Oiling the Wheels of Imperialism

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It is instructive, but not surprising, that more and more issues of the journal contain imperialism in the title. The theme of this issue is the interaction between what we might term material imperialism – the securing of resources – and cultural imperialism in which insidious disciplinary practices are levered in to Africa under the guise of ‘philanthropy’, which amount to little more than the ‘social engineering’ of a continent, its institutions and peoples. The latter have become the leitmotif of 2005 as western leaders and celebrities scramble to express their commitment to ‘saving’ Africa. However, the journal has never treated imperialism as a deus ex machina, but a complex process in which African political elites use state structures as a means of perpetuating power and control. All these themes come to bear on the articles gathered here.

In their analysis of empire Hardt and Negri conjured up a networked form of empire in which corporations and multilateral organisations organise capitalist exploitation on a global scale. Where their analysis was so fundamentally flawed was in downplaying the role of states in managing these structures of control. As such their analysis is in danger of obscuring the glaring realities of modern imperialism. Such matters are laid bare in Barnes’s contribution, previously published in the African Studies Review, where she distinguishes between resource imperialism and the forms of philanthropy used to legitimise this form of empire. In the latter regard she anticipates Jacoby’s article in seeing militarisation as a means of controlling access to resources rather than its publicly stated aim of protecting human rights and democracy under the spurious ‘war on terror’; something we come back to in the next issue.

In terms of resources Barnes focuses on oil and how security is framed in terms of anti-terrorism, but is largely about control of sea-lanes and military bases. Chris Alden shows that China’s interests in Africa are not that dissimilar. As China rapidly takes a major role in the global political economy, Africa serves as a key provider of resources and a site for industrial investment, as well as political arena in which to exercise diplomatic muscle. This goes against the earlier rhetoric of anti-imperialist solidarity that China espoused, although its current interests are couched in terms of beneficial ‘partnerships’. But China assumes even greater importance for development in Africa than these dimensions of bilateral links that Alden explores. Its massive role as supplier of manufactured goods to the West means that it stands in the way of any African initiatives to develop export-oriented industrial production, even if the developed countries did open up trade. Kyle picks up on the resource issue, but argues that the impact of their exploitation on the space economy of Angola must be situated in longer-term patterns. Although debates around the so-called Dutch Disease are useful, it is unhelpful to see the discovery and exploitation of minerals as somehow working from a clean slate. As he shows, the impacts are conditioned by and reinforce existing patterns of inequality. At the international scale Goodison examines European Union trade negotiations and
whether the current round offers the possibility for incremental change in Africa’s favour.

As Jacoby argues, underlying these actions is an ideology of delinquency and discipline. Africa’s underdevelopment has for long been blamed on local culture and the lack of ‘proper’ values. Such discourses designed to let imperialism off the hook have reared their ugly head again in various guises, which Jacoby lays bare. With a reductionist ‘clash of civilizations’ logic, all those regions and peoples beyond the pale can either be threatened with violence or controlled through means which generally fall below the radar. Where force fails or is deemed unwise, the imperialists deploy a range of Trojan horses to transform societies and political structures. Of growing importance are humanitarian interventions in the form of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), which Barnes shows can be tied to significant funding through ‘corporate social responsibility’ arrangements, on top of more conventional support for coercive elites. Timamy reveals how corruption can be analysed and focuses on budgets, which will be a key site for spoils politics as donors move towards direct budget support.

From this spurious ideology of security we see other forms of recolonization, which in different ways, seek to discipline society and produce liberal subjects. Buur’s discussion of the blurred line between community self-government and vigilantism in South Africa contrasts with Mugabe’s ongoing blitzkrieg on Harare’s poorer citizens and the conspicuous silence of African leaders, pace the peer review process of the African Union. Buur’s study of ‘participatory’ policing demonstrates how evocations of ‘the people’ are translated into practice, which can be reactionary or more progressive. Moore’s thought provoking review of Stephen Chan’s book *Citizen of Africa: Conversations with Morgan Tsvangirai*, draws attention to the complexity of the democratic struggles in Africa and in the case of Zimbabwe, the futility of the ‘peoples’ power, which had been so powerful in the Philippines and the Ukraine. Moore draws attention to the complexity and accommodation, which imperialist powers are now prepared achieve with African despots in the war against terrorism, post 9/11. Moore warns that the pariah Mugabe, may still have a more useful role to play in the war against terrorism, which might render Morgan Tsvangirai the sacrificial lamb.

After all this doom and gloom we are left asking what can the left do? For Barnes, writing from the United States, the worrying thing is that the scramble for resources and the architecture of control that accompanies it is rarely reported. The critical media has wholeheartedly failed to expose these covert operations so it is up to other intellectuals to break this silence since any complicity in this silence further legitimises these acts. Another route is revealed in Saul’s analysis of Eduardo Mondlane’s legacy. He shows how Mondlane struggled with a socialist ideal and the realities of organisations on the ground. At one level the Mozambican socialist project was hampered by regional and geopolitical interests, but he also reveals a very candid admission of the failings of the state in the post-independent period. The challenge is to build political organisations that encompass the most exploited in ways that transform the formal democratic structures being established as part of the new imperialist philanthropy.
Cultural Determinism, Western Hegemony & the Efficacy of Defective States

Tim Jacoby

This paper argues that the notion of a defective state, including those designated as ‘weak’, ‘failed’ or ‘collapsed’, has a number of obvious advantages for the West. First and most obviously, it offers an explanation for the faults of the state in question that does not implicate outside forces. Second, it justifies external action to intervene in the internal affairs of domestic regimes and, finally, it implies that such action can only reliably remove the inherent threat posed by defective states if intervention produces a project of political transformation. This suggests three questions (which make up the focus of the paper as a whole). First, if outside forces are not to blame, what is there within defective states that explains their failings? Second, what form should an external response to these problems take and, