independent organizations from which representative democratic interests (such as trade unions) are often excluded. Such changes often blur the distinction between public and private interests (for instance by appointing business executives or political allies to such regulatory agencies) and so create ‘significant opportunity structures for influence-peddling’ (Ibid. 13). The process has been identified as a source of corruption even in Western Europe where state capacities to control corruption are much stronger than in Africa. Della Porta & Meny (1997:176) note that ‘the actual point of privatization and deregulation seems to be characterized by an increase in the opportunities for corruption’. And Heywood (1997:14) observes that

... the imposition of market mechanisms in the absence of adequate legal underpinnings created plentiful opportunities for rampant corruption in post-Soviet Russia. Yet even if Russia represents an extreme case, the exaltation of the market in established democracies has also engendered a certain disdain for regulatory mechanisms and established rules of conduct. In contrast, therefore, to those who see state regimentation and bureaucracy as the principle cause of corruption, it is equally plausible to make the case that deregulation has helped blur the lines between public and private spheres, whilst the emphasis on the market, competitiveness and profit has devalued a ‘sense of state’.

The separation of the ‘public and private spheres’ is at the heart of conceptions of the modern liberal democratic state and of contemporary notions of corruption (Theobald, 1990:chapter 2). Corruption – especially when combined with clientelism – acts to eradicate this distinction by conducting public office for private gain. Governance conditionalities attempt to restore or create anew the separation by reducing the size and activities of a state that is ‘too big’ and fostering the growth of a ‘civil society’ of NGOs and associations which at present is ‘too small’ and ‘too weak’. Democracy and markets need ‘less state’ and ‘more civil society’; the creation of an ‘intermediate’ layer of associational structures occupying the space between the state, on the one side, and ethnic and kinship networks, on the other (LeVine, 1993:276) is seen as a means of counter-balancing the interventionist state and so reducing rent-seeking behaviour.

As a way of ensuring accountability and reducing corruption, the strategy seems seriously flawed. Firstly, the crude antithesis of state and civil society has no basis in reality; democracy rests on a dynamic and effective state as much as on ‘civil society’ (Glaser, 1997). Secondly, it is difficult to believe that this watchdog role can be performed by a donor-sponsored ‘civil society’ of civic and human rights associations dependent on foreign funding (Allen, 1997). Thirdly, and most important, efforts to reduce the size of a state that is ‘too big’ also undermine a state that is ‘too weak’ (that is, lacking in capacity to implement policy or provide strategic direction for development). Conditionalities require a reduction in the size of the state (through ‘Public Sector Reform’ programmes) but do little to improve its strength (audit structures, organization, salaries, educational and management skills, and so on). It is telling that public sector reform is classified as an economic conditionality, not as a governance problem; the policy is to reduce its activities to make space for capital and has little concern with its possible role in a sovereign, democratic country.

The shrinking of the state sector, without any complementary strengthening of state institutions and skills, turns a bloated weak state into a small weak state, further
reducing its capacity to check corruption. Worse, the combination of a weak 'civil society' and weak state allows small, predatory political machines the more easily to dominate an unorganised electorate (through clientelist and ethnic factionalism) and take control of the institutions of the state. In such circumstances, government becomes a means of access to public resources which, unprotected either by internal structures or by organized social interests capable of checking official misconduct, is available to be plundered. The governance agenda thus risks promoting what it seeks to eradicate—more corruption and greater instability. As Reno observes in his study of corruption in Sierra Leone (1995:12) structural adjustment tends to strengthen the very features of African governance which they are intended to address. There is some indication that the donors are beginning to recognise and respond to such problems—as signalled by the World Bank devoting its 1997 development report to the state (including the problem of corruption). Yet the approach is still on liberalization strategy; honesty and democracy are considered only as a means to that end. And where liberalization results in the state being too weak to control corruption, well, says the Bank, the donors will just have to take over the job on its behalf (1997:99):

*Sustainable development generally calls for formal mechanisms of restraint that hold the state and its officials accountable for their actions. To be enduring and credible, these mechanisms must be anchored in core state institutions; if these are too weak, external mechanisms, such as international adjudication may substitute temporarily.*

**Misunderstanding African Politics: Clientelism, Corruption, Class Formation**

If 'governance' rests on a crude simplification of the role of the state, there are problems also with its assumptions about the nature of African politics. The lack of separation between the public and private spheres, which encourages corruption, is often ascribed to 'neo-patrimonialism'—the personalized character of African politics, in which formal constitutions and organizations are subordinate to individual rulers (the president or 'big man') and personal relationships are 'the foundation and superstructure of political institutions in Africa'. Such systems are typically presidentialist and clientelist and use state resources to gain political support. Although 'neo-patrimonial practices can be found in all polities, it is the core feature of politics in Africa' (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997:62). This representation is echoed to some extent in Bayart's notion of 'the politics of the belly' (1993). In essence, this kind of notion understands African politics as a reflection of the way in which traditional institutions and cultural values respond to and appropriate the institutional arrangements of a modern state. Corruption then becomes one of the ways in which 'big men' employ traditional forms of patronage and clientelism to access state resources which they use to reward supporters or appropriate as personal tribute.

There is an implication, doubtless unintended, in this kind of characterisation with which I am uncomfortable; namely, that the modern state is somehow alien, that corruption is somehow a 'foreign' concept invented to fit western political practice, of little relevance to the values which direct everyday African politics, that notions of the separation of public duty and private interest lie somewhere outside the cognition of African politicians and administrators. It is a premise that chimes with anti-corruption measures adopted by the governance agenda, an assumption that values of honesty and transparency must be 'taught' through the pressures imposed by globalization and by persuasion, conferences, educational materials and, if necessary, sanctions and public condemnation. This kind of view is found in much western writing about corruption in non-western societies. The literature on corruption in
Asia, for instance, devotes much space to traditions of gift-giving, family solidarity and deference against which 'foreign' notions of honesty must contend (see the examples in Heidenheimer et al., 1993). Clearly such customs are important in creating pressures for special treatment or access (as are masonic societies, 'old school ties' and family loyalty in western countries). Yet, for all that, there is widespread disapproval of corruption in all countries, even (perhaps especially) in those where corruption is rife, and, no matter how systemic high-level (or 'grand') corruption may be, it is still practised furtively. It is not difficult for researchers to interview politicians who are involved in corruption but it is far more difficult to find one who does not understand the difference between what is corrupt and what is not. We noted at the outset that when regimes take power in Africa they denounce the corruption of their predecessors and promise to clean things up; it is part of the justification for their claim on office. They then invariably behave in the same way as those they succeeded. This suggests, firstly, that there is public concern about corruption and leaders sense that they must be seen to be against it and, secondly, that once in office, they are driven by the same imperatives as their predecessors. Unless we assume that everyone in politics is simply a liar, we must ask why, regardless of motives and intention, corruption is so resilient.

While the elements which comprise 'neo-patrimonialism' (presidentialism, clientelism, the appropriation of state resources) are easily identifiable on the ground in Africa, the concept offers us a descriptive label rather than an explanation of process and structure. What produces such systems? Similar patterns of political power are found in a variety of social environments and countries which have no cultural similarity (the Mediterranean basin, India, the Philippines, Haiti, and parts of the former USSR as well as much of Africa, for example) and in urban as well as agrarian settings (many urban 'political machines', from early-century Boston to contemporary Bombay, Lagos and Karachi, manifest similar characteristics of personalist leadership and clientelist factionalism). And, given the great range of cultural forms across the continent, it is difficult to accept that there is some 'African neo-patrimonialism' which somehow reflects a uniform African political culture. If it is indeed 'the core feature' of African 'historicity' (an assumption which is debatable, but not here) then the reason why it is so, why corruption is so deeply rooted in political practice, must be found outside it.

A much more fruitful approach to understanding the combination of clientelism, centralised rule and corruption so frequently found in African politics (but not inevitably or exclusively) would need to include a more holistic and coherent view of the various forces that shaped them. It might start from Allen (1995) who identifies the roots of clientelism and presidentialism in two elements of the decolonization process which were designed to ensure government passed into the hands of conservative interests: firstly, independence constitutions concentrated power in the executive to ensure order; and secondly, hastily organized elections encouraged the development of support through ethnic and regional networks. These networks were readily available, structured perhaps by the 'bifurcated' colonial state with its 'decentralized despotism' of 'native authorities' controlling rural society (Mamdani, 1996, especially 3-34, 287-294). This political order was built on the foundations of an historical experience of capital accumulation which produced underdevelopment, deprivation and racial exclusion and which consequently made power, 'the political kingdom', and access to the state's resources the primary focus of material expectations and aspirations (Szeftel, 1982, 1987). The 'shadow state' which Reno finds in Sierra Leone (persuasively from Siaka Stevens onwards, less so before that) rested heavily on the
existence of a colonial export economy, the patronage structures of electoral mobilization in a ‘bifurcated’ administration and the existence of a powerful central authority which could be used to maximise the returns afforded by political access. In such circumstances, access is everything and its absence means exclusion from the resources provided by office. Politics becomes a winner-takes-all game in which power allows private appropriation of state resources (to satisfy personal ambitions and factional loyalties). The process becomes self-defeating, increasing social divisions and corruption and finally culminating in ‘a crisis of clientelism’ (Allen, 1995:305). The result is increasing authoritarianism as leaders cling to power, a shift into what Allen calls centralised-bureaucratic politics and/or spoils politics. Viewed in this light, clientelism provides a mechanism for mobilizing support and controlling the electorate in a political economy in which socially and economically excluded rural producers and urban migrants predominate. Africa is not unique in this respect; clientelist politics have served in this way all over the world during the last century. Corruption – ‘the politics of the belly’, ‘neo-patrimonialism’, whatever – are not just ‘the African problem’.

In any case, African politics are not reducible to clientelist factions jockeying for access to state resources. This kind of politics underpins a more fundamental process of local capital accumulation and class formation. Given the context of underdevelopment and the power of foreign capital, political office in Africa becomes a means of entry into business (particularly commerce, finance and services). Given the depth of the economic crisis, the ability to use office to access and manipulate state resources and foreign aid opens up possibilities of entry into the bourgeoisie. Thus, Iyayi (1986) has suggested that corruption might represent a form of primitive accumulation in which the plunder of state resources was a means of transferring surplus from peasants and workers to bureaucrats and businessmen. The process also works the other way around; the state is a resource through which capital can seek market privileges, public contracts, monopolies or other rents. The ‘shadow state’ of Sierra Leone, which Reno describes, involves the use of the state to control illicit economic activities not only to ensure a continuing hold on power but also for purposes of personal accumulation.

Corruption, all too often, arises where capital and state intersect. Moody-Stuart (1997:13) describes how the size of contracts may determine the nature of the bribery needed by business to influence officials: 5% of $100 million may net a head of state, 5% of $10 million may interest a minister and key staff, 5% of $1 million and one is down to permanent secretaries, and so on. The ‘Goldenberg scandal’ in Kenya, involving some $300 million being syphoned from the public exchequer to assist mineral exports which never occurred, has implicated Cabinet ministers as well as private businessmen with close political links to government. In a 1996 report on corruption in Tanzania, Justice Joseph Warioba identifies business connections (not clientelism or an over-weening state) as the primary source of corruption:

*The growth in corruption in the 1990s was accentuated by the close relationship between Government and Political leaders on the one hand and businessmen who engage in corruption on the other. ... Leaders who are supposed to take important national decisions are bribed by businessmen in order for them to take decisions which are in the interest of those businessmen ... (Warioba, 1997:198,201).*

Not surprisingly, such problems play little part in the concerns about corruption discussed in governance papers, except insofar as they arise from the problem of state ‘gatekeepers’ charging rents. Structural adjustment is primarily concerned with the
stabilization of what might be called ‘a bourgeois order’ (markets, private enterprise, the liberal state, urban and middle class ‘civil society’). The process of accumulating private property is not a problem in its discourse. More seriously, it leads to those tackling corruption largely ignoring the role of political economy, electoral competition and inherited institutions in corruption. The concern is with the role of state intervention, not with crises of underdevelopment and debt peonage in the context of international accumulation, still less with the opportunities for corruption which markets, privatization and deregulation create. Corruption has survived and prospered despite efforts at institutional political reform, precisely because such change has not affected the structural forces which give rise to it and, frequently, has not even addressed it.

**Conclusion**

We can confine our conclusion to just two observations. Firstly, the governance agenda tackles corruption as if it were the cause of democratic and development problems rather than a symptom or consequence of them. Thus it fails to address the deeper political and class forces which drive the politics of clientelism and corruption. And secondly, in their demonization of the state and determination to substitute themselves for the state to force adjustment through, the donors and international agencies undermine the institutional development needed to sustain a more democratic, transparent and accountable political system. The result is that the important institutional structures and principles they seek to mobilize against corruption are unlikely to take root.

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**Endnotes**

1. The broader issue lies outside the scope of this paper. The argument is brilliantly set out in Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Democracy Against Capitalism*, Cambridge UP, 1995 (especially chapter 7), and Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Boston: Beacon, 1944 (especially chapters 12-14). Working from different perspectives, both evaluate the limited nature of the liberal democratic state and, in particular, the way in which citizenship is emptied of economic content in order to protect private property from democratic interference.

2. Material on corruption has been gathered in the course of wider research on aid and democratization in a collaborative study of ‘Aid, Political Conditionality and Democratization in Africa’, undertaken by members of the Centre for Democratization Studies in the University of Leeds, funded by the ESRC (R000234986).
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Women in Politics & Gender Equity in Policy: South Africa & Uganda

Anne Marie Goetz

There are more women in politics in Uganda and South Africa today than in many more developed democracies. This significant achievement owes to explicit affirmative action interventions in political institutions and processes to favour women's participation. This article analyses these measures for their effectiveness in bringing more women into government, and for their impact on the perceived legitimacy of women in power. It goes on to stress that there is a difference between a numerical increase in women representatives, and the representation of women's interests in government decision-making. The one does not automatically lead to the other, not just because individual women politicians cannot all be assumed to be concerned with gender equity, but because of institutionalised resistance to gender equity within the apparatus of governance. This problem is exacerbated in the context of structural adjustment, which rules out social welfare measures to subsidise women's reproductive contributions to the economy and thereby level the economic playing field between women and men. In spite of these obstacles, women in power in Uganda and South Africa have taken significant steps to articulate women's interests in politics, with a particular focus on problems of violence against women.

Today both Uganda and South Africa rank above many developed countries in terms of women's numerical representation in national legislatures. Political liberalisation is credited with this achievement, but women's representation is not a necessary consequence of greater degrees of democracy in civil and political institutions. After all, democratically constituted governments have long been able to deny women equitable participation (let alone the vote). In Uganda and South Africa, gender-sensitive structural and cultural changes in the institutions of rule have been needed in order to bring more women into politics. But this is just the first step. A numerical expansion of women in politics may not translate into the effective representation of their interests in development policy-making. It cannot be assumed that women politicians are necessarily committed to representing women's interests; indeed, few of them will have succeeded in politics by promoting a feminist platform. Much more critical to the promotion of gender equity in economic development policy than the number of women in power is the character and capacity of the state; whether it promotes class and gender equity in social and economic policy, and has the capacity to implement such policies even against the resistance of dominant patriarchal interests both in society and in the institutions of the state itself. In the current environment of intolerance of any restraint on the free functioning of markets, to
which liberal democracy is the handmaiden, the room for promoting women's interests in economic policy-making can be limited.

Gender equity is still considered by many people - and certainly by many political scientists and economists - as a human rights matter which will be a by-product of economic growth and greater democracy. In contrast, this article is premised on the assumption that gender equity is critical to the achievement of economic growth and to genuine democracy. It is a matter of concern for economic development policy because unequal gender relations create market distortions by raising transaction and information costs. Gender equity is also a welfare issue; it is about enhancing the quality of human and social reproduction through women's improved education or health. But more than that, it is a matter of social justice and social transformation aimed at redistributing resources and social value more equally between women and men, a process which includes undermining the gendered public/private segregations which marginalise women in the worlds of politics and economic production. These kinds of changes can be profoundly threatening to men's privileges, individually and collectively, and unsurprisingly arouse considerable resistance. At stake in considerations of developmental democracy from a gender perspective, then, is whether democratic institutions can achieve enough autonomy from dominant gender interests to challenge male privileges and promote the policies necessary for this kind of social change. Whether democracy can bring gender equitable development depends on whether its institutions admit not just of women's participation, but of the representation of women's interests as a gender.

It is important to specify at this stage what is meant by 'women's interests as a gender'. The notion that women share certain interests by virtue of their gender is central to feminist politics, but is deeply contested, because women's interests, like men's, vary according to their circumstances and identities by class, race, ethnicity, occupation, life-cycle stage, and so on. However, the fact that most women, whatever their other circumstances, tend to be constrained in their life choices to a range of reproductive functions in the private sphere, and marginal positions in public arenas of the economy and politics, suggests that gender affects the way other social cleavages (class, etc.) are experienced, and hence generates specific interests. Since a basic way in which gender inequality is organised is through gendered segregation between public and private worlds, it is in women's interests to seek presence and power in public arenas of politics and economics (Jonasdottir, 1988). Beyond this, feminists argue that women have 'strategic' gender interests in changing aspects of the gender division of labour and power which disadvantage them (Molyneux, 1985). This could mean a strategic gender interest in undermining gendered segmentation in the labour market, or abolishing men's greater rights to land ownership or property inheritance in certain cultures, or defending women's personal autonomy in decisions over reproduction or sexuality - but the exact nature of these strategic interests cannot be specified in advance in some kind of feminist prescription; they must be determined through women's political struggles in particular contexts.

This article discusses institutional changes which can enhance women's participation in politics and development decision-making, drawing on contemporary processes in Uganda and South Africa. It considers whether these changes have contributed to a improved representation of women's interests in policy-making. These two countries which have emerged from turbulent and protracted transitions now stand out as trailblazers in efforts to achieve gender equity in formal politics. They rank close to Scandinavian countries in terms of women's numerical representation in legislatures: women are 18 per cent of the National Assembly (previously the National Resistance
Council) in Uganda, and 27 per cent of the National Assembly in South Africa (ranking South Africa seventh in the world for women’s representation in national-level politics). Women are building on this democratic presence to establish a strategic impact on development policy. But this is proving a tougher project than bringing women into politics. In spite of the creation of institutional space in the state for the pursuit of women’s interests – sometimes known as ‘National Women’s Machineries – women’s economic interests still come second to men’s. This is particularly so where the national response to economic crises is market liberalisation and state retreat from human resource development and social welfare sectors. These two sectors are important in enabling women to strengthen their market positions with some state support for their reproductive work burdens. That in some cases women politicians have had to preside over cuts in these sectors illustrates the lack of a necessary connection between women in politics and the representation of their interests in policy. For instance, the South Africa Welfare Minister, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, a feminist, presided over a significant shrinking of the size of child grant payments in South Africa in early 1997. Although this was designed to extend the system to all poor mothers – and most significantly, the black population – in the country, it was highly controversial, given that it involved virtually halving the benefit and restricting it to children under six, as opposed to children up to the age of 18.

The following sections investigate three aspects of efforts to institutionalise women’s interests in development through democratic processes: first, efforts to improve interest articulation and aggregation amongst women in civil and political society – to amplify their political ‘voice’; second, changes to electoral systems to augment women’s presence in formal politics; and third, bureaucratic measures creating dedicated space for gender equity issues in the public administration.

**Women’s Mobilisation in Civil and Political Society: Enhancing their Impact on Politics**

In both Uganda and South Africa there is a phenomenal number and diversity of women’s associations, reflecting a rich African tradition of women’s organising which makes it the world region with the most extensive female solidarity networks (Staudt, 1986:199), with most structured around the self-help survival ‘politics of everyday life’ (Nelson & Chowdhury, 1994:18). But like women’s associations elsewhere, they do not always constitute an effective political base for women’s interests in politics because of a range of constraints on their capacities for interest articulation and aggregation beyond the local level. Beyond the obvious constraint imposed by women’s limited time for political activism because of their double duty of work in productive and reproductive arenas, other constraints include the hostility to women’s participation of male-dominated party politics, and the difficulties in establishing a coherent set of women’s interests in politics because of differences between women by class, ethnicity, race, region, and so on.

The first constraint – the impact of the gender division of labour on women’s time for political activism – is the most intractable, and cannot be resolved without a revolution in social relations. But as the recent history of women’s involvement in democratic transitions in Uganda and South Africa demonstrates, the other constraints have been challenged through a combination of deliberate strategies to make a political resource out of women’s strength of numbers in the electorate, to promote unity between women around major concerns – such as democratisation –
and through the political opportunities created by temporary suspensions of conventional party politics.

**Uganda**

The main institutional factors which have strengthened women's civil society presence and their engagement with politics have been the suspension of multi-party politics and the personal support of President Yoweri Museveni for women's rights. This has helped the women's movement grow from a negligible and politically co-opted social presence under the Obote regime, to 'one of the strongest mobilized societal forces in Uganda' (Tripp, 1997, chapter 1). Museveni's personal support for women's equality and for their participation in politics reflects his appreciation of women's role in the civil war as supporters of his National Resistance Army (Tripp, 1994:115), his awareness of their key role in agricultural development and family welfare, and also his recognition of the potential contribution of women's organisations to consolidating the NRM's political dominance in Uganda (Mugyenyi, 1994:1). Museveni's support has been a tremendous piece of political luck for the women's movement. This contingent variable - support for gender equity issues from a top national leader - is a critical yet unpredictable ingredient for success in feminist politics.

The suspension of multi-party politics in Museveni's 'no-party' system reflects a desire to build a national government of democratic reconciliation without returning to the sectarian multi-party system which proved so destructive in the past. Uganda's Constituent Assembly agreed in 1995 to suspend multi-party politics until 2001. Parties in Uganda, which still operate openly, if unofficially, are constituted primarily along religious and ethnic lines, which is why multipartyism has come to be associated with sectarianism. Obote's Uganda People's Congress, for instance, draws its support primarily from non-Baganda Protestants, while the Democratic Party is made up mainly of Catholics. Even Museveni's inclusive NRM is dominated by people from the Ankole region in the southwest of the country. In the traditional parties, the importance of ethnic identity, combined with religion, has left little space to pursue gender equity politics. In the 'no-party' system people stand for free and open elections as individuals independent of party affiliation, and join the government as part of a broad-based National Resistance 'Movement' without having to join the NRM itself. Because party loyalties interfere less to inhibit cooperation between women politicians, this extended transition period has made it easier for women activists and legislators to build coalitions to promote an agenda for gender equity in public policies. It has also created space in civil society for women to form new associations and promote their interests independently of sectarian party interests.

However, the bulk of these women's organisations remain fairly isolated from national and even local politics. This reflects a dual process: women continue to be marginalised from male-dominated local councils and other key community bodies, and also deliberately seek to distance themselves from public authorities because of experiences of corruption and fear of co-optation (Tripp, 1997: Chapter 4). Effective forms of coalition politics and interest aggregation aimed at influencing national decision-making still elude women's associations. There is still a divide between rural women's organisations which avoid registering themselves out of a concern to preserve autonomy from local and national authorities, and urban feminist groups
which engage with the state to promote women's professional prospects, secure legal
reform in family and customary law, establish women's rights to land ownership,
combat violence against women, and promote women's participation in politics.

New democratic structures established to broaden popular participation in national
decision-making have not always been more inclusive of women and more receptive
to their concerns. An example of this was the process of soliciting people's views in
early debates on the new constitution. The 1988 Constitutional Commission, which
consisted of two women and 19 men, was intended identify issues for debate by the
Constituent Assembly through an open and consultative process. However, the
majority of women were left out of this because of the inappropriateness of
consultative mechanisms used: mixed-sex public discussion groups all over the
country, and written memoranda. Neither of these mechanisms for participation
recognised constraints on women's voices imposed by the presence of men in public
fora or by the illiteracy of the majority of poor rural women. Thus, for example, few of
the reputed 15,000 memos to the constitutional commission were from women.

The resolution of this problem was, in the end, a good example of state-society
cooperation to amplify women's voice in politics. Urban women's organisations
recognised the need for gender-sensitive facilitation and, together with the
Department of Women in Development, researched women's understanding of
constitutional issues, designed a simple illustrated manual explaining constitutional
matters, and facilitated focus group discussions with rural women all over the
country to elicit their views on the constitution. These were submitted to the
Constitutional Commission in 1991-92. Later, women delegates to the Constituent
Assembly were able to argue that this process gave them a mandate for their efforts to
promote the progressive gender equity provisions in the 1995 constitution,
acknowledged at the time as one of the most 'woman-friendly' constitutions in the
world (Tamale, 1997:146).

While women acknowledge the key role which NRM support has played in
strengthening their political prospects, they have recently become increasingly wary
of being too closely associated with Museveni or the NRM, partly out of concerns that
the NRM is trying to capture and control the female constituency (Tamale, 1997:134),
and partly out of a worry that exclusive association with Museveni will undermine
the prospects of the women's movement under future leaders.

**South Africa**

In contrast to Uganda, women's organisations were central to the struggle for
democracy in South Africa. This gave them a mandate and leverage to impress their
needs on the politicians negotiating the transition. In consequence they have had
more direct ownership over the new democratic institutions and are in a stronger
position in political society.

Women in South Africa have made a substantial contribution as an organised group
to popular struggle against apartheid since at least the turn of the century (Walker,
1991). As in Uganda, a period of suppression of party activity has opened some space
for women to assert themselves as political actors. This was in the long suspension of
the opposition mass-based parties such as the African National Congress (ANC) and
the Pan-Africa Congress (PAC) from the mid-1960s to 1990. Some of this struggle has
occurred in the framework of multi-party competition – even when anti-apartheid
parties were banned from the mid-1960s to 1990, a great deal of women's activism
took place through party-linked associations. This has made it particularly important for women to raise the political status and legitimacy of gender equity issues within parties. This has been an uphill struggle. As pointed out by analysts of gender politics in South Africa:

There is no history or tradition within South Africa which recognises gender conflict as political conflict. South Africans unquestioningly accept the idea of racial conflict, ethnic conflict and religious conflict as being political. (...) The construction of racism and class exploitation by the national liberation movement precludes a gendered analysis of both class and race in South Africa (Charman, De Swardt & Simons, 1991:55-56).(2)

Extended struggle by women within the ANC has resulted in changes to its charter which have made it the standard-bearer of gender equity concerns in politics today. The South Africa Communist Party has tended to see gender conflict as secondary to other forms of social conflict as does the Pan-African Congress (PAC). This is suggested by a statement from Patricia de Lille, the PAC's representative at the transitional negotiations in 1993:

I am an African before I am a woman ... This is the way that all African women should see themselves. Liberal feminists say women face a triple oppression, on the basis of race, gender and class. This is a move away from the main problem (cited in Kemp et al., 1995:149).

The Democratic Party takes a liberal approach to gender equality (with the stress on equal opportunity over institutional change). The Inkatha Freedom Party, in step with its emphasis on tribal identity, follows the route more conventional to African politics of sporting a massive Women's Brigade (reputed to have 400,000 members) which is described as promoting a secondary role for women in politics and the economy (Hassim, 1991). On the other hand, as testimony to the relative autonomy of the political realm, IFP women representatives and MPs (particularly Suzanne Vos) have certainly not held back from taking a feminist stance on politics since the 1994 elections (Gowans, 1997). The National Party, the party of apartheid, has taken a more traditional perspective on women in politics, opposing affirmative action and abortion.

There is a strong tradition in South Africa of women seeking an autonomous organisational expression for interests which transcend party lines - such as the Federation of South African Women formed in 1953 by women from trade unions and political organisations, which drafted a Women's Charter in 1954 and participated in drawing up the Freedom Charter in 1955. The most dramatic example of cross-party collaboration was the Women's National Coalition (WNC) formed in 1992 to promote women's demands for inclusion and equity in the negotiations for a new South Africa. The 1992 WNC was nationally and indeed globally unprecedented in size and in the diversity of its membership. It represented over 90 national organisations and 13 regional coalitions by the time it had researched and presented the 'Women's Charter for Effective Equality' in February 1994. It brought women from the ANC together with women in the NP; the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the Business and Professional Women's Club, the Vroue Landbou-Unie (the white Afrikaner Women's Agricultural Union) and the Rural Women's Movement from the Transvaal. The political, racial, linguistic, and class differences between these groups were tremendous. The diversity this represents made for an unsustainable coalition, and since the 1994 elections the WNC has been unable to retain its membership or sustain its impact. Nevertheless, the urgency of ensuring women's participation in the
A rapidly unfolding democratisation process was enough to weld the widely different and often opposed groups of women in the WNC into a distinct constituency.

The impetus for the WNC's creation was the imperative of participating in the transitional negotiations. There were only 23 women amongst over 400 delegates to the formal negotiations in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The 'mechanics' of participation – essentially a series of highly technical and legalistic negotiations, and conversations between men in closed bilaterals between the two main parties, the ANC and the NP – excluded the majority of women in the country. The WNC lobbied to make this process more accessible to women. Its most publicised success was in pressing for the inclusion of a woman on every delegation to the Multi-Party Negotiating Process (MPNP) which replaced CODESA in March 1993 (Albertyn, 1995).

Some observers of the women's movement in South Africa consider this a phenomenal achievement: 'No other constituency had achieved such recognition during the negotiation process, and no single women's organisation had been able to achieve this kind of legitimacy for women's issues on its own' (Kemp et al., 1995:151). Others are less sanguine, pointing out that women were still excluded from the heart of decision-making, which were the closed bilaterals between the main contenders (Albertyn, 1994:56). Women's lack of technical legal expertise (1) detracted from their capacity to act in women's interests.

The strategy of seeking a numerical expansion of women at the talks was an example of confusing numerical representation with strategic representation. The liberal democratic framework of the MPNP did not admit of the representation of social movements, as opposed to political parties and legal experts. There were no mechanisms for the formal representation of group interests. Women did not act as a caucus within the MPNP, neither did they wield political or economic influence in the way that organised labour did (the congress of South African Trade Unions, COSATU, organised a march of 100,000 workers on the MPNP to demand reconsideration of the constitutional entrenchment of the right to lockout). The WNC set out to enhance communications between women negotiators and women's organisations, but it was extremely difficult to establish a sense of political clout or common interests behind the individual women negotiators compelled to toe party lines.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the interventions of the WNC made the parties involved in the transition aware of an organised women's constituency. Women's interests in gender equity were written into the draft constitution, and women and their concerns became important targets in the election campaign in 1994. Research by the ANC's Elections Commission identified women's issues as one of the four major areas, along with education, housing, and jobs, upon which its campaign should concentrate. This made women aware of their potential leverage on the electoral process, enabling some women politicians to campaign on feminist issues.

Since the 1994 elections the WNC has retreated in importance, and women's associations, like other key anti-apartheid groups, have been literally decapitated, as their leaders have moved from civil society into politics. This has somewhat weakened women's civil society presence, although new leadership capacities are developing. In spite of the loss of a unifying apex organisation, there is still structured engagement by women's associations in policy making, as will be shown in the next section.
To summarise, temporary suspensions of party politics-as-usual in both countries have given women opportunities to organise and express an autonomous position in politics – a position promoting gender equity as a political project. They have also prepared women for democratic competition by providing some space for women’s organisations to institutionalise themselves more firmly. However, starting from a weaker position in Uganda, women’s associations have been more dependent on state patronage than in South Africa.

Women activists and politicians in Uganda and South Africa have targeted constitution-writing processes as a first step in deepening democracy from a gender perspective. The impressive results are state-of-the-art constitutions which have guaranteed women’s equal rights with men. Many of the mechanics of governance and norm-creation in these new democracies have been designed with a view to respecting minorities in these highly diverse and divided societies – a form of ‘democratic counter-majoritarianism’ (Devenish, 1993) – although in the case of South Africa, of course, the objective was to liberate an oppressed majority. Women, though in fact a numerical majority in the population, experience the stigma and marginalisation associated with politically powerless sociological minorities. This is particularly so for poor, rural, and in South Africa, black and coloured women. Consequently, they benefit from constitutional minority rights protections such as a Bill of Rights, a public ombudsman or public protector, commissions on human rights and equal opportunities, and proportional representation which facilitates minority representation in a multi-party system (Ibid.). Women in civil society in both countries have made a point of trying to ensure that guarantees of gender equity overrule protections for cultural rights and the jurisdiction of customary law. In this they have not been unambiguously successful, reflecting the extent to which traditional patriarchs remain critical power brokers even under the new democratic dispensations. The challenge to customary law by women is a critical first step, however, in translating public democracy into democracy in the home, and into economic democracy, as constitutional democracy stands in the way of some women’s equal rights to property ownership and legal adulthood.

Political Measures to Bring Women into Electoral Politics

The second aspect of efforts to consolidate women’s ‘democratic presence’ has been institutional reform in the electoral process. In both Uganda and South Africa, women have been able to impress upon the leading political movements – the NRM and the ANC – the need to take measures to guarantee space for women in legislatures to bypass the entrenched male-preference of voters and of male-dominated party selectorates.

Uganda

In Uganda, affirmative action has been the basic political mechanism used by Museveni to encourage women’s political participation in the Local Council (until 1996 this was known as the Resistance Council) governance system. This five-tier system starts from the village, in which Local Councils are directly elected. Village LCs send representatives to the next tier of government, and so on up to the National Assembly in Kampala (each of the country’s 32 districts is divided into five administrative zones, with Local Councils at each level). A special seat for women – the Secretary for Women’s Affairs – is mandatory amongst the nine seats at each of the five LC levels. The objective is to institutionalise representation of women as a special
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group. Each District elects a woman representative to sit in the National Assembly. Although initially the existence of this special seat associated women’s participation in local politics solely with women’s issues, women have been competing in ever greater numbers in local elections over the last decade for other seats on these councils, with a few winning the chairperson’s seat in the 1992 local elections. (3)

The system has resulted in an increasingly substantial presence of women in government: since 1989 women have occupied 18 per cent of National Assembly seats – the majority of these seats being those reserved through affirmative action. In addition, although there is no explicit affirmative action provision in the civil service, by 1995 women were reasonably well-represented by virtue both of direct appointments and regular promotional processes: 21 per cent of Permanent Secretaries, 26 per cent of under-secretaries, and 16 per cent of District Administrators. Museveni has made a point of putting women in politically sensitive, extremely high-profile positions, such as the 1988 appointment of Betty Bigombe as Minister for the Pacification of the North, where she has been the most prominent negotiator in Uganda’s persistent civil war. In a country whose agriculture is dominated by women, the president has insisted on appointing women as Ministers of Agriculture. In 1994 he appointed a woman, Specioza Wandira Kazibwe, as vice-president, a first for Africa. He has appointed very few women to Cabinet posts, however.

There is considerable debate amongst feminists in Uganda on the merits of the affirmative action system (see especially Tamale, 1997, and Ahikire, 1994). While its success in bringing more women into politics has been applauded, it is clear that it has not been an effective tool for ensuring the representation of women’s interests. Right from the village level, the women elected as Secretary of Women’s Affairs tend not to be the more radical women involved in women’s associations. This is because male voters tend to reject those candidates in favour of more malleable women who are linked to the local male power structure; women who are related to dominant village men, who will participate in sustaining the hold of a traditional group over a local community (Tripp, 1994:116). In some areas where women local councillors are not in a painful minority of one, there is some evidence that women have made an impact on decision-making at local levels over women’s practical needs for water, sanitation, and schools (Elson and Evers, 1997:21). However, they face pressures from husbands and local communities not to stand for election at the county and district levels (LC 4 and 5) where strategic policy and budgetary decisions are made (Ibid.).

The presence of a greater number of women at the national level does seem to offer more opportunities for building support for gender equity concerns, as evidenced by the effectiveness of caucusing amongst women Constituent Assembly delegates (where they were 18 per cent of delegates) over women’s issues in the constitution. A Women’s Caucus has also been formed in the National Assembly. It also includes representatives of workers, the disabled, and a category of men labelled ‘Gender Sensitive Males’ by Women’s Caucus members. As a result it constitutes the largest organised caucus in the National Assembly. In spite of this, its impact has been limited. Only a minority of women representatives project themselves as feminists in political debates. The women who are in affirmative action district seats are selected through an all-male electoral college (4), which can favour the selection of fairly conservative women (Tamale, 1997:124). Women representatives who are interested in gender equity have faced considerable opposition to efforts to promote women’s interests, particularly in relation to development planning decisions. The Women’s Caucus has, however, been able to bring women together across the Assembly on the issue of domestic violence, resulting in substantial support for legislation to enforce
better policing and sentencing of perpetrators of domestic violence. An emerging issue over which women are uniting is the promotion of women’s rights to land ownership.

One problem with the affirmative action system is that it risks creating a gendered enclave for women’s political participation, with electorates assuming that the reserved seats are the only legitimate spaces for women candidates. This became apparent in the 1994 Constituent Assembly elections, in which 39 women ran against male candidates for county seats (9 won). Some of these candidates were told by voters not to fight in the election for county representatives, but to wait for the separate election a few weeks later for the seats representing special groups, including the seat of the women’s LC delegate for each District (Kasente, 1994).

Precisely these kinds of problems with the affirmative action system have spurred greater numbers of women to contest open seats. They seek to base their political legitimacy on constituency support, and sometimes also campaign on women’s rights issues. Some women have treated the affirmative action seats as the first step into competitive politics, with ten of the women who were in affirmative action seats in the 1989 parliament competing against men for county seats in the 1996 elections (six won) (Tamale, 1997:119).

The affirmative action system has had the great value of providing space for increasing the numerical representation of women in politics, pending the development of a women’s movement better able to mobilise electoral support for them. The absence of party divisions has created opportunities for feminist activists amongst women politicians to galvanise others into acting as genuine representatives of women, as is currently being demonstrated in the united front women parliamentarians are building on issues of domestic violence and women’s rights to land ownership. Effective collaboration was also demonstrated in the Constituent Assembly by the Women’s Caucus, a non-partisan organisation animated by feminist politicians such as the county seat holder Winnie Byanyima. This Caucus was responsible for the progressive provisions on gender written into the 1995 Constitution, ensuring that the final Ugandan constitution recognises gender equality under the law, prohibits laws, customs, and traditions that undermine the position of women, provides for the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission to see that constitutional principles are enforced, and provides for an expansion of the numbers of women representatives to a minimum of one-third of parliament and local government bodies. This last provision suggests that in spite of ambivalence regarding the perceived legitimacy of access to politics through affirmative action, it is still seen as necessary in overcoming gender biases in the electoral system.

**South Africa**

In South Africa the party list version of the proportional representation system has been a key electoral tool for bringing large numbers of women into office, confirming research which shows the greater amenability of this system to the inclusion of women (Norris, 1985). The 1994 elections returned 109 women to the National Assembly – 27 per cent of the seats. Political scientists such as Hyden have celebrated PR as a means of ‘de-localising’ the vote to promote the representation of marginalised social groups in ethnically fractured societies (Hyden, 1995). This can work to women’s advantage too; the party list version of PR helps to undermine voter reluctance to select women candidates because the focus of the vote is on the party,
not the individual candidates. Another advantage of the ‘de-localising’ effect of the PR system is that it allows candidates to campaign on issues which are sometimes controversial, such as women’s gender interests, which would otherwise be downplayed when candidates are responding to the conservative common denominator of voters in a constituency.

Dramatic evidence of the power of PR in overcoming local prejudices against women is to be seen in the results of the local government elections in South Africa, which were a combination of PR and ward-based voting. For every party except the right-wing Freedom Front and the left-wing PAC (from which, respectively, just nine and two women were elected), the PR system returned far more women to local government office than did the ward system. In the ANC, of the 911 women elected (24.6 per cent of the total ANC winners), 717 won through the PR system and only 194 through the ward system (election results fact sheet, IDASA, 1997). The impact of ward-based conservatism in selecting women candidates resulted in the poorer showing women made at the local level compared to the national level. Women won just 19 per cent of local councillor positions across the country.

The PR system cannot promote women candidates in male-dominated parties without an explicit commitment, usually underlined by clear quotas, to fronting women candidates.(5) After considerable internal struggle, in October 1993 women in the ANC succeeded in winning agreement to a self-administered quota of 30 per cent women on the ANC party list, and most other parties joined in this voluntary quota for the 1994 elections. The ANC’s list of 200 candidates, which included 66 women, clustered most of them on the bottom 15 per cent of the list. There were only two women: Winnie Mandela and Albertina Sisulu, in the top 30 positions, and 19 women in the bottom 30.

Quotas on party lists for women are more effective than reserved seats. Women who win are seen as having a legitimate presence as political participants, and if they have campaigned partly on gender issues, they can claim a legitimate mandate to represent these issues in government. However, a serious problem with this system – the reverse side of the detachment or ‘de-localisation’ of candidates from particular constituencies – is that it places great power in the hands of the central or provincial party which compiles these lists, making women candidates beholden primarily to the party hierarchy, not to a particular constituency.(6) Women face a difficult trade-off: the price of access to power is subordination to the party hierarchy, unless they can establish themselves as national electoral assets to their party – in the way Winnie Mandela has done.(7) And as the case of Winnie Mandela suggests, it is not through taking explicitly feminist positions that women cultivate electoral loyalty, but rather, as in her case, by pursuing a very populist political agenda and developing a personality cult.

On the one hand, the PR system makes women’s position in politics more tenable and legitimate because they have achieved it through popular election. On the other hand, their freedom to raise feminist concerns, particularly if these are seen as oppositional and divisive, is more tenuous. Without a constituency they cannot threaten to deliver their local popularity – their seat – to another party in the next election, since no-one voted for them specifically. They have no leverage to exert if their party neglects issues of importance to them. Ideally, the women’s movement could serve as a constituency providing this leverage for women in government, and to some extent it does. But the break-up of the Women’s National Coalition after the 1994 elections has
weakened the capacity of women's organisations to support cross-party action in women's interests, or to make demands on politicians with a single voice. Women's associations now coalesce across social and ethnic divisions on specific issues, such as violence against women, rather than seeking expression as a coherent and singular women's movement.

These kinds of constraints have undermined women's capacities to act across party lines in the National Assembly. A parliamentary women's caucus does exist but has not risen above party competition between ANC and NP parliamentarians. In two major gender-specific debates held in Parliament in 1996, women divided along party lines: the debates over pornography, and abortion. The women's caucus within the ANC, on the other hand, is very strong, and the ANC's majority in government means that this group has been able to press parliament into acting on some of the constitutional protections of women's rights.

Notable successes so far have included passage of an abortion rights bill, and challenging the government to appoint powerful feminists on its Commission on Gender Equality. ANC women MPs are behind the creation of the 'Ad Hoc Parliamentary Committee on Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women in South Africa' to review government legislation for its gender implications, and to monitor the situation of women in the country. In late 1996 the ANC Women's Caucus initiated a parliament/NGO task force on Violence Against Women, and in early 1997, in response to the rape of a prominent feminist activist on Robben Island, women across most parties joined in supporting the task force's campaign against violence against women, which included lobbying for the reform of magistrates' courts and the police system to sentence offenders more systematically, and to police more sensitively. Women's strength in civil and political society is evident from the fact that the campaign generated a rapid response: by mid-1997 the Departments of Justice, and Safety and Security had declared violence against women a priority crime.

Through each of these legislative battles, the women's movement has been strengthening its capacity to recover from its post-transition exhaustion and to engage in politics in a structured way. Democratisation has multiplied fora and opportunities for consultation, and women's associations have been particularly involved in policy debates over the reform of the country's social welfare system, particularly debates in early 1997 over the re-orientation of the child benefit system to respond to the needs of poor coloured and black women. As will be shown in the next section, however, women in both civil and political society have found it harder to break into debates on economic policy.

In sum, political measures which involve affirmative action have been necessary in both Uganda and South Africa to increase the numbers of women in legislatures. But whether these women are able to bring the developmental concerns of all women into the political process depends largely on their personal proclivities; on a contingent and not structural variable. This issue is blurred by the language used to justify special measures to bring women into legislatures; in Uganda, affirmative action is justified as a means to represent women as a group, without measures to enhance connections between women representatives and the women's movement. In South Africa, the strength of women's associations and their support for women politicians gives the latter a stronger and more direct mandate to represent women's interests.
A problem for women both in Uganda and South Africa is that they have no realistic political options outside of the NRM or the ANC. There are no other social-democratic alternatives with any prospects for electoral success. The lack of political alternatives rather restricts the political leverage of women within their parties, both of which are likely to continue to dominate politics in their respective countries for some time to come.

From Politics to Policies

In both countries democratization processes have been relatively sensitive to the need to enhance women's political participation, but has this resulted in greater gender equity in development policy-making? In both countries there are growing numbers of women in power who profess a commitment to gender equity, and they are backed up by a substantial civil society presence of organised women. This ought in principle lead to an impact on economic decision-making, but it has not been this simple. For a start, it is too early to make a fair assessment of the impact of women politicians on policy, as it takes a long time for a group which is so new to politics to learn the rules and to use them effectively. Secondly, it is difficult to trace direct connections between women politicians and policy outcomes because of the many different factors which affect the making, adopting, and implementing of policy. Thirdly, as the women politicians interviewed for this paper suggested, to look for a direct policy impact is to overestimate the power of parliamentarians. Many of them had been surprised by their relative lack of power when they entered office, particularly in the arena of economic reform policy, which is shaped by international economic forces and fashions which seemed to these politicians to be relatively impervious to domestic political manipulation. And finally, to expect an immediate feminist impact on policy even if there is a feminist presence in political and civil society is to greatly underestimate the obstructive effect on women's political effectiveness of the very masculine culture and environment of politics. Although this paper cannot investigate this problem, it is discussed in a study by Sylvia Tamale for the Ugandan National Assembly, and by Hannah Britton for the South African parliament. Both describe problems faced by women representatives ranging from ridicule, exclusion from key informal discussions, to sexual harassment. So intense is the sense of alienation this produces, that in the South African parliament, half of a sample of women representatives interviewed by Britton claimed they would not seek office again (Britton, 1997:1).

This section examines primarily the impact of formal measures to institutionalise a concern with gender equity at the heart of economic policy-making. The difficulty of both legitimising feminist politics and gender-sensitising state institutions has promoted the pursuit of bureaucratic strategies to institutionalise a space for women in the state – strategies such as creating special bureaucratic 'machinery' for the representation of women's interests.

Uganda

In an analysis of gender issues in Uganda's economic reform programme, Diane Elson and Barbara Evers conclude that women have not shared equally in Uganda's impressive growth – averaging six per cent a year since 1987. Its structural adjustment programme has taken a particular toll on women, whose labour obligations have increased in the production of new export crops, without a commensurate growth in
their control of the proceeds (Ibid: 24). This is suggested by persistently poor welfare indicators for women and children. Furthermore, there is some evidence of a drop in the access of women and girls to health care and education, because user fees for health care are too high for women, and because girls are withdrawn from school to assist in export crop production or housework (Ibid: 25).

Elson and Evers note that the increased numbers of women in national political decision-making has had little impact on public expenditure decisions, which do not reduce gender-based price distortions or lift institutional barriers to women's capacities to profit from their labour. They posit that:

[It]his may be because, in absolute terms, there are not yet enough women in positions of power; or it may be that women have insufficient voice in public expenditure decisions; or that the few women in positions of power do not share the priorities of poorer women (Ibid: 25).

All three points may be right, but certainly it is true that there have been barriers to women's participation in public expenditure decisions. In Uganda the gender issue has been institutionalised through the establishment of a separate women's ministry: the Ministry of Gender and Community Development. Although responsible for initiating and coordinating 'gender-responsive development' across economic development sectors, it has a limited capacity to do this because it is small and underfunded.

The gender interest in policy remains a step behind major economic planning initiatives; neither the Gender Ministry nor powerful feminist politicians are included in national economic planning processes. This seems obvious from the exclusion of gender equity concerns from Uganda's national planning document, the 1993-96 Rehabilitation and Development Plan, which is the 'single most comprehensive statement of Government's principal social and economic policies' (GoU, 1993:1). This plan is primarily concerned with co-ordinating macro-economic stabilisation measures and structural adjustment in agriculture, industry, and the social sectors. There is an emphasis on encouraging private initiative and a stronger export-orientation in productive sectors through privatisation and market liberalisation. Three paragraphs under a small sub-heading on 'Women in Development' reiterate the government's commitment to integrating gender in development, and acknowledge that women 'are the overwhelming majority of the producers in agriculture which is the mainstay of the economy' (Ibid: 58). But in the rest of the document, gender is not integrated into planning assumptions regarding the impact of liberalisation on patterns of labour and asset deployment in productive sectors such as agriculture, nor the impact of higher prices for basic commodities on domestic consumption budgets.

The Ministry of Gender and Community Development has been excluded from key economic policy discussions in other areas where gender issues are recognised as critical, such as poverty reduction. For example, the Ministry has not been invited to join a Poverty Assessment Consultative Group which was formed in 1995 for line ministries and donors to develop a National Action Plan for Poverty Reduction in Uganda (Elson and Evers, 1997:20). An important constraint has been the difficulty of building skills in gender-sensitive economic analysis in the Ministry itself or amongst sympathetic bureaucrats. Linked to this is the lack of economic analysis capability in women's civil society organisations. This emerged in 1996-97, when the normally secretive World Bank and Uganda's Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
threw open their joint economic planning process in highly publicised consultations with 'civil society' over the Country Assistance Strategy (a World Bank/government policy paper). Women's groups were invited to participate, but as Hellen Wangusa, of the African Women's Policy Network, suggested in feedback to the World Bank, women were unable to make much of an impact, having no idea what a CAS is. She argued that many of the conditions of 'participation' were insensitive to women. The technical language was an enormous obstacle, with economic planners making few allowances for women's lack of economic literacy (or even basic literacy). And the time-frame for involving them in 'participation' or 'consultation' was too short; the nine months provided by the Bank and the government's tight economic planning and project preparation framework was insufficient for women's groups to develop sufficient policy knowledge and bargaining skills (World Bank, 1997:18).

According to Tamale, the Ministry maintains formal and informal links with women legislators through conferences at district and national levels (1997:112). The Ministry's political role of representing women was implicit in the symbolically powerful fact that its Minister was created the Vice President in 1995. But clearly neither the Ministry nor women politicians have been able to make a significant impact on economic planning. Their impact has been greater in other areas, particularly: raising the political legitimacy of combating violence against women; protecting war and AIDS orphans; improving legislation on domestic violence; and building the awareness of women all over the country about their rights through civics education. These are not insignificant achievements and are also, strikingly, issues which male legislators and bureaucrats have tended to ignore in the past. Since these kinds of issues deal with very fundamental forms of gender oppression, they tackle a first-order constraint on women, a set of obstacles to their capacities to benefit from economic policy opportunities. They tackle a set of problems around women's physical security and knowledge about their own human rights which are in their strategic gender interests to resolve.

**South Africa**

In South Africa, likewise, the representation of gender equity concerns at economic planning levels has remained a step behind policy developments. To begin with, much of the bureaucratic machinery for the representation of gender issues in the public sphere has yet to be fully installed. In response to widespread debate amongst women in civil society, the option of a Women's Department was rejected out of a concern to avoid ghettoising the gender equity interest (Mabandla, 1994). Instead, a package of mechanisms was favoured to allow for the cross-institutional promotion of gender equity - measures such as Departmental gender equity focal points, an Office on the Status of Women to develop a national women's emancipation policy, and a Commission on Gender Equality to keep an independent eye on the promotion of gender equity and the status of women (section 119(3) of the Constitution).

There has been some delay in enacting these measures. Not until two years into the new administration was legislation enacted detailing the remit of the Commission on Gender Equality, and indicating that the Office on the Status of Women would be established in the Office of the Deputy President. The composition of the Commission was not finalised until early 1997, at which point it became clear that its budget was to be just one third of budgets for other commissions, such as those on human rights or youth. More generally, women parliamentarians have complained that gender equity concerns have been forced into second place as other issues, such as the crime situation, are declared grater priorities, without, however, attention being given to
the gendered dimensions of these issues. Although there is considerable political will for action on gender equity, a central obstruction has been the limited capacity of the relevant departments to make new resource commitments and create new institutional structures in the environment of strict fiscal discipline which has been imposed by the economic reform programme adopted by the government. The 1996 neo-liberal Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) programme is framed in the language of current economic orthodoxy of tightly controlled government deficits and in a political context which obliges compromises with business interests. Under these economic and political conditions, and in the absence of either an independent watchdog mechanism in the state, or a vigilant civil society presence, women's interests as a gender in redistribution and in participating in economic restructuring are easily overruled. Another problem is the difficulty of pursuing new agendas in bureaucracies which are little changed from apartheid days – this is a problem which afflicts many other government programmes addressing the vast socio-economic disparities between the races in South Africa.

As a result of the tremendous amount of cauusing amongst women which occurred during the transition to democracy, and included consultations with women across the country, and the elaboration of visionary plans for women's participation in political and economic democracy, women politicians in South Africa and women in civil society have developed significant skills in strategic planning. A draft Women's Empowerment Programme which is the result of consultations by the Gender Unit of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (the ANC's national development plan prior to 1996) will be finalised as the national gender equity policy by the Office of the Status of Women. As in other national contexts, however, there is still a lack of means and skills to 'mainstream' gender equity concerns across all government departments. An important and highly innovative response to this problem and to bureaucratic resistance to internalising gender analysis is the Women's Budget initiative.

The Women's Budget initiative calculates the impact of government expenditure and revenue-raising policies on women, providing a mechanism to audit the impact of public spending on women, and to sensitise economic planning departments to women's different experience of policy measures. It also serves the critically important function of translating highly technical and political discourses surrounding public expenditure into accessible language for women's organisations. Prospects that it will feed into policy-making processes may be enhanced by the appointment in 1996/97, for the first time, of two women to high positions in the Department of Finance: Gill Marcus as the deputy minister, and Maria Ramos as the director general; both are considered potential allies for the women's movement.

Another arena in which efforts have been made to institutionalise women's interests is in the national corporatist body: the National Economic Development Labour Council (NEDLAC). NEDLAC has four chambers: the first three follow corporatist convention in housing representatives of labour, business, and the state. These chambers negotiate economic and trade policies. The fourth chamber houses representatives from civic organisations – and this has provided an arena for women's organisations which have national coverage to articulate women's interests in economic policy. To date, civic organisations have not had an appreciable impact on NEDLAC negotiations – they are constrained by the fact that they have no powers to formulate economic policy, and any proposals they make must be approved by an executive committee on which all four chambers are represented. There is no formal mechanism for the representation of women's interests in the other chambers,
although the trade unions have well-established mechanisms for representing women; they were the first institutions in South Africa to have women's caucuses and gender equity units. Although women are still badly underrepresented in the leadership of COSATU, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, (Nyman, 1996:31), this has not prevented COSATU from defending gender equity concerns, lately in its campaign to include extended paid maternity and parental leave rights in the government's 1997 Basic Conditions of Employment Bill. The toehold for women within South Africa's corporatist institutions holds out promise that women may develop influence in the arena of employment and industrial policy via the same routes used in Scandinavia: enhanced influence on social equity policy in parliament feeding into greater representation of women on corporate bodies.

In sum, the relative lack of political leverage of women and feminists both in and outside of the state in Uganda and South Africa has obliged women to seek a bureaucratic form of representation for the gender equity interest in policy-making. This strategy has had ambivalent results: while it has raised the general level of awareness of gender issues and heightened rhetorical commitments to women's rights, it has not yet resulted in a substantive change to the concepts and priorities guiding economic planning, nor has it yet led to a transformation in the structure of bureaucracies and the character of the state. These kinds of changes take time, and it is unrealistic to expect profound change yet. Given the difficulty of making a direct impact on economic policy, women in both countries have chosen to pursue policy change in other arenas, most notably in policies affecting women's physical security in contexts where violence against women appears to be on the increase, yet is insufficiently proscribed socially, let alone prosecuted legally. These efforts are highly significant: they promote policies which male politicians and bureaucrats are less interested in pursuing, and they are a critical step towards enabling women to participate equitably in the economy and society. They aim to reduce one of the most fundamental transaction costs on women's access to social, economic, and political opportunities, which is the fear, and experience, of gender-based violence.

Conclusion: Interrupting Conversations between Men

More women in politics and a mobilised feminist presence in civil society is probably a good indicator of the extent to which democratic freedoms are shared in a society, but it does not translate automatically into higher well-being for women and more gender-sensitive development policies. Political liberty and liberal constitutionalism in Uganda and South Africa have been important, but not sufficient, conditions for seeking institutional changes to the institutions of democratic competition and public administration which could improve the representation of women's strategic interests. Political liberty has provided women with the space in civil society to organise autonomously and legitimise feminist politics or gender equity concerns, while women's participation in writing new constitutions has provided the opportunity to challenge customary law and the social power of private-sphere patriarchy. Different measures to ease, however slightly, elite male control of party hierarchies – from the extreme of banning party politics in Uganda to the efforts to share space on party lists with women in South Africa – have enabled women to engage in political competition. The creation of new institutions in the state bureaucracy to perform a watchdog function over the impact of government policy on women – such as the Commission on Gender Equality in South Africa – demonstrate political will to improve women's status.

These processes have, however, been slowed by the masculinity of party politics, elite
bargaining, and the functioning of state bureaucracies. The latter, particularly, are extremely slow to react to new gender equity legislation, as witnessed, for example, by the resistance of magistrates and the police system in South Africa to enact gender-sensitive measures to combat violence against women in ways which would challenge male sexual prerogatives. However, the very fact that women in both countries have been able to come together, in political and civil society, to address issues of violence against women does indicate that important changes have been initiated. By demonstrating that violence in gender relations is a development and justice issue, not a private matter, women have politicised an issue which their male counterparts have, historically, failed to take as seriously as women do. This shows that women politicians and activists have been able to make some difference to the conduct and concerns of politics, and are beginning to enhance the accountability of government to women.

States do not achieve autonomy from socially entrenched gender relations merely by including more women in government, although greater numbers of women in policy-making fora is definitely a critical step to changing the culture, concerns, and capacities of government. Thus it is not whether government is liberal democratic or not which affects women's capacity to participate in politics and influence decision-making, but the degree to which it promotes and implements policies on social equality, and the degree of legitimacy enjoyed by feminist social movements and politicians. This does imply a significant degree of political liberty for women to politicise their needs, special measures to get women into politics, and economic policies compensating for their reproductive burden. The latter implies some version of a welfare state, and serious limits are put on gender-sensitive economic policies by the prevailing environment of economic austerity. Like liberal democratic politics, neo-liberal economic planning can admit of measures to enhance women's access to economic opportunities, but denies the legitimacy of efforts to level the playing field (and tamper with the market) in order for women to have substantive control over these opportunities.

Anne Marie Goetz, IDS, University of Sussex. For comments and advice on this article I am grateful to Gordon White, Mark Robinson, Julie Oyegun, Debbie Budlender & Robert Jenkins. A first draft of this article was presented on 10 April 1997, to the joint Gender Colloquium of the University of the Western Cape's Gender Equality Unit, and the University of Cape Town's Africa Gender Institute, where I received useful comments which I acknowledge with thanks. This article is an abridged version of a chapter to appear in: Mark Robinson and Gordon White, forthcoming 1998, The Democratic Developmental State: Politics and Institutional Design, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Endnotes
1. Whereas the majority of male delegates were politicians or lawyers, most of the women were from caring professions such as nursing, education, or social work (Finnemore, 1994:16), with little experience of these kinds of negotiations.

2. Two efforts to overcome the resistance and determined myopia of mainstream parties involved creating women's parties: the South Africa Women's Party, and the Women's Rights Peace Party. Unsurprisingly, both performed poorly in the 1994
elections, where the priority for most voters was to endorse strongly the leading organisations of the anti-apartheid struggle.

3. Interview with Gertrude Njuba, Director of Women’s Affairs, NRM Secretariat, April 1995.

4. The electoral college for women National Assembly representatives in affirmative action seats is composed of people elected from the first three levels of the Local Council system; since the majority of LC officials are men, the electoral college for women national representatives is overwhelmingly male. This system is now under review, with many women affirmative action representatives interested in opening up their electorate to all District residents.

5. In Namibia, for example, a PR system has not automatically ensured women’s numerical representation. There were no official quotas for women on party lists, and only SWAPO placed women on lists to ensure that at least one woman would be elected out of every ten candidates. Each party submitted a list of 72 candidates for the National Assembly, seven parties participated in the elections, and among these, only six women were elected. In contrast, for the local authority elections in 1992 an affirmative action provision stipulating a minimum of 25 per cent of women on party lists resulted in women being elected to approximately 30 per cent of local authority councils.

6. This problem affects men too, as attested by the fate of Patrick Lekota, who was withdrawn from his premiership of the Free State in 1996, in spite of his tremendous local support.

7. The allegations of extensive criminal activity made against Winnie Madikizela Mandela at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in November and December 1997 have deeply undermined her value to the ANC as an electoral asset. At the time of writing this article, the outcome of those hearings was not yet known.

8. See Tamale, 1997, and Britton, 1997. These problems are also discussed in a report on the achievements of women in the first two years of the multi-racial parliament: Serote et al, 1996. In both countries efforts are being made to challenge the masculine culture of politics and to build the political skills of women new to politics. In Uganda, the Forum for Women in Democracy, an NGO, supports women in the National Assembly. In South Africa, the multi-party caucus, the Parliamentary Women’s Group, tries to give practical support to women politicians, while the Speaker’s Office will house a Women’s Empowerment Unit to build women’s political skills and to make efforts to transform the culture of parliament.

9. Britton interviewed 30 per cent of women parliamentarians (Britton, 1997).

10. Interviews with four women parliamentarians in Cape Town: Brigitte Mbandla, Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture (22 April 1997), Pregs Govender (23 April 1997), Melanie Vorwoerd (24 April 1997), Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge (24 April 1997).
11. This initiative is a joint project of the Working Group on Gender and Economic Policy of the Joint Standing Committee on Finance, The Institute of Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), the Law, Race and Gender Research Unit (University of Cape Town), and the Community Agency for Social Inquiry. In its first year the emphasis was on employment, welfare, housing, education, public service, and taxation (Budlender and Govender, 1996). In its second year it focused on the budgets for health; police, corrections and justice; transport; energy; land and agriculture; home and foreign affairs. It also looked at budget reform.

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Debate: Radicalism, Relevance & the Future of ROAPE

Giles Mohan

ROAPE was established at a time when critical scholarship on Africa was rare. Most Africanist journals bore the marks of their colonial origins in that they were generalist and highly empirical. In contrast, ROAPE was set up to provide a radical forum for politically engaged scholars who explicitly challenged neo-colonialism in its various guises, especially the pervasive (and continuing) tendency to privilege the voices of European scholars over those of Africans living and working on the continent.

The journal was also theoretically informed by marxist political economy which was challenging the ideologically charged, but apparently commonsensical, modernisation approaches. Marxist scholars attempted this through various theories of the world system, but what marked ROAPE out as unique was that contributors developed these theoretical insights through engaging, often practically, with struggles on the ground. ROAPE was not simply an 'armchair decoloniser', but sought to analyze common struggles over the meaning and content of 'development'. The editors were self-consciously involved in undermining what they saw to be the causes of Africa's underdevelopment in the post-colonial, cold war cauldron.

ROAPE has never towed a particular left position dogmatically and has continuously engaged with the spectrum of radical perspectives. For me ROAPE has made a number of critical interventions. First, is a concern with power and social class. Although debates have raged about the nature of classes in Africa it cannot be denied that certain political and economic interests are closely tied. Throughout its history ROAPE has shown how class forces have impinged upon national politics, especially the position of the bourgeoisie vis-à-vis imperialism. Second, has been broadening our conceptions of imperialism and the conflicts this creates. Whether it be militarisation during the cold war or policy conditionality under SAPs, ROAPE contributors have retained a view which accounts for the interaction of international and global/local forces. Third, the journal has not been tied to a rigid class line, but sought to create dialogues with other powerful structures within society, most notably gender differences. Fourth, the articles, while theoretically informed, have never been detached from the needs and agendas of radical political activists in Africa either within the state or working in opposition to it.

For these reasons, and many more besides, ROAPE has successfully straddled the divide between academic journal and political mouthpiece. Over the past few years changes have taken place within academia as well as with regard to the causes of and reactions to African underdevelopment. This introduction is not the place to begin to unravel these various strands. While I do not wish to characterise these trends in any simple soundbite, I think it is fair to say that more and more areas of our lives are being subjugated to the dictates of capitalist logic. Whether we call this 'globalization' or 'neo-liberalism' we have seen, over the past two decades, a deepening and
widening of market discipline. And all this is set, perversely, against debates in European and American universities in particular about the fragmentation and difference brought about by/through postmodernism.

So what is at stake is the role that scholarship and activism by scholars can play in continuing to challenge the causes of Africa's underdevelopment in a radical and relevant way. Hence, we hope this debate will chart some key priorities for the future. It was in response to some of these movements that I decided to initiate this debate. I invited a number of ROAPE editors and like-minded colleagues to candidly respond to a series of questions about the political role that ROAPE has played and can continue to play. The aim was not to indulge in self-congratulation, but to build on the past and set out broad agendas for the future. This is important because most universities are increasingly tied into the state's neo-liberal agenda. Certainly, in British universities our work is being more tightly monitored and evaluated and various 'quality assurance' exercises have begun to instil a strong sense of what 'valuable' academic work entails.

For our colleagues in Africa, authoritarian governments have often attempted to silence critical academics so that scholarship is a key site of political struggle. Indeed, in this regard, the fact that ROAPE is not based on the continent is a source of political power itself, enabling a level of critical debate that would be difficult in many of these countries.

Although I did not want to lead the debate in a given direction I did suggest some broad questions which could guide these contributors. They were not intended as a prompt to recall hazy, halcyon days or to encourage narcissistic catharsis, but to stimulate some thoughts about how we might build productively and critically for the future. They were: What do you consider to have been ROAPE's strengths and weaknesses? What do you consider are ROAPE's present strengths and weaknesses? Is there a place for an area-focused political-economy journal given the tendencies towards globalisation and neo-liberalism? What role should radical academics play in political struggle? Should we and how could we involve more non-academics? What forms of research might open up or develop non-repressive political spaces?

The debate is ongoing and will continue in our next issue (No. 77) with contributions that came in as we were going to press. While we welcome contributions from anyone, we cannot guarantee that they will be published. This is not a form of censorship; we want the debate to be as open and honest as possible, but ROAPE's normal standards for submissions do apply. We also want the debate to be as dynamic as possible so we welcome contributions sent electronically which means that they can be typeset and published quickly; deadlines are: 25 June (No. 77), 18 September (No. 78). Please send contributions to: Giles Mohan, Department of Geography, University of Portsmouth, Buckingham Building, Lion Terrace, Portsmouth, PO1 3HE, UK. Tel: 44 + (0)1705 842768; Fax: 44 + (0)1705 842512; e-mail: mohang@geog.port.ac.uk.
ROAPE & the Radical Africanist: What Next?

John S. Saul & Colin Leys

Giles Mohan has invited us to contribute to a debate in these pages 'concerning the future of African studies and of ROAPE's political-intellectual role in this.' He suggests that 'some editors of ROAPE are concerned that the journal has lost the political focus with which it began and which marked it as a radical alternative to the “mainstream”.' Note that in this latter formulation the question is less about the future of African studies per se than it is about the future of 'radical' African studies. It is, in fact, the latter subject that our remarks will chiefly address (1). We do agree with Mohan that this seems a good moment to think aloud about what both ROAPE and radical Africanists are up to – even though we will argue that neither need spend too much time apologising for what they/we have been/are doing. The main challenge is to do 'our thing' even better, and to do it even more relevantly to the considerable complexities of the current moment. We will develop our thoughts by dealing, in turn, with each of the six specific questions Mohan raises in the 'guidelines' he proposes for the debate.

**Question 1:** What do you consider to have been ROAPE's strengths and weaknesses?

**Question 2:** What do you consider are ROAPE's present strengths and weaknesses?

Looking back, for purposes of this exercise, over the 74 issues produced to date we’re most struck by the Review's considerable strengths: there is an accumulation of articles that remain significant points of reference for the ongoing study of Africa, something regularly confirmed by our own experience, and that of our students, in prowling through back-issues as the need arises. Most important is the fact that, over the years, there has been no shifting away from confrontation with the most important, the most radical, questions facing students of Africa. In the ROAPE archive we find accumulated critical documentation of the past twenty-five years of African struggle not easily found elsewhere. At one level, we are tempted merely to say: keep right on keeping on. Ensuring that the flag of progressive theory and analysis remains flying seems more necessary than ever in the face of both neo-liberal triumphalism and defeatism of the ‘TINA’ (‘There Is No Alternative’) variety.

Certainly, there is a continuing need for an English language journal with the kind of focus ROAPE has. Despite the strong efforts of groups like the Association of Concerned Africanist Scholars (ACAS), there is, for example, nothing quite comparable in North America as a highly visible expression of sustained left Africanist scholarship. Nor can we consider ROAPE as anything but complementary to, rather than preemptive of, efforts in Africa itself to keep alive a critical voice. Still, the unfortunate fact is that efforts to do this on the African continent itself have run into real difficulties: political repression and economic constraint (not to mention, as one particular fall-out of these two factors, the new diaspora of African intellectuals) have taken their toll. It is not least because there still exists some political and economic space in the west (and in the western academy) for freedom of manouevre vis-à-vis the conventional wisdom of global capitalist ‘common-sense’ that we can continue to make an important contribution.
In stating this we are assuming that Mohan is not overly preoccupied with more philosophical concerns regarding the ‘authenticity’ of western/northern voices and the appropriateness of their making themselves heard in African studies. As it happens, ROAPE has a very positive record of incorporating into its project African voices (whether from the continent or from the diaspora). More broadly, however, we (as ‘western Africanists’) would not so patronize our African colleagues as to suggest that our ‘right to speak’ compromises their own ability to disagree and debate fruitfully with us. Of course, one does not have to be a post-modernist to grasp the need, not least as regards the tone and style of argument adopted, for sensitivity and increased self-consciousness towards the fact that there are differential points of entry into such debates. But if we ask ourselves the question as to whether progressive African intellectuals would be better off if there were no progressive Africanists elsewhere we think the answer to be self-evidently in the negative and we suspect few, if any, colleagues in Africa would disagree.

We would even suggest that recent global developments may provide firmer ground than ever for intellectual-cum-political interactions across continental and racial divides. Although a global hierarchy does continue to exist – one that is still, in part, defined spatially – there is also an increasingly shared vulnerability in every jurisdiction to the illogic of globalisation and the narrow calculations of corporate power-wielders. Radical Africanists, in embracing the anti-imperialist groundings of our work, have always sought to steer clear of the seductions of a patronising and/or guilt-ridden ‘third-worldism’. But the fact remains that there are now additional reasons why our exchanges can and should be substantive, shared and equal, both as to the challenges we jointly face and the alternatives available to us (compare Albo, 1997; Drydyk and Penz, 1997). In this sense, globalization is a problem but it is also an opportunity.

In sum, ROAPE’s ‘right to speak’ seems to us more a question of the value of its contents (and the appropriateness of its tone) than one of the nature of the enterprise itself. In our judgement, ROAPE, even as it stands, remains a valuable instrument in the hands of radical Africanists and, assuming the editorial group, both broadly and narrowly defined, has the energies to do so, an enterprise worth sustaining. Nonetheless, implicit in this argument is the premise that ‘radical Africanists’ still have something useful to say about Africa’s crisis and its future. It is this premise that we will have to explore further.

Area Studies/Africa

**Question 3:** Is there a place for an area-focused political economy journal given the tendencies towards globalisation and neo-liberalism?

One further preliminary point. We have emphasized the crucial importance of ‘globalization and neo-liberalism’, both in the preceding paragraphs and elsewhere (Leys, 1994; Leys, 1996). Why, then, Africa? The critical interrogation of our continental focus here implied by Mohan finds resonance in recent, more general writing on the ideological nature (both implicit and explicit) of much that has come to pass for area-studies in the academy, especially in North America. Ravi Palat, for example, sees conventional area studies, in ‘the sheer arbitrariness of the geopolitical segmentation of the globe’ that it institutionalizes, both as serving imperial needs and as continuing, negatively, ‘to perpetuate and reinforce the series of binary oppositions between an essentialized and totalized West and its equally essentialized and totalized other(s)’ (Palat, 1996:272). However, we would suggest – it does not seem a
very bold point to make – that area studies can be carried out from an anti-imperialist perspective as well as from an imperialist one. Thus, even Palat (311) concludes his critical attack (from a world-system theory perspective) on area-studies with an invocation of the necessity ‘to locate particular configurations of social relations within larger contextual frameworks.’ Precisely (2).

For Africa does seem to have a sufficiently individual ‘configuration of social relations’ to warrant attention in its own terms. At one level, in terms of the *longue durée*, Africa has had a distinctive history, one epitomized by John Iliffe as follows: ‘Africans have been and are the frontiersmen who have colonised an especially hostile region of the world on behalf of the entire human race’ (Iliffe, 1995:1). Other scholars have sought to identify, albeit controversially, the specificity of certain shared cultural sensibilities said to characterize much of sub-Saharan Africa (see the various African views on this subject collected in Eze, 1997). Nor can one doubt the crucial importance of the slave trade both in scarring the continent in a quite particular way and in providing a uniquely shared symbol of oppression. Moreover, among the descendants of the diaspora created by that trade there lie black constituencies in Europe and the Americas for whom the emotional and political salience of Africa’s particularity as a continent is very powerful indeed (3). More recently, scholars concerned to explore the process of globalization have also insisted on identifying the distinctiveness of Africa’s mode of insertion into that process (both under formal colonialism and contemporaneously) and of the continent’s particular vulnerability to it (Ake, 1995; Hoogvelt, 1997).

More actively, ‘Africa’, even ‘sub-Saharan Africa’, has been ‘constructed’ not merely by history (or by American social scientists and foundations), but also through the very ‘imagining’ of it by Africans and through their acting upon that sense of continental-cum-racial particularity. Pan-Africanism and the continental sweep of African nationalism; the Organization of African Unity and the OAU Liberation Committee; the Frontline States and the Thirty Years’ War for Southern African Liberation; the widely-shared commitment (movingly evoked in Zeleza, 1994) to redemocratisation and continental rebirth of recent years: these are some of the expressions of self-creation that have served to complement more ‘objective’ criteria of African specificity and give them life. Of course, in radical Africanist theory, it is a challenge to grasp clearly and present with sufficient nuance the tension that must inevitably exist between continental and global levels of determination (both as alternative yet overlapping nexuses of oppression and exploitation on the one hand, and as diverse focusses of resistance on the other). But the same subtlety is demanded when we expand the referent to take into account the competing claims to our consideration of community, nation and region/sub-region as well. Certainly, we see no prima facie reason to question the bona fides of radicals who want also to be Africanists.

**Academics**

**Question 4:** What role should radical academics play in political struggle?

**Question 5:** Should we and how could we involve more non-academics?

We must be careful about the way in which we deploy the word ‘academic’. Too often it is twisted into a sneer and used both by enemies and even friends to oversimplify the nature of our intellectual-cum-political practice. And sometimes we ourselves become too apologetic about our role. There is no inherent necessity to do so even if this word – ‘academic’ – has come to seem tainted for many on the left. Would the
term 'left-intellectuals' (or 'intellect-workers') serve better? But Gramsci has warned us of the necessity to grant to 'intellectuals' a much more expansive definition. Elsewhere Saul has used another term, 'scholar-activist', to make the point we wish to reinforce here and perhaps this is good enough (Saul, 1990; Saul, 1993). The words used are, in any case, less important than what they are crafted to evoke: which is the fact that, in our role as 'radical-Africanists' of the academy, we can have the space and the time to research, to debate, to raise issues in a particular (somewhat more leisureed) way that doesn't always come easily to others more immediately and 'practically' engaged. In consequence, we can hope to make a distinctive contribution to the task of discerning a line of march and revealing various problems, possibilities and complexities—always assuming, once again, that we sustain a critical self-consciousness about the inevitable limitations of our own perspectives and remain open to as wide a range of voices and experiences as possible.

No doubt it is also true, as Mohan further suggests, that some of this 'space and time'—some of ground for sustaining a 'right of refusal of the conventional wisdom'—is now being lost, especially in British academic life. There, in his view, academic work is being depoliticised by 'being more tightly monitored and evaluated and various "quality assurance" exercises have begun to instill a strong sense of what "valuable" academic work entails', giving rise to 'a trend towards more scholarly, abstract and purely theoretical work.' One result of this, Mohan asserts (here, however, perhaps merely paraphrasing the view of certain [unnamed] others), is that

what is seen to be missing in ROAPE are the previous concerns with political struggles on the ground ... Rather than involving ourselves in these struggles we prefer to use them to 'test' some novel theoretical position.

We would not for a moment underestimate the dangers to 'radical Africana' posed by such pressures towards increased commodification and ideological conformity in academic work. We worry, however, about the implications of Mohan's way of invoking the demon of theoreticism in phrasing the point. For his formulation seems to us to run the risk of blurring crucial distinctions and understating, in consequence, the need for scholarly theory of a different kind. The fact is that scientific investigation cannot be separated from theory any more than theoretical concerns can themselves be abstracted from political choices. And it is theories grounded in radical commitments that shape our scholarly undertakings and encourage us to discover things scientifically that more conventional theories merely serve to hide from sight (Resnick and Wolff, 1987; Stretton, 1969). In short, radical social scientists are engaged, willy-nilly, in 'theoretical practice'.

True, many if not most radical academic Africanists have been drawn to Africa (and also to their vocation as radical Africanists) not only by 'accidents' of autobiography but also by political practice of a more immediate kind (for example, campaigns of the anti-apartheid/anti-landmine variety; participation in the NGO sector, or in the alternative media). Continuing involvement in this kind of practice can help to keep radicalism (and 'committed science') alive. Yet it is not appropriate to narrow the notion of appropriate scholarly 'practice' merely to those limits. To do so would be to risk wiping away the importance of what we, as scholars, as workers, 'really do'. As suggested above, a large part of what we really do is, must be, the 'testing [of] novel theoretical positions'. Indeed, we would argue that what radical Africanists now need are, precisely, novel ways to think about— to theorize— both the present workings of the global capitalist system (in Africa and beyond) and the likely sites and agencies of possible resistances to it.
In short, for us the lure of narrow academicism seems less serious a problem for radical Africanists than is confusion – a confusion that is at once both theoretical and political. For there is a deep-seated uncertainty as to how we are to conceptualize the Africa that confronts us, a lack of clarity that, in many ways, haunts Africans themselves. This confusion is understandable: the world is not as it once was (if indeed it ever was!). In consequence, those associated with ROAPE are not so much distanced by 'lack of concern' from political struggles as dogged by the present drying up of (relatively) clear and unequivocal radical practice ('practical' and 'theoretical') both in Africa and, *vis-à-vis* Africa, in countries of the North.

At its origins and for much of its life to date ROAPE as a radical enterprise has seemed borne along (hopefully, if not always 'realistically' perhaps) on the bubble of apparent revolutionary possibility evidenced in Africa itself. Like many progressives on the continent, ROAPE-related scholar-activists have often appeared content to assume, as the very air we breathed, the self-evident underpinnings of our radical practice (and of the premises for a radical projection of alternative futures for Africa). This has been a mind-set based, in turn, on a lingering confidence that, in significant measure, such issues were being taken care of by history: by the existence in Africa of seemingly real enough socialist projects, from Guinea and Ghana to Mozambique, and the existence outside Africa of real enough solidarity movements, including the anti-apartheid struggle; and by the troublingly ambivalent, but also real, existence of historical alternatives apparently chosen by the Russians and Chinese. But with the defeat – failure perhaps, but defeat certainly – of Africa's socialist projects, and the collapse of Soviet communism, the sometimes unreflected premises of our radicalism have had to be re-examined.

We will assess, in our next section, some of the challenges these changes might be thought to pose for 'theoretical practice' and for 'scholar-activism' of the kind we have chosen to emphasize here. First, though, what of the other of Mohan's questions reproduced at the beginning of this section: Is one way out of our problems to be found through forging different kinds of links with 'non-academics'? We may now sense that this question rests a bit uneasily on distinctions – between 'theory' and 'practice', for example – that are not always so very easy to make or to sustain. But assume for the moment that they are and that we know, common-sensibly, what we are talking about. Would anyone doubt that it is essential for 'radical Africanists' to be in close touch with those who are engaged more directly in whatever struggles are in progress on the ground (in Africa, and, *vis-à-vis* Africa, elsewhere)? Of course, most of us would like to think we are doing this already in the course of our work. But, once again, increased self-consciousness and diligence in pursuing such contacts will help, especially in these rather bleak times when we are that much less confident in our sense of where the most important voices challenging the status quo are to be heard. Clearly, ROAPE as a journal must continue to seek out and reflect such struggles and to hear such voices, not only through research trips and other contacts with the continent but also, where finances and energies permit, by being even more active in bringing African activists and journalists, artists and writers, to participate in workshops, assume fellowships, and the like.

Yet we would resist any notion that ROAPE can easily become – or indeed should pretend/hope to become – some kind of chap-book or clearing-house for African revolutionaries, even if more articles from African radicals 'outside the academy' were published in its pages. We reaffirm that, in terms both of meaningful practice and of geographical siting, ROAPE as presently conceived, fits into a perfectly
plausible division of labour amongst radicals *vis-à-vis* Africa. The question is not whether or not we should continue to theorize and to investigate as scholar-activists, but rather how we should go about carrying out both these tasks in a much more meaningful and illuminating manner.

**Radical Research**

**Question 6: What forms of research might open up or develop non-repressive political spaces?**

Having affirmed the vocation of 'radical Africanists' (and of *ROAPE* as an important vehicle of expression for such Africanists), it is, for us, precisely this latter question that seems most central to the necessary soul-searching Mohan wishes to evoke. If our own response to this question seems more like a check-list of further questions to be explored by ourselves and others, this is no accident. For it may serve to remind us just how much work there is for *ROAPE* to do in order to help make sense of the novel and complex terrain that Africa presents to us. It also suggests the degree to which this work must link 'theoretical practice' (concept-formation, broad generalization, theoretical elaboration) to case-studies and back again in a more focussed and cumulative manner than *ROAPE* has easily managed to realize in recent times (5).

The starting-point for an answer to Mohan's final question, then, has to be an Africa-oriented analysis of the dynamics of the global economy and the political forces that are driving it. The African experience of globalization, above all in the form of 'structural adjustment' imposed by the Bank, the IMF, and aid 'donor' consortia, has been extensively researched and reported, not least in *ROAPE*. There is also a burgeoning general literature on globalization (and on the nature of the interface this process provokes between the novel imperatives of global corporate activity and those of the established international system of states). But there have so far been few studies of the logic of global capitalism as it works its way through the African continent. Few articles, and no books, have attempted even the kind of typology and initial conceptualisation of this process that Chris Allen (1995), for example, has proposed for African politics in his remarkable article, 'Understanding African Politics'. What, for example, are the main sectors of the global economy into which the different regions and states of Africa are integrated? What are the main 'market forces' at work in Africa – transnational corporations, local capitals, constellations of local producers and/or traders – and what are the strategies (local, regional, national, global) governing their actions? How far can we specify a conceptual framework that grasps this complex of actors and processes? Do we yet have an adequate map of globalised capitalism as it now works in and on Africa? And what are the chief contradictions involved?

As a corollary to this, do we yet have an adequate understanding of the dynamics of the international financial institutions themselves, through which so much of the political project of deregulation and marketisation has been implemented in Africa? The literature on the policies comprised in 'structural adjustment', their implementation and their effects, is relatively rich; but how well do we understand the political processes through which these policies are formulated and adopted (the global corporate lobbying process, the role of the US and other state apparatuses, the role of various strata of the global intelligentsia in rationalising them, the inner dynamics of the research and monitoring that purports to validate them, and so on)? These questions go beyond a purely African focus; yet Africa, as a major field of application of World Bank/IMF policy, and, as a continent only able to resist external pressure
through well-informed solidarity (both between African states and between Africa and other parts of the world), has the strongest reasons for knowing the answers to such questions.

While the above agenda is large, its formulation in these terms omits the domestic political dimension, a second crucial front for the analysis not only of the effects of capitalist accumulation and the operations of the IFIs in Africa, but also of the contradictions inherent in these processes. Once again Chris Allen’s ground-breaking article may be cited as a model of the kind of synthesis and typology that is called for (6). We need a systematic analysis of the formation and deformation of classes in African social settings that these processes entail; of the way bourgeois or proto-bourgeois classes are formed, strengthened, united and organised, but also blocked, coopted, assimilated and divided by these processes; of the way other classes and social categories are crystallised, mobilised, linked – or fragmented, demobilized, dissociated, blurred – in the same general movement; of the way ethnicity, gender, language, religion and other bases of identity are rendered more or less salient, with both progressive and reactionary potential. These processes are general, but their effects fall into a number of recognisable patterns, which need to be established and compared, and their dynamics theorised.

ROAPE has published a great deal of information about these themes, especially on classes and class relations. What is being envisaged here is no more than that this work should be carried forward, as far as possible, as part of a collective quest for emerging patterns and the structures and dynamics which underlie them – a quest whose implicit aim is to help identify the emerging social base for, and means of, resistance to capital’s African agenda and support for a viable alternative. Inevitably, there will be strenuous debate about the likely agents of possible progressive struggle (classes, ‘identity’ groups, including, importantly, gender-based initiatives, ‘new social movements’), the likely sites (community, nation, region, continent and global arena) and the likely organizational mechanisms (states, parties and movements; trade unions, cooperatives and women’s groups; demonstrations, riots and revolutions). Our only guideline for such a debate would be that we remain as open to learning fresh lessons from newly emergent contestations in Africa as from working the changes on lessons (both positive and negative) drawn from the past (see, in this regard, the exchange between Barker and Leys, 1997).

This brings us to our third and final theme, one which we would tentatively label ‘practical utopianism’. In the past, we have suggested earlier, radical thinking about alternative African futures ‘floated on the bubble of possibility’ of a particular kind of radical transformation of African social conditions. With that bubble burst, imaginative thought is needed about attractive and credible alternative futures. What conditions must such thought meet in order to be credible? Gavin Kitching once identified as a constraint that populist dreams in Africa had not hitherto overcome the absence of an economic model capable of constantly raising productivity – and he suggested capitalism still to be the only possible agent for doing so. Yet how far has his formulation been made irrelevant by capitalism’s relegation of so much of Africa’s one billion people to the status of ‘supernumeries of the human race’? That is to say, in conditions, now increasingly common in Africa, in which no prospect seems to exist of capitalism developing the means of production and raising per capita incomes, would a vision based on merely assured subsistence now suffice? Or, for any imaginable future African alternative, what imaginable changes in the world’s current trading and investment regime must be presupposed? How far has the
historical project of socialism been exhausted? Does the discourse of radical democracy offer Africa more? Is the thesis of Davidson and others that surviving precapitalist cultures of equity and accountability can and must be the basis of a new African model valid (see Leys, 1994)? In short: if maoism, 'marxismo-leninismo', ujamaa, consdencism, African humanism and the rest are discredited, what is to take their place?

The questions are endless and dismayingly huge, but unavoidable if we are to move beyond criticism to critique, beyond charting the continent’s injuries and registering and supporting ‘resistance’, to articulating a vision of something else worth struggling for. ROAPE can and should be an important forum for this, above all for giving wide currency to the creative ‘utopian’ thinking of Africa’s political intellectuals and permitting people outside Africa to contribute their experience, reflections and objections as well.

Endnotes

1. Radical? Note that, central though it is to the debate, we offer no easy preliminary definition of this term, since, as we will see, part of our present challenge is to think through more clearly just what being ‘radical’ in and about Africa can now mean, both analytically and politically. As a first approximation, might we perhaps agree that the ‘radical Africanist’ project has something to do with understanding Africa from a perspective that validates the struggle for gender, racial and post-class equality, for genuine popular empowerment, and for viable, sustainable and anti-imperialist economic policies.

2. The complete citation from which this formulation of Palat’s is drawn may also be of interest since it implicates, in an interesting way, some of the themes explored in the previous section: ‘In the context of the widening disparities in income and wealth between the core and the periphery, and the resultant imbalances in library facilities, computer facilities, and the like, scholars located in the core have a special responsibility to aid their colleagues in less-favored locales resist the deepening commodification of everyday life by providing them the information to locate particular configurations of social relations within larger contextual frameworks’ (Palat, 1996:311).

3. Nor should we underestimate the extent to which latter day ‘diasporans’ – ‘scholar-activists’, but also, journalists, artists, creative writers and the like, of African origin now resident abroad – work to keep alive, in dialogue with their counterparts still on the continent, a sense of shared ‘post-coloniality’ and potential continental achievement.

4. Note, in this regard, Paul Zeleza’s argument, evocatively documented (Zeleza, 1994), that – among other examples of their prescience – ‘African writers were among the first to note that the emancipatory potential of independence had been overestimated. Indeed, while many historians and social scientists were busy celebrating the achievements of nationalism or devising models of nation-building and development, African writers had already discovered that the post-colonial emperor was naked’ (482). Moreover, ‘African writers, by calling, choice, and circumstance, have been in the forefront of democratic discourse in Africa, probably longer and more consistently than any other group of intellectual workers ... Since independence African writers, far more than the professional academics, have exhibited a commitment to the political cause of the ‘masses’ and cultural regeneration’ (485,487). The possible role of writers (and others on the continent) in revitalizing political economy-related debates (about, say, the likely future provenance of socialist concerns) is less clear in this important article, however.

5. We are well aware, from our own long-time editorial experience on other fronts, how difficult bringing this kind of intensified focus to a journal undertaking really is. The pull towards eclecticism is as much a matter of the day-to-day exigencies of filling-in the page count on time as it is of anything else, for example. We are merely suggesting that the current crisis of theory in radical African studies – the bursting of our bubble! – is sufficiently serious to demand a more pro-
active attempt on the part of ROAPE activists (as well as others) to realize, self-consciously, an ever more coherent and integrated intellectual project.

6. Allen’s article also reminds us of the fact that political processes and institutional practices have roots and dynamics of their own that cannot simply be ‘read off’ from presumed social and economic imperatives. In this regard, there is a pressing need to reclaim the analysis of political and bureaucratic institutions from the ‘governance’ school so popular with the World Bank and its ilk and to reclaim the analysis of popular politics, existent and potential, from the liberal theorists of ‘civil society’ and (a certain kind of) ‘democratization’ (Saul, 1997).

Bibliography


Kenya’s Democracy Experiment: The 1997 Elections
Rok Ajulu

Kenya’s multi-party elections were the second since the advent of the ‘democracy experiment’ which started with the ‘democracy wave’ of the last half of the last decade (the Saba Saba uprising of 1990, and the donor pressure – the 1991 Paris Consultative Group’s decision to withhold $1bn aid pending political reforms – which ultimately led to repeal of section 2(a) of the constitution in 1991 and the controversial 1992 elections). They finally took place from 29 December to 5 January 1998.

It was an election which almost did not take place. According to a report by the Kenya Human Rights Commission, the government at one time considered postponing elections until it had gained the initiative from the National Convention Assembly, which throughout July and August of that year had ‘pinned it against the wall’. At least, this is one of the reasons which has been advanced for the ‘ethnic cleansing’ at the coastal towns of Mombasa and Kwale during the months of August and September, a crisis which would have served as a convenient pretext for the declaration of state of emergency. But in the final analysis, the election did take place, and it was, in most respects, a repeat of 1992, albeit, more of a fiasco this time round.

Two weeks before the elections, the newly appointed chairman of the Electoral Commission told the country not to expect too much from the Commission.

‘The law,’ he said, ‘does not give us power to ensure that polls are free and fair ... At the moment, the Commission is looked at and expected to have a jail, a police force, prosecutors and magistrates. Possibly when the next parliament is formed, it should consider giving us more powers ...’ (Daily Nation, 16 December 1997).

And he was to prove quite prophetic – the chaos and the bungling of the Electoral Commission were of such a magnitude that the voting process had to be extended by another two days and in some places by as much as three days, and the counting was still in process in some constituencies long after President Moi had been declared a winner, and inaugurated for his final term (Economic Review, 5-11 January 1998).

Even President Moi’s ruling party, KANU, came out against the Commission, arguing that it (the ruling party) had borne the brunt of the Commission’s inefficiencies, a complaint which according to the outgoing leader of the official opposition, Wamalwa Kijana, was designed ‘as part of cover-up to hide the collusion between KANU and the Commission’ (Economic Review, 5-11, 1,1998). That notwithstanding, the performance of the Commission was so bad that even the normally pro-establishment Weekly Review found itself asking for the resignation of the Chairman of the Commission to which the chairman retorted that ‘nobody resigns in Kenya!’, and the Economic Review was prompted to question if the poor performance displayed by the EC was sheer ineptitude, or part of a ploy at making an opposition victory possible.
Yet all this was pretty obvious long before the elections. The consensus among political observers, journalists, and other Kenya watchers was that Moi had taken advantage of his incumbency to ensure electoral victory even before a single ballot had been cast. The developments in the run up to the 1997 election bore a striking similarity to the 1992 electoral period which had produced a similar controversial result.

First the run up to the elections had provoked a series of violent confrontation between the security apparatuses of the state and the opposition alliance. In July, barely five months away from the elections, political mobilization, which started with the Limuru Convention on constitutional reforms, culminated in the Saba Saba confrontation with President Moi’s feared paramilitary force, the General Service Unit (GSU), which left ten people dead, most of them students, and hundreds injured (Daily Nation, 8 July 1997). A week later, the security forces again stormed a peace prayer in Nairobi’s main Anglican church, and left a prominent church leader and opposition activist, Reverend Njoya for dead (Daily Nation, 14 July 1997). The original Saba Saba in 1990 had been sparked off in almost identical pattern when thousands of people had gathered at Kamkunji in Nairobi for a democracy rally (Africa Watch, 1991:61-82).

Then came the ethnic cleansing in Coast province. Violence there started as an ordinary criminal raid into the local Likoni police station in which several policemen were killed, the armoury broken into, guns and ammunition stolen and the police station burnt down. A few days later, the death toll had risen to 20 and the attack spread into Likoni and Kwale districts and increasingly targeted at upcountry people. Furthermore, it was beginning to emerge that these were no ordinary criminals. The attackers targeted churches where displaced persons (predominantly upcountry people, non-coastal, mainly Kikuyu and Luo ethnic groups) and the government proved either unable or unwilling to deal with the issue decisively. As the violence moved into its second week with the death toll reported close to 50, and the government neither able to stem the tide of rumours nor contain the violence, parallels were drawn between ethnic cleansing in the Rift Valley Province in 1991 and 1992 in the run up to the 1992 multiparty elections.

The possibility of a conspiracy probably involving very senior people in government appeared to have been confirmed by two main developments. First, about ten youths arrested into the second week of disturbances reportedly admitted to have received training and oathing ceremonies, particularly the Mjikenda oathing ceremony of Kinu, which reportedly is used to invigorate youths. It was said that they had been recruited in Likoni, Waa, Ngombeni, and Twa areas of Kwale districts and had been trained in Similani and Kaya Bombo and Kaya Wa forests by ex-security and policemen (see Daily Nation: 16 July 1997). Secondly, it also transpired that senior ruling party leaders in the Province had been closely associated with the violence. The Mombasa strong-man Rashid Sajja was named in Parliament for being connected with the disturbances, while KANU activists, Masumbuko and Maitha were arrested in connection with the violence, only to be charged with minor offences like possession of firearm and causing disturbances.

Against this background, it is not surprising that most observers of Kenyan politics saw in the Coast ethnic eruption, a repeat of the 1991-2 ethnic cleansing which engulfed the Rift Valley Province, sections of Nyanza and Western Provinces. A Kenya Human Rights Commission Report in December identified the undermining of demographic strength of the opposition parties in a number of constituencies at the Coast in the run up to the election as one of the objectives of
the violence (*Economic Review*, 15-21 December 1997). The large populations of the Luo, Kikuyu and Luhyia have often been considered as a crucial swing factor in the Coast electoral calculations.

Thus it was patently clear in the run up to the elections that the playing ground was far from level. However, the opprobrium and international outcry which followed the violent scenes of confrontation in Nairobi, captured live on international TV networks, forced President Moi to concede to opposition demands for constitutional reforms before the next general elections. This was achieved through the Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group (IPPG), a KANU platform which had been designed to blunt the impact of the reform agenda of the opposition and its allies in the National Convention Council, or as the Convention’s Executive Committee put it, to cool the fire raised by the NCEC action and by the demands of the country for electoral reform, and in the process to legitimise the Moi re-election machine ...’ (NCEC, 1997:1), a feat which President Moi achieved with remarkable success.

On the surface, the IPPG did achieve a remarkable breakthrough – the constitution was amended to render the country a *de jure* multi-party democracy; the Public Order Act (Cap 56) was amended to facilitate freedom of assembly; section 33 of the constitution was amended so that MPs are proposed on a pro rata basis by all Parliamentary parties with a minimum of seven MPs. More importantly, the electoral process was supposedly delinked from the state apparatuses:

- The Electoral Commission (EC) was mandated to manage the campaign process without interference by the provincial administration;
- The EC was to have powers to hire prosecutors to expedite the process of election petition;
- The EC was to have powers to monitor fair coverage by the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, radio and television (Report of the Committee, 1997).

The IPPG thus allowed president Moi to kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand, he was able to recapture the political initiative from NCEC, and ‘legitimise his re-election machine’ as the NCEC put it. On the other, he was able satisfy the demands of the donor community, who had insisted on some basic reforms (largely undefined), particularly after the NCEC had taken to the streets and threatened ungovernability and political instability.

In practice however, President Moi made sure that the reforms package remained a paper tiger. As the Commission chairperson indicated above, the Commission had no power over anything. He further conceded that there was little the Commission could do about unfair coverage of the opposition parties by the state owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (*Daily Nation*, 16 December 1997).

Elsewhere the Provincial administration continued as if the amendments had not been passed at all. In the Rift Valley Province, President Moi’s stronghold, the Keiyo District Commissioner is reported to have urged the local community to vote KANU in the following words:

> ... as an employee of Kanu government my livelihood depends on the very same system. Therefore I would not shy away from praying that President Moi be re-elected once more, to enable me to remain the DC ... Better the devil you are used to than the angel you do not know. It is scary to hear of these parties who usually claim that once they take over power from Kanu, they would dismantle the provincial administration and clip off powers of the police. Who will entertain that? (*Daily Nation*, 16 December 1997).
Most officials of provincial administration would have been of the same opinion. The determination to retain their jobs under the 'devil you are used to', certainly ranked much higher than any hypothetical ideas of commitment to democracy and fair play. Thus, confronted with a powerless Electoral Commission, the actual process of managing the election remained in their hands. And it must have been business as usual - 'praying that President Moi be re-elected once more'.

And, as in 1992, President Moi had done just enough to legitimise the electoral process. The outcome, however, was not in any doubt. The idea that the elections were unlikely to be free and fair was one that was widely accepted in the run up to the election. It would seem that not much has changed during the previous five years or rather, the more it changed the more it remained the same.

Thus, when on Friday 2 January 1998, Mwai Kibaki and Raila, the leading opposition contenders called a press conference to announce that there was overwhelming evidence that Moi had manipulated the Electoral Commission and to demand fresh presidential elections in 21 days, there was an ironic sense of *deja vu*. In 1992, Kibaki, Matiba, and Raila's father, the late Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, had occupied the same chairs, probably before the same journalists, making similar demands after having failed to oust Moi in the first multi-party elections in nearly thirty years of Kenya's political independence.

What does this tell us about the 1997 election and the whole question of the democratization experiment in Kenya? The obvious response probably is that the democratization experiment in Kenya appears to be getting nowhere. Six years after the opening of democratic space, politics, political institutions and the whole concept of governance remains stuck in the authoritarian quagmire of the past. Lack of broader participation in decision making processes, and absence of consensus around important issues of governance appears to be the norm rather than the exception. The transition process in Kenya refuses to comply with prescriptive models developed by various 'democratization' scholars over the last decade. On the surface, this experiment appears to defy common sense.

Diamond (1993) asserts that the 'only absolute requirement for transition ... is commitment to democratization by the strategic elite'. In the Kenyan case, Diamond's 'strategic elites' appear not to be able to demonstrate any 'commitment to democracy', and a buoyant and combative civil society appear not to be able to limit the power of the state and check the transition process from backsliding into authoritarianism. If, as Stepan (1990) argues, democratic transition is about the 'erosion of the past and the construction of a future', the Kenyan experiment appears not to be constructing a future, on the contrary, the last five years have witnessed a gradual slide to the authoritarianism of the past. How then does one explain this phenomenon?

Elsewhere (Ajulu, 1997a; 1997b), I have argued that in order to understand the roots of political crisis and obstacles to democratization in Kenya, we need to focus attention on the character of the post-colonial state, particularly its forms of accumulation over the last thirty years or so, and the character of the class forces which have traditionally controlled it. I started from the premises that politics is about the conscious processes of sorting out contestation over resources, cooperation and negotiations in the use, production and distribution of resources, and the inevitable disputes arising from calculations about winners and losers (Leftwitch, 1994). In Kenya these processes have historically been regulated by authoritarian means. This was the essence of the colonial state, bequeathed to the incoming independent state almost in its entirety.
Another form of colonial legacy that was reproduced in post-colonial Kenya was the centrality of the state in economic activity and particularly, the role of the state as the ‘driver’ of the accumulation process. It was also the most important dispenser of patronage and resources. Hence control of the state or proximity to those who had access to the state became the main preoccupation of politics. Politics is generally about control of (state) power. However, in societies characterised by low spread of commodity relations, ethnic inequalities of the type that characterised capitalist development in Kenya, and high instances of extra-economic coercion, all politics is about control of the state.

This has been the main defining characteristic of Kenyan politics since independence. And precisely because of uneven development of commodity relations in this epoch of imperialism, which in the context of Kenya had the effect of intensifying ethnic inequalities, this contestation increasingly assumed the form of ethnic competition. Ethnicity thus became the most important unit of political mobilization. Obviously in situations of this nature, successful groups have used authoritarian means to secure and legitimate their position. The dominant tendency in politics therefore is bound to be the tendency towards authoritarian control. This was precisely what colonial state control was all about. Its legacy which has been reproduced within the post-colonial period quite uncritically, but understandably so, from the point of view of the class forces which have traditionally been in control of the independent state.

Thus, the struggles between KANU, KADU, KPU in the sixties, the rivalries between the Luo and Kikuyu ethnic groups throughout the 1970s, and the intra-Kikuyu rivalry in the dying days of the Kenyatta regime, all had one thing in common: ethnic mobilization for control of the independent state. To this extent therefore, the only difference between the Kenyatta and Moi regimes is the intensity of kleptocracy. It is important to emphasize this point because recent literature (cf. Bates, 1989; Barkan 1992), have tended to paint a glowing picture of Kenyatta while demonising Moi, the difference here is one of degree rather than content.

I have also argued that the Moi regime’s kleptocracy was particularly intense and devastating because of the international economic environment within which it was situated and of course the character of the class elements which constituted his ruling coalition. Moi’s ascendency to the presidency coincided with changes in international market conditions which adversely affected the country. Secondly, President Moi’s new alliance comprised a relatively weak economic class. Unlike the Kenyatta clique which had consti-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>KANU</th>
<th>DP</th>
<th>NDPK</th>
<th>F(K)</th>
<th>SDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/Eastern</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

tuted the most prominent pre-colonial and colonial primitive accumulators (Cowen, 1981; Swainson, 1980; Kaplinsky, 1980; Spencer, 1985; Sorrenson, 1967), the Moi coalition were comparatively impoverished. So President Moi’s most important task was to construct a capital base for his coalition, and in the absence of fresh areas of accumulation, Moi’s embryonic accumulators were compelled to ‘loot’ the old accumulators, or as Ngunyi (1993) puts it, the capital base of the new coalition had to be constructed upon the dissolution of the already entrenched Kikuyu capital.

It would seem to me that this is precisely what the two multi-party elections have been about – contestation of control of the state through ethnic mobilization. To this extent therefore, the 1997 election has only served to confirm these trends. To understand this, a brief analysis of the 1997 elections results is necessary. For purposes of our analysis, we have selected the main political players according to the following criteria: political parties which have more than 10 members in parliament and whose presidential candidates who were seen or perceived to be serious contenders for the presidency.

To place these tables in perspective, an understanding of the ethnic composition of Kenya’s provinces is necessary. Kenya has more than 40 ethnic groups ranging in number from a few hundred to several millions. The three largest ethnic groups, Kikuyu (21%), Luo (13.5%), and Luhyia (14%) occupy three distinct provinces, Central, Nyanza, and Western provinces respectively. Three districts in Nyanza are occupied by the Bantu Kuria and Kisii who have ten seats between them. The Luhyia of the Western Province however, does not constitute one homogeneous ethnic group, in fact, the ‘Luhyia’ is a combination of 16 different sub-ethnic groups – Bukusu, Idakho, Kabras, Khayo, Kisa, Marama, Maragoli, Marachi, Banyala, Banyore, Samia, Techoni, Tiriki, Tsotso and Wanga. This segmentation may explain why the Western Province has never voted as one single bloc.

The Kamba (11%) occupy the Eastern Province which they share with the Meru (5%). The Rift Valley Province is occupied by the Kalenjin (11%), the Masai, Turkana, Samburu, and a large population of Kikuyu ‘immigrants’, those who settled in the province as a result of colonial land dispossession at the beginning of the century and often referred to as the Kikuyu diaspora. It is also important to point out that the Kalenjin is similarly not a single ethnic group but like the Luhyia, is a combination of several nilo-hamitic sub-ethnic groups – Kipsigis, Nandi, Pokot, Elgeyo, Marakwet, Keiyo, Tugen, Sabaot, Dorobo and Terik. These together form what is generally known as the Kalenjin. The Coast Province is occupied by a number of ethnic groups about 5% of the total population, Mombasa, the provincial capital is metropolitan with substantial representation from the big four – Kikuyu, Luhyia and Luo, and Kamba. As a metropolitan capital, the Nairobi Province is predominantly composed of ethnic groups with the highest instances of proletarianization, the balance however is skewed heavily in favour of the Kikuyu, which explains why the Kikuyu have traditionally dominated the parliamentary seats here.

Given the ethnic composition of the political parties, patterns of ethnic support is therefore very easy to identify. As Table 1 shows just as in 1992, the ruling party KANU victory represented an alliance of the minority ethnic groups – Coast, North Eastern, Eastern, Rift Valley, Western provinces and eight seats from the Kuria and Kisii of Nyanza. KANU was locked out of Nairobi (one seat), Central (no seat) and Luo Nyanza (no seat). It is equally significant to observe that just as in 1992, areas of minority ethnic groups had proportionately more constituencies in relations to their populations. Thus Nairobi Province
with a registered voter population of circa 680,000 had only 8 parliamentary seats compared North Eastern's 142,000 for 10 seats or for that matter Eastern Province 32 seats to Central's 25 for almost the same number of voting population. This indeed clearly demonstrated the uneven nature of the playing field.

In the absence of Kenneth Matiba's FORD-Asili, DP's Kibaki emerged as the authentic Kikuyu candidate, he collected five of the eight seats in Nairobi, 17 of the Kikuyui seats in the central Province including five from the Kikuyu diaspora. 8 from Eastern Province, but notably, only from the Meru and Embu sections of the Eastern province. Thus the old GEMA alliance held on rather well. Following the split within the former official opposition, FORD-Kenya, Wamalwa's FORD-K and Raila's NDPK were reduced to Bukusu and Luo parties respectively. While Raila was able to lock KANU and other parties from Nyanza picking all seats except the ten seat from the Kuria and Kisii districts of Nyanza which it lost to KANU and Wamalwa's FORD-K. Wamalwa was not able to do the same in Western Province and lost 15 seats to KANU, but he was able to get two seats from the Luo heartland, Ugenya and Gem in Siaya district, and two from South and West Mugirango in Kisii district.

Thus while Raila's 21 seats, 19 came from Nyanza and one each from Nairobi, Wamalwa's FORD-K was represented in at least four provinces: Nyanza (3), Western (9), Rift Valley (3) and Eastern (1). The other new party, Charity Ngilu's and Prof. Nyongo's SDP was able to collect 10 seats in Ukambani as was expected, but was a disappointment in Kiambu in the Central province where it had been expected to collect the Matiba vote. It

Table 2: The 1997 Kenya General Elections: Presidential Vote by Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Moi KANU</th>
<th>Kibaki DP</th>
<th>Raila NDPK</th>
<th>Kijana FORDK</th>
<th>Ngilu SDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>75,272</td>
<td>160,124</td>
<td>59,415</td>
<td>24,971</td>
<td>39,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>16.23%</td>
<td>6.92%</td>
<td>10.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>229,084</td>
<td>50,540</td>
<td>22,794</td>
<td>11,156</td>
<td>37,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.05%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>6.07%</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
<td>10.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>46,121</td>
<td>11,741</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>4,418</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>73.08%</td>
<td>18.60%</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
<td>0.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>368,801</td>
<td>296,262</td>
<td>7,755</td>
<td>7,009</td>
<td>332,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.87%</td>
<td>28.61%</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
<td>32.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>55,622</td>
<td>885,382</td>
<td>6,812</td>
<td>3,067</td>
<td>29,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,59%</td>
<td>88.73%</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rift</td>
<td>1,140,109</td>
<td>343,529</td>
<td>36,022</td>
<td>102,178</td>
<td>11,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
<td>2.19%</td>
<td>6.22%</td>
<td>0.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>314,669</td>
<td>9,755</td>
<td>13,458</td>
<td>338,120</td>
<td>3,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.67%</td>
<td>1.38%</td>
<td>1.91%</td>
<td>48.00%</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>215,923</td>
<td>138,194</td>
<td>519,259</td>
<td>14,623</td>
<td>15,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>15.05%</td>
<td>56.55%</td>
<td>1.59%</td>
<td>1.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,445,801</td>
<td>1,895,527</td>
<td>665,725</td>
<td>505,542</td>
<td>469,807</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

nonetheless managed to get 5 seats from Kiambu, and one from Nairobi, but more significantly, none from Nyanza where the party leader, Prof. Nyongo was beaten into a third place in the Kisumu rural constituency.

These figures are more or less replicated in the presidential vote as shown in Table 2. Once again, KANU's president Moi had solid support in minority regions – 61.85% at the Coast, 73% in the North Eastern, 69% in the Rift Valley Province. He also managed a comfortable 44.67% in the Western Province, and 35.8% in the Eastern Province and thus easily met the 25% in five Provinces requirement. Kibaki managed to get 25% in only three Provinces, but his best showing was in Central Province among the Kikuyu where he garnered 88.23% of the votes. The rest of the candidates were 'one-province' candidates, Wamalwa only managed 48% in his own backyard in Western Kenya, Charity Ngilu, 32.95% in her Eastern Province, while Raila did slightly better at 56.55% in Nyanza, he certainly lacked the clout to better his late father, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga’s tally of 75% in Nyanza at the 1992 elections.

Thirty-two years later, Moi, now in KANU, continues to draw support from the same alliance of minority ethnic groups, while the old Kenyatta and Odinga coalitions, now in separate opposition parties continues to draw support from the same ethnic constituencies. The only difference now is that because of rivalries engendered by the bitter struggles for control of state-power during the 1963-69 period, these groups are unable to vote in concert against what is perceived as the common enemy. Clearly what has taken place is not a shift in alliance of class forces but a change in the pattern or traditions of political discourse. The 1992 and 1997 elections confirms the overwhelming centrality of ethnicity in political mobilization.

This voting pattern represents a trend that has been observable in Kenya throughout the 36 years of political independence. During the short-lived multi-party period from 1963 to the 'Little General Election' of 1966, the personalities and the parties were different but the voting patterns were strikingly similar to these last two elections. The then opposition party, Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), in which President Moi and his present coalition were leading figures, drew its support mainly from the Coast, Rift Valley, and parts of Western Province. While the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) then headed by Jomo Kenyatta with Oginga Odinga as his deputy, drew its support from Central, Nyanza, Nairobi, Eastern, and parts of Western province. And in 1966 when Odinga walked out of the ruling party to found his short-lived Kenya People Union (KPU), the KPU failed to cultivate a presence outside his Nyanza base and in the ensuing 'Little General Election', all except one of the KPU MPs came from Odinga's Luo stronghold in Nyanza.

This raises several interesting questions for the democratisation process. The first of these is the wider question of enduring ethnic pluralism against a background of unitary constitutional structures that were bequeathed to the country at independence. This is potentially an explosive issue. A political process that is prone to exclude up to 65% of the electorate from political centre stage does not bode well for long-term political stability. Ultimately it can only survive on some form of authoritarianism, more so in the context of Kenya where those excluded constitute huge chunks of ethnic blocs who perceive that they are excluded because of their ethnic identity. The danger of a debilitating 'ethnic' war is very much a probable outcome of this type of dispensation. It is this conundrum which is at the core of much of Africa's so-called civil or ethnic wars, as traditional rivalries leads to armed confrontation over scarce resources.
The second question relates to the fecun-
dity of the electoral system. The First Past
The Post (FPTP) electoral system inher-
ited from the Westminster at independ-
ence does not seem suited to political
economies of this type. In societies where
political power is hotly contested along
ethnic cleavages, an electoral system
which allows the winner on a minority
vote to take all is simply a recipe for
disaster. The winning party is compelled
to resort to undemocratic means to pro-
tect its gains and legitimise its political
control. The Kenyan situation has not
exploded yet, but developments certainly
push in that direction, unless of course a
workable power-sharing formula can be
found.

To this extent therefore, it can be argued
that one of the positive outcomes from
the last two electoral exercises is a clear
message to opposition parties that no
single party can win on its own. The need
for a more inclusive political system
cannot be overemphasized. Chege (1994)
suggests that it is time that the merits of
democratic federalism was given serious
consideration. Unfortunately, in much of
the sub-Saharan Africa, attempts to intro-
duce constitutional reforms to accommo-
date ethnic diversity have not been
particularly successful, precisely because
political autonomy has often been ma-
nipulated to pursue sectarian interests.

A third and equally important question
relates to the character of democracy
being fostered in Kenya. After two multi-
party election in Kenya can we genuinely
say that something fundamental has
changed in the political system? In the
five years to the 1997 elections, it would
seem that very little has changed. On the
other hand, it could be argued that the
Moi regime has very much succeeded in
narrowing the political space which was
prised open with the reforms of 1990.
Political repression has not abated, deten-
tion without trial has been brought to an
end, but as a local lawyer and activist put
it, political activism has increasingly
been criminalised. In the meantime, the
judicial system has remained tightly un-
der the control of the ruling elite, any
legal action against government or gov-
ernment officials is completely out of the
question. Meanwhile corruption has
reached unprecedented levels over the
last five years, and the police and other
security apparatuses of the state have
almost been transformed into the armed
thugs of the ruling party.

The democratic experiment in Kenya
demonstrates that it is possible to have
multiparty elections every five years
without changing anything. Thus the
debate as to whether the opposition
parties are capable of uniting to remove
the ruling KANU from power would
seem to be misplaced. Some commenta-
tors have even gone further to suggest
that a major obstacle to democratization
in Kenya is the inability of the opposition
parties to unite and field one candidate.
While a united opposition would cer-
tainly bring an end to this long period of
KANU misrule, whether this would en-
gender democracy remains highly debat-
able. By their own political practices over
the last seven years, the opposition lead-
ers have demonstrated that they are no
different from KANU, which indeed is
the main stem from which all of them
emerge. The proliferation of a plethora of
political parties since 1992 has nothing to
do with principles or ideological differ-
ences but rather motivated by political
greed and personal ambitions.

Finally, a few words about conditionalities
and democratization in Kenya. The use of
western aid to impose democratization
has been one of the main features of
democratic transition in sub-Saharan Af-
rica. Indeed, it was the intervention of
Western governments and donor agen-
cies in November 1991 that finally per-
suaded president Moi to concede political
space. Yet it has remained rather unclear
what western donors mean by democracy
and good governance. Soon after the 1992
election, despite the fact that the election
was visibly flawed, and the newly elected government had remained largely unaccountable, and that human rights record had hardly improved, and at a time when state instigated ‘ethnic cleansing’ had clearly been unleashed on Kikuyu residents in the Rift Valley Province, it was business as usual with a now legitimised Moi regime. Donor agencies and their respective governments appeared to exhibit more concern for macro-economic reforms, economic liberalization and accountability to the IFIs rather than political reforms. Throughout the last five years, the regime has been able to get away with all manner of political abuses, including fresh outbursts of ‘ethnic cleansing’ so long as it kept its macro-economic reforms on track. The result is that the Kenyan economy is probably one of the most liberalized in SSA, but unfortunately, with little corresponding political liberalization.

Last August in the run up to the general election, as political mobilization which started with the Limuru Convention culminated into yet another Saba Saba, and as the ‘crowd’ once again briefly re-entered the political ring, and the radical opposition members with their allies in the NCEC captured the political initiative, threatening ungovernability and political instability, donor agencies and their respective agencies were quick to intervene. Subsequently, President Moi was once again pressured to concede reforms. And as we have indicated above, just as in 1992, President Moi had done just enough to legitimise the electoral process.

A few days after his electoral victory, with an eye to the donor community, he returned to the theme of his government’s commitment to macro-economic reforms. Addressing businessmen at the Nairobi Stock Exchange, he said,

*I want to assure Kenyans and investors [sic], both local and foreign, that the government places economic growth high on its agenda ... the stability of macro-

economic environment, he said, ...would be assured as a prerequisite for attracting investment ...* (Daily Nation, 16 January 1998).

This speech appeared to have done the trick. A week later the London Club agreed to reschedule the external debt arrears that had soared to US$560 million. That same week the IMF mission was in town and expressed optimism at the country’s future. The IMF director for Africa Department, Mr. Gadwall Gondwe is quoted as having said that:

*... the Fund was keen on ensuring that Kenya returns swiftly to economic stability. The country had broadly met the conditions on good governance and anti-corruption ...* (Weekly Review, 20 February 1998).

Hot on the IMF trail came the EU’s statement in Nairobi saying that they had ruled out the idea of suspending aid to Kenya. The Weekly Review of 20 January 1998, quoted a EU delegation in Nairobi saying that,

*the two sides had agreed on a new measure under which the funds would be disbursed ... long-standing co-operation between the two sides would continue, notwithstanding the shortcomings of a general election which the EU described as a step further toward Kenya’s full democratization.*

Almost at the same time, the Japanese government gave the Kenya government a grant of KShs 188 million to be spent on the health sector. The Japanese ambassador, Dr. Shinsuke Horiuchi is reported to have said that,

*his government was happy to note Kenya’s commitment to addressing various governance issues such as greater transparency. Better management of public expenditures and combating corruption ...* (Weekly Review, 20 January 1998).
And so, another controversial election, another round of ethnic cleansing, but with the donor community and the IFIs, it is business as usual.

**Rok Ajulu**, Rhodes University, South Africa

References


**Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group** (nd.), ‘Report of the Committee on Constitutional, Legal and Administrative Reforms’.


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**Innovation in Mali**

**Alex Duval Smith**

In a country where women weave elegant bracelets out of discarded coloured plastic and men fashion useful objects from old oil cans, there are no prizes for ingenuity. But even Malians were impressed five years ago, when a Swiss man with a flowing white beard turned up in a Sahel desert village bearing four hunks of steel which were to liberate women, give children the opportunity to play as well as work, and improve literacy.

Now, Roman Imboden’s ‘multifunctional platform’ – a generator, alternator, mill and hulling machine – is processing rice and millet, lighting bulbs and pumping water in 40 villages of this West African country where most cannot read and write and only a minority eat three meals a day. The platform runs on diesel but in some places has been refined to be fuelled by nuts from the Mexican pourghere bush.

Balanfina, close to the Guinean border in southern Mali, is 30 miles from the nearest tarmac road and can only be reached by foot or a bumpy one-hour drive in a 4x4 vehicle. Like their neighbours, the 1,200 people of Balanfina live in earth-brick huts with thatched roofs. Life in this remote place, which must produce almost everything it wishes to consume, is a slog.

But unlike other villages in the area, Balanfina has an electricity cable running from its well to a corrugated iron structure that seems to have replaced the old...
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But unlike other villages in the area, Balanfina has an electricity cable running from its well to a corrugated iron structure that seems to have replaced the old
mango tree as everyone’s favourite meeting place: the platform. ‘It has certainly made our lives easier,’ said Kani Sidibe, an elderly woman chosen with two others – because they can read and write – to head the village platform management committee.

The women of the village can get their shea nuts ground in a machine instead of having to break them open on a wall. We finish our work sooner so we can start preparing dinner, or help the men in the fields.

We have time to do a little more gardening and take care with our sauces. That means the men are happier, too.

Siacka Sidibe, the committee’s treasurer, agreed:

We women work so very hard. There is no let-up for us, even when we are ill. So we need every bit of help we can get.

Balanfina’s platform was installed in August 1994 and is now managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Laurent Coche, the UNDP worker who supervises the platform scheme in Mali, said:

Mills are not new to Mali but there is an ongoing problem of their being inaccessible or going bankrupt when the crops fail. Under this scheme, the villagers administer the equipment themselves.

It is in the villagers’ interest to keep milling prices competitive since the platform has other functions – hulling, water pumping, lighting, welding and sawing – which the village comes to depend upon.

The structure is, to Western eyes, an impressive blend of the ingeniousness that characterises poor countries and dependable European technology: an eight-horsepower engine, made in India, with belt-drives and other exposed mov-
had come across for rural areas. 'You cannot put a price on the wonderful opportunities electricity provides and extent to which the women's situation can be improved by it. They have been freed from hours at the pestle and beatings from husbands whose dinner was not ready,' he said.

But the platform's future is not assured. Under plans that rely on villages borrowing to pay a share of the platform’s £2,500 cost, the UNDP hopes to take the magic machine to a further 450 Malian villages, reaching 5% of the 10 million people who live in this mostly desert country, which is four times the size of the United Kingdom. Coche said: 'The UNDP with some help from USAID is putting in nearly £3 million over five years but that is less than half the money we need.' The women of Balanfina hope other villages will be as lucky as they have been.

However, treasurer Sidibe conceded that for women the platform had the same drawback as the washing machine can have for women in the developed world: it doesn’t put more hours in the day, just frees time to do other housework.

'The best we can hope for is for our men to be happier,' she said. 'Then they treat us better.'

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Organized by the Jubilee 2000 Coalition which is made up of a variety of religious and secular organizations from all over the world, the demonstration at Birmingham was intended as the beginning of a concerted movement to force western governments to write off unpayable debts which have been crippling the world’s poorest nations, and the poorest sections within those nations for almost 20 years.

Coalition spokeswoman Ann Pettifor said that she was delighted that the G8 had finally acknowledged the worldwide movement, although she was certain that this year’s concessions would be minimal. ‘These men will not relinquish power over these countries very easily. We are already planning for next year’s summit’, she said. Pettifor turned over boxes of petitions containing some 1.5 million signatures calling for the cancellation of third world debt to the UK Minister for International Development, Clare Short.

Speaking at St. Martin’s cathedral to a packed audience, Clare Short briefly outlined her government’s 5 point strategy to cope with increasing poverty in developing countries by creating a ‘more just and sustainable world’:

- to maintain the momentum of HIPIC;
- to agitate for special relief for post-conflict countries such as Rwanda and Liberia who are unable to meet HIPIC criteria;
- to help attract more external investment to poorer countries;
- to reverse the 30-year decline in the amount of aid given to less developed countries, and to increase political conditionality on economic assistance;
- to deal with corruption, economic mismanagement, ‘bad’ development policies through careful monitoring.

50,000 Protest in UK to Cancel Third World Debt
Anita Franklin

In a wave of protest against G8 leaders not seen for over a decade, at least 50,000 individuals formed a seven-mile human chain around Birmingham’s centre city to pressure the G8 to cancel the debt of the world’s poorest countries.
had come across for rural areas. 'You cannot put a price on the wonderful opportunities electricity provides and extent to which the women's situation can be improved by it. They have been freed from hours at the pestle and beatings from husbands whose dinner was not ready,' he said.

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• to deal with corruption, economic mismanagement, ‘bad’ development policies through careful monitoring.
Ed Mayo, head of The Foundation for a New Economics made a number of comments about the plan. First there has been no momentum around HIPIC. Certainly the refrain 'HIPIC is not enough' was echoed throughout the day. Second, whilst some countries may get early and significant levels of assistance; Indonesia most recently has been given a $43 billion bailout and Korea a similar amount few months ago, it is still not clear how much or when debt will be written off for other poorer, less strategically well-placed countries. Third, attracting external investment to poor countries does not in and of itself address the problems of increasing infant mortality, illiteracy, poor housing, widening socioeconomic divides between the rich and poor. Indeed other speakers spoke at length about how the poor pay for the perks governments provide to attract and keep foreign investment. No critique was offered about the point on aid by Mayo, nor on the point about monitoring change. I'm concerned about the framework for external investment. And I am concerned about the assumption that external investors will be interested in providing health care, education and other socially necessary but not terribly profitable services. I have a problem about the way political conditions are being attached to helping some countries but not others and am interested in who gets to monitor what regarding the use of development monies.

It maybe as Clare Short pointed out that ours is the first generation that has the knowledge and technology to halve the numbers of people living in absolute poverty by 2015. At present that figure is 1 in 4. It will take tremendous political will, the concerted use of all Britain's and other states' national and international leverage to tip the balance toward universal access to primary education, health care and housing. It is affordable. It is achievable. And the world's wealthiest countries have pledged to work toward these aims. But it cannot be done when countries have to pay 35-50% and more of their GNP on debt payments. As a percentage of export earnings, the impossibility of paying becomes even more clear: Somalia at present has to pay 3,671% of its export earnings.

Bernie Grant, a member of the government's Select Committee on International Development, warned that it is not debt alone which plagues the poorest nations. He voiced concerns also about the failure not only to get rid of old trade barriers but also the way in which new trade barriers are being erected by the EU which are already beginning to decimate many economies whose structures were formed during colonialism. In the absence of a preferential trade agreement the Caribbean's export of primary products like sugar and bananas will no longer be viable. The western control over patents and biotechnology also affects sustainability and people's access to food and to their ability to use their own natural resources cheaply and safely. The Multilateral Agreement on International Trade threatens to worsen an already appalling set of terms and conditions of trade. And the MP from Tottenham in his inimitable style drew our attention to the finances of the summit.

Costing some £10 million, that amount he said could pay off the debt of Niger, could immunize a million children against most preventable diseases, or could have provided clean water and sanitation for most of Tanzania's schools.

Next year's summit in Germany promises to be interesting. I wonder how the G8 will avid comparison with 1953 when the US and the UK cancelled German debts, repayments of which amounted to a little over 5% of Germany's export earnings. Given the figures for countries such as Somalia (repayments equal to 3,671%) it will prove a good opportunity to assess the extent to which the rules of justice have changed.
Book Reviews

Why Eurasians Conquered the World


_Not only did Africans south of the Sahara fail to invent gunpowder, gas and electricity; they failed to invent, or even acquire in precolonial times, writing, the yoke, the plough and the wheel._

With these tendentious words, after quoting first from Aime’ Ce’saire, the Martiniquan poet and ideologue of négritude, Armand Marie Leroi opens his review of Jared Diamond’s latest book in the _London Review of Books_ (4 September 1997).

Diamond had concluded his study of the geographical endowment of Africa, the second smallest of the continents in size and population and the most predominantly tropical, by emphasising that ‘all other things being equal, more land and more people mean more competing societies and inventions, hence a faster pace of development’.

Eurasia, by far the largest of the continents, had developed fastest and the Americas split in two at Panama had done no better than Africa until conquered and settled by Europeans. Africa’s ills, at least those of sub-Saharan Africa, flowed inevitably from its poor original endowment in land and from its killer diseases. So it was argued in this new book from the American evolutionary biologist, Jared Diamond. The Africans apparently never had a chance.

Poor Africans! they are the object of everyone’s despair today. Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Harvard Institute for International Development contributed an invitation article to _The Economist_ on ‘The Limits of Convergence: Nature, Nurture and Growth’ (_The Economist_, 14 June 1997) in which he told the same tale:

_Temperate climes have generally supported higher densities of population and thus a more extensive division of labour than tropical regions. Until this century, the burden of disease and low productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa kept population densities among the lowest in the world, with the exception of coastal trading regions and a few mountainous areas ... During the period 1965-90 ... Africa suffered a shortfall in growth [as compared with East and South-East Asia] due to poor geography and poor health of an estimated 2.3 percentage points a year._

And the conclusion is drawn:

_that we should begin to accept as normal a situation in which Africa and other tropical regions are fed by temperate zone exports ..._

The blocking by the rich countries of labour-intensive manufactured exports from the poor will have to end and

_... the world may have to contemplate vastly larger flows of migrants ... and vastly larger international efforts to deal with tropical infectious diseases ..._
The Importance of Original Endowment

This is becoming the consensual view, but is it correct? Diamond is more cautious than his reviewer. He does not see the problem of worldwide human inequality, which he has set himself the task of understanding, purely in terms of temperate and tropical regions. He properly rejects all racial arguments and goes on to distinguish the continents according to whether they had a north-south axis, as with Africa and the Americas which involve crossing from temperate into and out of tropical regions, or an east-west axis, as with the massive Eurasian continent, all in the temperate or Arctic regions. Plants and animals are more easily transmitted across lines of longitude than lines of latitude.

The most important distinction that Diamond then identifies between the continents is the widely differing endowment of edible plants and of animals originally found in them that could be domesticated. The Americas and Africa were originally peculiarly devoid of such plant - or animals, whereas Eurasia had a considerable number particularly of large seed grasses and of large animals that could be domesticated. Australia was lacking in the appropriate flora, and the fauna were extinguished an the arrival of human beings. Moreover, the domestication which took place mainly in South-West Asia was thereafter easily diffused east and west through Eurasia.

It is Diamond's main thesis that this original advantage of endowment made possible the evolution of hunter-gatherers into farmers, the expansion of populations, production of a food surplus and with it division of labour and emergence of complex human organisations, armies, scholars, priests, administrators etc. Such organisations easily dominated and generally destroyed societies with smaller surpluses, less division of labour and social complexity. The most famous example he quotes is the defeat of large bodies of American Indian peoples by a tiny number of Spanish soldiers. To this Diamond adds a fascinating touch - the real killer the Europeans took with them was not so much their steel weapons and firearms but the collection of diseases they carried which they had gathered from the animals they tended but to which they had gained some immunity over time. Those exposed to these diseases for the first time died in their thousands and hundred thousands - probably 95% of the American Indian population. The only diseases which the Europeans discovered for the first time on entering the tropics were malaria and yellow fever, which were equally devastating and simply ruled out European settlement where they were prevalent.

Diamond does not underestimate the importance of centralised government and organised religion in establishing a people's dominating position. Pizarro and his 168 soldiers facing 80,000 Indians at Cajamarca had no special skills or courage, but they were used to giving and taking orders and firmly believed that they were saving infidels for the "law of our Lord Jesus Christ", as well as for "the service of His Majesty the King of Spain". From all this Diamond reaches the very broad generalisation that Descendants of those societies that had achieved centralised government and organised religion earliest ended up dominating the modern world.

What Happened to the First Empires?

This is the point at which Diamond's argument breaks down. The statement is manifestly untrue. Sumeria, Egypt, China and India do not dominate the modern world. China may come to do so, but the North American descendants who dominate the modern world are not the direct descendants. Diamond has explained how Eurasians came to dominate others but not which Eurasians. In fact he does seek
to explain China's failure after its early success, but his explanation goes against the generalisation quoted above. China, he believes, suffered from being too centralised, he says, so that alternative competing innovation could not emerge. He adds to this a peculiar argument - that the long coast line of China without indentations and only three off-shore islands gave less encouragement to coastal development which has always been the core of European success. He could quote Taiwan and Hong Kong in support of the argument, but for the fact that their development really was the result of external forces, which were not operative in the case of Hainan. He could also quote, and does, the massive Chinese influence on Korea and the islands of Japan, but why did their development come so late and from external influences when it came? And how explain India's long hibernation - India with its immensely long coast line (look at a Peters projection), its food surpluses - until the nineteenth century - centralised governments and organised religions?

Diamond's explanation for the failure of Sumeria is that the Mongol invaders destroyed the ancient irrigation systems of Iran and Iraq. But what kind of centralised government and religion gave the Mongolian nomads their extraordinary domination? He would be nearer the mark in his emphasis on the absolute importance of horsemanship in all wars before 1914. He could say that the Golden Horde was short-lived, as indeed it was except in China where Kublai's Yuan dynasty simply absorbed Chinese culture. Neither the Yuan empire nor the empire of Tamerlane in South-West Asia lasted for more than a century, but the Mongol empires do place a question mark over the picture of food surpluses, centralised government and organised religion as the source of dominant human societies. It was not until after their conquests that the western Khans accepted Islam, just as Kublai in the East accepted Confucius.

Finally, how does Diamond explain the decline of Egypt from its three thousand year greatness? Who are the descendants of this civilisation who now dominate the world? He is perhaps a little nearer the truth than he knows in this case, not because Egypt is really part of Eurasia as he always places it, and not because its peoples are white as he depicts all Africans north of a line he draws (on a map on page 379) which roughly follows the 10th degree of latitude, while dipping south to include all of the horn, but because European civilisation really does derive from Egypt via Crete and Greece. I shall justify this claim in a moment, but Diamond's inclusion of all North Africans as 'whites' - something that must delight Mr Al Fayed - requires a brief comment.

**What Divides Africa: North & South?**

Diamond includes all peoples north of the 10th degree of latitude, including the whole of the Sahel, as 'whites', because their hair is straight, a characteristic that he found to be of great and fascinating significance in his studies of the aborigines of Australia and indigenous peoples of Papua New Guinea. The curly haired original populations of the East Indies and Australasia had, except in a few remote mountain regions, been overwhelmed by people from South East Asia speaking Austronesian languages and venturing out in their outrigger canoes to populate not only the East Indies but all the Polynesian islands of the Pacific and even Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. It is for him the supreme example of Eurasians with agricultural and boat building technology, organised government and religion dominating and completely or nearly completely extinguishing earlier hunter gatherers all over the world.

But to return to Egypt, it appears that Diamond is not familiar with Martin Bernal's path-breaking studies of ancient Greece and its Egyptian heritage (*Black Athena*, 1987-1996, volumes 1-3, Oxford: Free Association Books). If he had been,
he would have questioned the assumption that Egypt was not really part of Africa, but part of Eurasia, its agriculture and civilisation deriving from the 'Fertile Crescent' of West Asia. Before Bernal any one could be forgiven for making this assumption. As Bernal demonstrated, a silent revolution in thought during the nineteenth century had taken Egypt out of Africa, placed it with Crete somewhere off the coast of what is now Israel and allowed it a very minor influence on Greek civilisation and the development of the Indo-European languages. It was an age of European empires in Africa and altogether too embarrassing to imagine a black baby in the cradle of European civilisation. But that is just what Bernal had found.

This correction, which puts Egypt back into Africa, is not just important for the historical sequence of European development, but has great significance for our understanding of the reasons for the collapse of the first great empires – Sumeria, Egypt, the Indus, China and Maya – and above all for our understanding of African history. It has for long been my view, which I have explained in my books, that the centralised government required by large scale irrigated agriculture was enormously productive of human inventiveness, but ultimately excessive and stultifying. By contrast the little rivers and constant rainfall of Europe provided a permanent encouragement to local initiative and resistance to overcentralisation. It was the same in Japan and in the eastern seaboard of North America.

Diamond seeks to make a point that centralisation of government was not the result of water control but preceded it, in Sumeria, China, India and South America. I do not doubt it, but over-centralisation was the result of large-scale water works. I have also always argued, following Owen Lattimore (Inner Asian Frontiers of China) that the supporting and sometimes the main reason for what proved to be excessive centralisation was the need for defence against nomadic invaders. Hence the siting of capitals, not in the middle of the rich food producing lands but an the frontiers with the nomads.

Chang An and then Peking, Harappa and then Delhi, Susa and then Persepolis, Thebes in Upper Egypt and Moscow too all bear witness. Overspending on preparations for war has been the cause of the downfall of empires down to our own time. Diamond's thesis is in effect much strengthened by a proper understanding of the inheritance of Minoan Crete and of classical Greece from ancient Egypt. The 'descendants of societies that achieved centralised government and organised religion first did dominate the modern world', at least the world that was modern in the second millenium BC. The great discovery of Martin Bernal was that all the Greek words for government and religious matters had Egyptian roots. Only kitchen Greek was Indo-European.

Understanding Egypt's place in Africa has even more importance for making a correct assessment of Africa's development. To start at the beginning, it is not by any means sure that Egyptian agriculture came over the Sinai desert from the fertile crescent of West Asia. Could it not have come from Ethiopia and the Sahel, which Diamond acknowledges as 'possible' original sites of food production in cattle herding and agriculture? Egyptian civilisation developed from the south not from the north. Thebes in Upper Egypt was the capital of the Old Kingdom. (How was it before Bernal that we never asked ourselves why the earliest city of ancient Greece, Thebes, had the same name or why Europa in Greek mythology was carried away on a bull, like the bull at Knossos, when cattle herding was not, and is not, known in Crete or in most of ancient Greece?) And along with the production of a food surplus, and especially cattle, why is it assumed that Egyptian writing came from Western Asia and not from Ethiopia? The alpha-
Was Africa Backward when the Europeans Arrived?

What then are we to say to the complaint, quoted at the beginning of this review, that ‘Africans south of the Sahara ... failed to invent or even to acquire in pre-colonial times, writing, the yoke, the plough and the wheel’? That curving line that follows the 10 degree latitude north but dips south to include the horn of Africa was drawn by Diamond to distinguish the ‘whites’ to the north and the blacks to the south. So, the Ethiops, who for thousands of years from Homer to Shakespeare were thought to be the very epitome of black people, were after all Caucasians speaking an Arabic language. Diamond can be forgiven for thinking so, since my schoolboy Dent’s ‘Everyman’ Classical Dictionary, issued in 1910 and corrected up to 1928, when I bought it, tells me so. But Diamond tells us that the real black people, who occupied the African continent south of the Sahara from 3000BC, originated as ancestral Bantu speaking yam farmers in what is now Cameroons, spreading east and south, largely eliminating the indigenous pygmies and bushmen (Hottentots) on the way.

Judged by the Afro-Asian and Nilo-Saharan words incorporated into Bantu languages, they are said by Diamond to have acquired iron working from the Sahel (far to the north in modern Mali) and the growing of millet and sorghum when they reached East Africa. Diamond concedes that the much earlier smelting of gold and copper in West Africa, since at least 2000BC, ‘could have been the precursor to an independent African discovery of iron metallurgy.’ But he wishes to emphasise the extraordinary length of time, over 2000 years, which it took for iron, pottery and cattle to reach the southern tip of the African continent. Compare, he says, the speedy diffusion from the fertile crescent eastward and westward through Eurasia. We are back to the complaint quoted before – no writing, yoke, plough or wheel south of the Sahara before colonial times.

There must be some question about its truth, depending on where you draw the line for the Sahara’s southern edge, north or south of Ethiopia. What about Timbuctoo and the great city of Khano at the southern end of the camel trail across the Sahara, where from at least 500BC, caravans arrived and departed across the desert? Basil Davidson in his Story of Africa writes of them:

> Along well-known trails there are caravan markers – roughly sketched carts pulled by donkeys or horses – that were engraved in very ancient times, probably before 500BC. The Phoenicians who founded Carthage obtained gold from West Africa.

Depending where you draw the line of the Sahara, then, there was writing, there were yokes and ploughs and wheels. Moreover, there was gold and copper smelting and iron making and in the zimbabwes of the country that is now called Zimbabwe a greater quantity of stone was moved to build their great walls, according to Sir Mortimer Wheeler, than went into building all the pyramids of Egypt. And even before Arabians from the north established their trade all along the East African coast, there were zimbabwes on the Indian ocean in the twelfth century built by the Shona people for trading their gold for the products of the sea. This was a gold trade of such importance that by the fifteenth century it attracted even Chinese traders from mainland China.

The ending of this African trade with China perfectly illustrates the decline of an over-centralised bureaucracy. The emperor, whose power depended upon tribute from the land, fearing the growing
power of the merchants had all the ocean
growing junks destroyed by Edict and a
limit placed upon the distance from
China’s shores that Chinese vessels might
sail. The ‘sea party’ at court was defeated
by the ‘inland party’. The causes of the
decline of the Zimbabwe Culture are not
known, but they could equally have been
the result of excessive centralisation of
power and over dense settlement ex-
handing local supplies of timber and soil
fertility, as Basil Davidson proposes.
They were certainly not the result of some
failure in technology or in King Mutota’s
ambitions when he abandoned Zimba-
bwe. For, he went on to conquer all the
lands that lie between the Zambezi river
and the Limpopo, that is most of modern
Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

In asking at this moment of history,
somewhere around 1500AD, how rela-
tively backward Africa really was in
relation to Europe, Basil Davidson re-
marks upon the difference between a
potential power gap and actual achieve-
ment. Of course, he says,

*Europe had behind it a long period of
mechanical invention and technological
ingenuity, built on economic need and on
the science inherited and developed from
classical times ... Yet potentiality is not
the same as achievement. Inventions
become effective only when they are
socially applied ...*

He gives the example of the European
water mill, a ‘Roman development of a
Greek invention elaborated in Egypt’. It
took, he says, another 600 years to get
from Roman France to Britain. This was
not a question of the vertical or horizon-
tal axis of Europe, as Diamond might
suggest, but of the adequacy of human or
horse power until demand caught up with
available resources. The wheel bar-
row, invented in China in the fifth cen-
tury AD did not reach Britain until the
plague in the fourteenth century created a
great shortage of manpower. Hero of
Alexandria in the second century AD
invented a steam engine, which was used
to open temple doors, without apparent
human intervention, causing the wor-
shipping slaves to prostrate themselves
before the priesthood. It was not until the
need to pump water out of mineshafts in
Eighteenth Century England that a steam
engine was put to useful purposes. Ne-
cessity is not just the mother of invention,
but the accelerator. And so today, African
coffee and cocoa farmers took to the use
of the computer and modem as soon as
they found that they could get a minute
by minute update of prices on the world
markets.

**The European Invasion and the
Slave Trade**

It is one of the great ironies of history that
Europeans in the ships of Admiral Vasco
da Gama arrived in the Indian Ocean at
the beginning of the sixteenth century,
just after the Chinese had left and Zimba-
bwe was deserted, to be plundered by the
Portuguese. It is interesting to speculate
what kind of show the admiral would
have put up, when his ships of 200 tons
faced the Chinese junks of three times
that size. It is hardly likely that he would
have fared so well as his contemporary
Pizarro facing Atahualpa’s massed forces
at Cajamarca. For one thing the Chinese
had cannons. The Africans did not and
the Portuguese spoliation of towns and
villages knew no respite. ‘Colonial times’
had begun, but first there was a short
period in West Africa of partnership in
trade. It is important to recognise be-
cause, along with the picture we have just
seen of powerful and complex African
political organisation and metal working,
it confirms the falsity of the view of a
wholly “backward” Africa south of the
Sahara before the Europeans arrived.

Trade by Portuguese vessels down the
West African coast had begun in the
fifteenth century and by the early six-
teenth. English merchants got into the act
and then French and Spanish and Dutch.
They brought European cloths and wool-
lens and some metal pots and pans and firearms in exchange for gold, ivory and pepper, above all gold. The great trans-Saharan caravans lost business in the flood of gold to Western Europe—not for nothing our golden guinea. For a hundred years or more there was also a trickle of slaves from Africa for Spain, to be sent to the West Indies to replace the disease struck local labour. It was an equal partnership at first, in which no European regarded Africans as anything but their equals; this was to change entirely.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the trickle of slaves had become a flood to staff the sugar plantations of the West Indies and South and North America. The most skilled, especially metal workers and miners, were most in demand. English and North American slavers followed the Portuguese and the Spaniards. Numbers rose until by the middle of the nineteenth century, when the trade was cut back, some 12 million captives had been landed alive in the Americas and another 2 million had died on the journey, and how many more in the slave raids and wars in Africa cannot be estimated. Nor can the damage done to African development, while at the same time vast profits had been accumulated in Europe and North America, enabling great investments to be made in industrial development. It was no longer possible to think of an exchange between equals. Black had to be seen as inferior, and had been made inferior. None of this appears in Diamond’s book. Africans are assumed to have achieved nothing or next to nothing before colonial times.

There is one more example of pre-colonial African achievement and of equal partnership with Europe which gets no mention in Diamond’s book. After Britain had abandoned the slave trade in 1907, the British navy sought to prevent others from unfairly continuing it. The coasts of West Africa were patrolled and slavers caught and their cargoes returned to the mainland, not generally any where near where they had originated. Settlements of ‘re-captive’, established themselves particularly in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria. Coming from all parts of Africa they invented their own language ‘creole’ and with the help of English missionaries learned to read and write. As Christopher Fyfe and Basil Davidson have told their story, they thrived and began to trade with England, once more in a partnership of equals. Schools and colleges flourished – 42 primary schools in Sierra Leone alone; newspapers proliferated – several dozen throughout West Africa. These, so-called Saro people, became governors and judges in British colonies and doctors even colonels in the British army.

It could not last. Growing racism in Britain and some trade rivalry combined with growing envy among the local African populations among whom the Saro had settled resulted in massacres and by the 1870s a tightening up of British colonial rule in Africa. Plantations and mines in Africa needed subservient labour. The Africans had to be demeaned, their history buried, their achievements forgotten. The tragic end to this story in the inheritance of the colonial system of commodity exports and oppressive administration by local elites in more than fifty nation states in Africa need not be told here. The point at issue is that despite all the drawbacks of climate and geography and history, Africans have still survived who can manage their own development, if just given the chance.

**On Giving Africans a Chance**

Exaggerating African failures and emphasising the poor geographical endowment of much of the continent serves only to overlook the destructiveness of the colonial past and to excuse the injustices still being perpetrated. When Professor Sachs of Harvard University recommends Africans to accept their continuing dependence on US and European temperate zone food supplies, he does not mention that their export is heavily subsidised to
maintain US and European farmers in business, at the expense of African farmers – not only subsidies for grains, but for vegetable oils, beet sugar and corn syrup. The professor does just rescue himself by noting that the exiguous funding for research into tropical crops or tropical diseases has to be compared with massive funding for research into temperate crops and the illnesses of affluence in North America and Europe.

In his epilogue on the ‘Future of Human History as a Science’, Jared Diamond appeals for students of human history to profit from the experience of scientists like himself in other historical sciences, from astronomy to his own field of evolutionary biology. He says that he is optimistic that historical studies of human societies can be pursued as scientifically as studies of dinosaurs – and with profit to our own society today by teaching us what shaped the modern world, and what might shape our future.

One can only agree wholeheartedly, but adding the caveat that in studying human beings, and particularly in making comparative studies of different human societies, it has to be remembered that we too are human and that the preconceptions of our particular gender, age, race, nationality and education can obstruct our understanding in ways that do not apply to the other sciences. I would judge that Jared Diamond has overcome the preconceptions of his gender, age and race pretty well. Those of nationality as a citizen of the United states, the most powerful nation state on earth, and of an education provided within the national curriculum of that state, are likely to be much harder to overcome. But the comparative study of human histories cannot be attempted without the most committed effort to place oneself in the shoes of that part of humanity that is being studied. We need to have more studies of European and North American societies made by Africans and by Latin Americans, Indians, Chinese or by others who are generally the object of study. I can think only of one – Edward Said’s _Culture and Imperialism_ – but it would be an excellent starting point for others.

**Michael Barratt Brown, Derbyshire, UK**

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If women are represented in Tanzania’s multi-party Parliament today it is largely because they occupy seats specially reserved for them. Women face almost insurmountable difficulties in achieving direct election, with prejudice marshalled against them both from men and from other women. This outcome is paradoxical, given the pivotal role which women played in the nationalist movement and which is reviewed in Susan Geiger’s book, TANU Women, based on interviews with over fifty women activists in TANU (the Tanganyika African National Union).

Men in the nationalist movement had ignored the potential of women in political mobilisation, until a visiting official from the British Labour Party asked about their nominal Women’s Section. Bibi Titi Mohamed, the singer in a Dar es Salaam musical group, was persuaded to fill the role of TANU women’s leader. She went on to recruit many other women and to campaign for TANU throughout the country, joining Julius Nyerere who was younger, educated and Christian. In this accidental way, TANU discovered a previously untapped source of female energy and political enthusiasm which became the mainstay of the party. Geiger quotes Illife to the effect that at Independence ‘Bibi Titi Mohamed and Julius Nyerere were probably the only TANU leaders whose names were known throughout the country’.

Geiger’s account has several features to commend it. She shows that what was striking about these women was that most of them were poor and unschooled. The majority were urban women, often Muslims, older and married more than once, members of the trans-ethnic Swahili-speaking communities found in most Tanzanian towns. Her study encompasses life histories of women activists not only in Dar es Salaam, where Swahili culture with its dance and musical societies had promoted women’s organisational skills, but also in Mwanza and Kilimanjaro. She is thereby able to show that whilst in Kilimanjaro the activists were younger, had more years of schooling and included many Christians as well as Muslims, what they shared with those in Mwanza and Dar es Salaam was membership of communities which were ethnically and socially diverse. Women such as these had a more general and less parochial view of the colonial polity and they shared a language, Swahili, in which to express it.

Geiger also shows that women’s political activities went beyond the recruitment of other women and playing servitor roles to male politicians. Whilst they reported men’s oppressive ways they did not see themselves as victims. Their views of men were often ones of lofty disdain: ‘We have given birth to all these men. Women are the power in this world’. They noted men’s fear of the colonial government, whilst their own relative distance from colonial power gave them a degree of political freedom. Since TANU was at first proscribed, workers were afraid to join. As few women were in wage employment they had little to lose and they gained in political confidence. “To tell the truth it was the women who brought TANU”.

Some paid a high price. Bibi Titi’s husband divorced her when her political activities led to long absences from home. They sacrificed time and energy to the cause of collecting funds and campaigning for the party. Few of the older and unschooled activists survived the transition from activist to professional politician when TANU led the country into independence. Geiger recounts Bibi Titi’s version of the events which led to her downfall, accused of treason, and her later partial rehabilitation.
More generally Geiger exposes the neglect of women's political skills after independence. From being the essential backbone of the Party, women suddenly became a 'problem', redefined as the target of development efforts rather than as actors in their own right, exhorted to work harder and to remember their role as mothers. The demise of TANU's women's section coincided with the promotion of the Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania, the Women's Union, whose leadership soon fell into the hands of women with more education than the older activists and who were often the well-off wives of male politicians. Women in politics ceased to have an organic link with the ordinary women from whom the activists had arisen. By 1990 women were even reluctant to vote for other women. In one area they expressed the view that "when we elect a fellow woman, she becomes arrogant, she deceives the rural poor women completely" (quoted in Kiondo, 1994). It seems unlikely that the move to multi-party politics will give more space to the kind of women who became politically active in the struggle against colonialism.

Geiger is to be commended for revealing the political efforts, the imagination and the verve of women without whom TANU would not have had its wide appeal and whose names might otherwise have been forgotten.

**Reference**


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**Donkeys for Development* by Peta Jones**

Recent studies have made clear what has been known to farmers for years; that donkey power is crucial to smallholder economy, to help with tillage, transport and thus with reconstruction and development. Donkeys are hardier and stronger than cattle, and work for many more years with little human input besides care and supervision. The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in the academic interest given to donkeys, while at the same time the demand for them, and their price, has risen.

This book aims to answer most of the basic questions about donkeys asked by those who need them and work with them, incorporating recent research findings as well as traditional knowledge acquired over the thousands of years that donkeys have worked for humans.

Dr Jones has not only worked as a teacher and consultant with donkeys, but herself lives in a remote rural area of Africa (Binga, Zimbabwe) where she is dependent on donkeys for all local transport and cultivation. She writes from an awareness of the problems that donkeys can create as well as the problems that they can solve, and the equipment that she recommends and illustrates with numerous drawings and photographs is all within the reach and skills of rural villagers of the developing world.


* Sponsored by the Agricultural Research Council of South Africa and the Animal Traction Network of Eastern & Southern Africa (ATNESIA)
WorldViews

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Compiled by Thomas P. Fenton and Mary J. Heffron, Directors, WorldViews.

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Academy Chicago Publishers, 363 W. Erie St., Chicago, IL 60610, USA.

Academy Science Publishers, P.O. Box 14798, Nairobi, Kenya.


ActionAid, Old Church House, Church Steps, Frome, Somerset BA11 1PL, England.

Addison-Wesley Longman, One Jacob Way, Reading, MA 0867-3999, USA.

Afram Publications, 9 Ring Rd. East, P.O. Box M18, Accra, Ghana.

Africa Faith and Justice Network, P.O. Box 29378, Washington, DC 20017, USA.

Africa Fund, 198 Broadway, New York, NY 10038, USA.

Africa Policy Information Center, 110 Maryland Ave., NE, Suite 112, Washington, DC 20002, USA.


African Language Teachers Association, University of Wisconsin, 866 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Dr., Madison, WI 53706-1447, USA.

African Literature Association, University of Wisconsin, 866 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Dr., Madison, WI 53706-1557, USA.


African Studies Association, Emory University, Credit Union Bldg., Atlanta, GA 30322, USA.

African Studies Center, Boston University, 270 Bay State Rd., Boston, MA 02215, USA.


Africana Publishing, c/o Holmes and Meier, 160 Broadway East, Bldg. 900, New York, NY 10038-4201, USA.

AIDS Counselling Trust, P.O. Box 7225, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Altschul Group, 1560 Sherman, Ste. 100, Evanston, IL 60201, USA.

American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Committee on International Security Studies, 136 Irving St., Cambridge, MA 02138, USA.

American Friends Service Committee, Literature Resources, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102-1479, USA.

American Refugee Committee, 234 Nicollet Ave., Ste. 350, Minneapolis, MN 55404, USA.

American University in Cairo Press, 113 Sharia Ksr El Ahni, P.O. Box 2511, Cairo, Egypt.

Amnesty International Publications, 1250 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, USA.


Amnesty International USA, 322 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10001, USA.

Amsterdam University Press, Prinsengracht 747-751, Amsterdam, 1017-JX, The Netherlands.
300 Review of African Political Economy

Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, USA.

Anthropos Publishers, P.O. Box 636, Belleville 7535, South Africa.


Anvil Press, P.O. Box 4209, Harare, Zimbabwe.

ApeX Press, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

ApeX Press/New Horizons Press, P.O. Box 337, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520, USA.


Arcade Publishing, 141 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010, USA.

Archiv für Sozialpolitik e.V., Postfach 100125, 60001 Frankfurt/M., Germany.


Associated University Presses, 440 Forsegate Dr., Cranbury, NJ 08512, USA.


Association of African Studies Programs, Duke University, 2814 Perkins Library, Durham, NC 27706, USA.

Association of African Women for Research and Development, B.P. 3304, Dakar, Senegal.

Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa, AACC Bldg., Waiyaki Way, Westlands, P.O. Box 14205, Nairobi, Kenya.


Audio-Visual Services at Pennsylvania State University, Special Services Bldg., University Park, PA 16802, USA.

Avebury, Gower House, Croft Rd., Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3HR, England

Avon Books/Heast Corp., 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019, USA.

B

Ballantine Books, 201 E. 50 St., New York, NY 10022, USA.

Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, USA.

Baobab Books, P.O. Box 1559, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Lilian Barber Press, P.O. Box 232, New York, NY 10163, USA.


Basic Books, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022, USA.

Beacon Press, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108-2892, USA.


Berg Publishers (USA), c/o New York University Press, 70 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012, USA.

Bergin and Garvey Publishers, c/o Greenwood Publishing Group, 88 Post Rd. West, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007, USA.

Between the Lines, 720 Bathurst St., Ste. 404, Toronto, ON M5S 2R4, Canada.

Birkhauser Verlag, 675 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139, USA.

Black Classic Press, P.O. Box 13414, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA.

Black Studies Program, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802, USA.


Blackwell Publishers (USA), 238 Main St., Cambridge, MA 02142, USA.


Bonus Books, 160 E. Illinois St., Chicago, IL 60611, USA.

Bookcraft, 29 Moremi Rd., New Bodija, P.O. Box 16279, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Boston University, African Studies Center, 270 Bay State Rd., Boston, MA 02215, USA.

R. R. Bowker, P.O. Box 31, New Providence, NJ 07974, USA.

Brassey's UK, 33 John St., London WC1N 2AT, England.

Brassey's/Maxwell Macmillan, 22833 Quicksilver Dr., Ste. 100, Dulles, VA 20166, USA.

George Braziller, 60 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10010, USA.

Bread for the World Institute, 1100 Wayne Ave., Ste. 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA.


E. J. Brill, 24 Hudson St., Kinderhook, NY 12106, USA.

Brookings Institution Books, 1775 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036, USA.

Buchu Books, P.O. Box 2580, 8000 Cape Town, South Africa.

Bullfrog Films, P.O. Box 149, Oley, PA 19606, USA.


California Newsreel, 149 Ninth St., Ste. 420, San Francisco, CA 94103, USA.


Cambridge University Press, 40 W. 20 St., New York, NY 10011-4211, USA.

Canadian Council for International Cooperation (COCAMO), 1 Nicholas St., Ottawa, ON KIN 7B7, Canada.


Catholic Institute for International Relations. See CIIR Publications.

Catholic Relief Services, Global Education Office, 209 West Fayette St., Baltimore, MD 21201-3403, USA.

Center for African Studies, University of Florida, 427 Grinner Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611-2037, USA.

Center for African Studies, University of Illinois, 1208 W. California, #101, Urbana, IL 61801, USA.

Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California—Los Angeles, African Area Studies, Los Angeles, CA 90024, USA.

Center for Economic Research on Africa, Montclair State College, School of Business, Dept. of Economics, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043, USA.

Center for International Education School of Education, University of Massachusetts, Hills House South, Amherst, MA 01003, USA.

Center for International Studies, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701, USA.

Center for Media Literacy, 4727 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 403, Los Angeles, CA 90010.

Center for Women's Global Leadership, Douglass College, 27 Clifton Ave., New Brunswick, NJ 08903, USA.

Center of Concern, 3700 13th St., NE, Washington, DC 20017, USA.

Centre for the Strategic Initiatives of Women, 1701 K St., NW, 11th floor, Washington, DC 20006, USA.

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CODESRIA, P.O. Box 3304, rue Leon Damas, Fanm-Residence, Dakar, Senegal.

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Columbia University Press, 136 South Broadway, Irvington, NY 10533, USA.

Columbia University, Institute of African Studies, 1103 International Affairs Bldg., New York, NY 10027, USA.

Committee on International Security Studies, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 136 Irving St., Cambridge, MA 02138-1996, USA.

Committee to Protect Journalists, 330 Seventh Ave., 12th floor, New York, NY 10001-5010, USA.

Common Courage Press, P.O. Box 702, Monroe, ME 04951, USA.

Community Aid Abroad, 156 George St., Fitzroy, VIC 3065, Australia.


Continuum Publishing Group, 370 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017-6503, USA.
Copley Publishing Group, 138 Great Rd., Acton, MA 01720, USA.
Cornell University, Africana Studies and Research Center, 310 Triphammer Rd., Ithaca, NY 14853, USA.
Council on Foreign Relations Press, 58 E. 68 St., New York, NY 10021, USA.
Crossroads Press, University of California, Los Angeles, 255 Kinsey Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90024, USA.
CSA Publications, Binghamton University, P.O. Box 6000, Binghamton, NY 13902-6000, USA.
CSISBOOKS, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800 K St., NW, Washington, DC 20006, USA.
Cultural Survival, 96 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge, MA 02138, USA.
Da Capo Press, 233 Spring St., New York, NY 10013, USA.
Dag Hammarskjöld Centre, Övre Slottsgatan 2, 753 10 Uppsala, Sweden.
Dar es Salaam University, P.O. Box 35182, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
Ivan R. Dee, 1332 N. Halstead St., Chicago, IL 60622, USA.
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Development Group for Alternative Policies, 1400 I St., NW, Ste. 520, Washington, DC 20005, USA.
Disa Press, 2307 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810, USA.
Documentary Educational Resources, 101 Morse St., Watertown, MA 02172, USA.
Doubleday, c/o Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.
DSR/Development through Self-Reliance, 9111 Guilford Rd., Columbia, MD 21046, USA.

Earth Resources Research, 258 Pentonville Rd., London N1 9JX, USA.
East African Educational Publishers, Brick Court, Mpaka Road/Woodside Grove, Westlands, P.O. Box 45314, Nairobi, Kenya.
Edinburgh University Press, 22 George Sq., Edinburgh EH8 9LF, Scotland.
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Edward Elgar, Old Post Rd., Brookfield, VT 05036, USA.
Emory University, Institute of African Studies, 101 Social Sciences Bldg., 1555 Pierce Dr., Atlanta, GA 30322, USA.
Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA), P.O. Box 3370, Dakar, Senegal.
European Campaign Against South African Aggression on Mozambique and Angola (ECASAAMA), P.O. Box 839, London NW1 7EF, England.
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Faculty of Education, Swansea Institute of Higher Education, Townhill Road, Swansea SA2 0UT, England.
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Ghana Universities Press, P.O. Box 4219, Accra, Ghana.

Illen Ghebrai, P.O. Box 53247, Washington, DC 20009-9998, USA.

Glenhurst Publications, Central Community Center, 6300 Walker St., St. Louis Park, MN 55416, USA.

Global Assembly Project, WorldWIDE Network, 1331 H St., NW, Rm. 903, Washington, DC 20005, USA.

Global Pesticide Campaigner, c/o Pesticide Action Network, 116 New Montgomery, Ste. 810, San Francisco, CA 94110, USA.

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Greenwood Press/Greenwood Publishing Group, 88 Post Rd. West, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007, USA.

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Grove Weidenfeld, c/o Grove Atlantic, 841 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4793, USA.

Guidebook Press, P.O. Box 30064, Windhoek, Namibia.

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H


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Howard University, African Studies Program, P.O. Box 231, Washington, DC 20059, USA.
International Library of African Music, c/o ISER, Rhodes University, P.O. Box 94, Grahamstown 6140, South Africa.

International Monetary Fund, 700-19th St., NW, Rm. C100, Washington, DC 20431, USA.

International Negotiation Network, Carter Center of Emory University, One Copenhill, Atlanta, GA 30307, USA.

International Peace Academy, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), Fiolstraede 10, DK-1171 Copenhagen K, Denmark.

Intervention Press/Forlaget Intervention Press, Castenschioldsvej 7, DK-8270 Hojbjerg, Denmark.

Iowa State University Press, 2121 S. State Ave., Ames, IA 50010-8300, USA.

Irish Mozambique Society, 13 Carlisle St., Dublin 8, Ireland.

Island Press/Center for Resource Economics, 1718 Connecticut Ave., NW, Rm. 300, Washington, DC 20009-1149, USA.

Ithaca Press/Garnet Publishing, 8 Southern Ct., South St., Reading, Berkshire RG1 4QS, England.

J-K

Jacaranda Designs, P.O. Box 7936, Boulder, CO 80306, USA.


Johns Hopkins University Press, 2715 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218-4319, USA.

Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (Copenhagen). No address given in publication.

Joint Ministry in Africa, United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115, USA.

Kegan Paul International, P.O. Box 256, London WC1B 3SW, England.

Kendall/Hunt Publishers, 4050 Westmark Dr., P.O. Box 1840, Dubuque, IA 52004-1840, USA.


Konkori International (Denver). No address available.

Kumarian Press, 14 Oakwood Ave., West Hartford, CT 06119-2127, USA.

L

Lake View Press, P.O. Box 578279, Chicago, IL 60657, USA.

Landmark Films, 3450 Slade Run Dr., Falls Church, VA 22042, USA.

Larousse, 95 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, USA.

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 333 Seventh Ave., 13th floor, New York, NY 10001, USA.


Legal Research and Resource Development Centre, 386 Murtala Muhammed Way, Yaba, P.O. Box 75242, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

Leicestershire Multicultural Centre. See Centre for Multicultural Education (Leicester).

Carol Lems-Dworkin Publishers, P.O. Box 1646, Evanston, IL 60204-1646, USA.


John Libbey Media, Faculty of Humanities, University of Luton, 75 Castle St., Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 3AJ, England.

Libraries Unlimited, P.O. Box 6633, Englewood, CO 80155-6633, USA.

Limelight Editions/Proscenium Publications, 118 E. 30 St., New York, NY 10016, USA.

Lit Verlag, Dieckstr. 73, Munster 48145, Germany.

Little Brown and Company, 34 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02106, USA.


Lynee Rienner Publishers, 1800 30 St., Ste. 314, Boulder, CO 80301-1032, USA.

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Macmillan Publishing (USA), c/o Simon and Schuster, 201 W. 103 St., Indianapolis, IN 46290, USA.

Macmillan Reference, 1633 Broadway, 5th floor, New York, NY 10019, USA.

Madinia Publishers, Dept. of Sociology, University of Natal, King George V Ave., Durban 4000, South Africa.

Malthouse Press, P.O. Box 8917, Lagos, Nigeria.

Manchester Development Education Project, c/o Manchester Polytechnic, 801 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M20 8RG, England.
W.W. Norton, 500 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10110, USA.


NTC Publishing Group, 4255 W. Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood, IL 60646, USA.

Ocean Press, GPO Box 3279, Melbourne, VIC 3001, Australia.

Ocean Press, P.O. Box 20692, Brooklyn, NY 11202, USA.

OCIC Publications, Rue de l'Orme, 8, 1040 Brussels, Belgium.

Ohio University Press, Scott Quadrangle, Athens, OH 45701, USA.

Olive Branch Press/Interlink Publishing Group, 43 Crosby, Northampton, MA 01006, USA.


Open Court Publishing, 315 Fifth St., Peru, IL 61354, USA.

Oral Traditions Association of Zimbabwe, P.O Box 7729, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Orbis Books, Walsh Bldg., Maryknoll, NY 10545, USA.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Centre, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France.

Oryx Press, 4041 North Central, Ste. 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397, USA.

Overseas Development Council, 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 1012, Washington, DC 20009, USA.


Oxford University Press (Australia), GPO Box 2784Y, Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia.


Oxford University Press (USA), 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, USA.


Pandora Books, c/o Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 29 W. 35 St., New York, NY 10001, USA.


Panos Institute (UK), 9 White Lion St., London N1 9PD, England.

Panos Institute (USA), 1025 Thomas Jefferson St., NW, Ste. 105, Washington, DC 20007, USA.


Pantheon Books/Random House, 201 E. 50 St., New York, NY 10022, USA.

Paragon House Publishers, 90 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011, USA.

Peoples Video Network Store, 39 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10011, USA.

Pesticide Action Network, 116 New Montgomery, Ste. 810, San Francisco, CA 94105, USA.


David Philip Publishers, 3 Scott Rd., P.O. Box 23408, Claremont 7735, South Africa.

Physicians for Human Rights, 100 Boylston St., Ste. 702, Boston, MA 02116, USA.

Picador USA/St. Martin's Press, c/o Macmillan Publishers, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010, USA.

Pierian Press, P.O. Box 1808, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, USA.

Pilgrim Press/United Church of Christ, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115, USA.


Pinter Publishers/St. Martin's, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010, USA.


Pluto Press Australia, P.O. Box 199, Leichhardt, NSW 2040, Australia.

Population Council, One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

Population Reference Bureau, P.O. Box 96152, Washington, DC 20090-6152, USA.

Sierra Club Books, 100 Bush St., 13th floor, San Francisco, CA 94104, USA.


Simon and Schuster/Paramount Communications, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, USA.

Skotaville Publishers, 35 Malle St., 2nd floor, Northside, P.O. Box 32483, Braamfontein 2107, South Africa.

Smithsonian Institution Press, 470 L'Enfant Plaza, Ste. 470, Washington, DC 20560, USA.

Smyrna Press, P.O. Box 1803—GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202, USA.

Snoeck-Ducaju and Zoon. See University of Washington Press.

South Centre, Chemin du Champ-d'Anier 17, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland.

South End Press, 116 St. Botolph St., Boston, MA 02115, USA.

Southern Africa Grantmakers’ Affinity Group, c/o Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 1450 G St., NW, Ste. 250, Washington, DC 20005, USA.


SPA Publications, Guzmán el Bueno, 21, 28015 Madrid, Spain.


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Stanford University, Center for African Studies, 114 Littlefield Hall, 300 Lausen St., Stanford, CA 94305-5013, USA.

Steck-Vaughn, P.O. Box 26015, Austin, TX 78755, USA.

Struik Christian Books, P.O. Box 3755, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa.

Study Circles Resource Center, P.O. Box 203, Pomfret, CT 06258, USA.

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U.S. Institute of Peace, 1550 M St., NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20005-1708, USA.

UN Development Program, 1889 F St., NW, Washington, DC 20006, USA.

UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service, DC, Rm. 1103, New York, NY 10017, USA.
Africa World Press Guide


Victoria International Development Association (VIDEA), 407-620 View St., Victoria, BC V8W 1J6, Canada.

VSO, Development Education Unit, 317 Putney Bridge Road, London SW15 2FN, England.

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Warwickshire World Studies Centre, Manor Hall, Sandy Lane, Leamington Spa, Warks CV32 6RD, England.

Waveland Press, P.O. Box 400, Prospect Heights, IL 60070, USA.


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Professor Iolo Wyn Williams, School of Education, University College, of North Wales, Lon Pobty, Bangor, Gwynedd LL571DZ, Wales.

Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development, 1611 Kent St., No. 600, Arlington, VA 22209, USA; Rt. 3, Box 376, Morrilton, AR 72110-9537, USA.

Witwatersrand University Press, 1 Jan Smuts Ave., Johannesburg 2001, South Africa.

Woelli Publishing Services, P.O. Box K601, Accra, New Town Ghana.


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World Food Day Association of Canada, 400 176 Gloucester St., Ottawa, ON K2P 0A6, Canada.

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The material is organised by region (except for Nigeria and South Africa, which have distinct sections), and within each region by five broad subject areas:

• Politics (which also includes current affairs, international relations, and some aspects of law);
• Economics and development;
• Society and social welfare (which also includes gender, some anthropological material, health, urban studies, and demographic studies);
• Rural economy (which also includes agriculture, food and famine studies);
• General and other material (which also includes environmental and media studies).

Within these subject areas – which are admittedly crude – items are arranged alphabetically. Many of the items are chapters from books, and in many cases the books concerned are also listed. In these cases an abbreviated reference is given (editors and short title only), plus the number of the book itself.

For a detailed subject index, and for a listing covering a much wider range of material, see the International African Institute’s annual Africa Bibliography, published by Edinburgh University Press. I welcome comments on the arrangement, and notification of missing items. Send these to me, Chris Allen, Department of Politics, 31 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9JT (e-mail address: c.h.allen@ed.ac.uk).

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Africa General

(A) Politics and International Relations

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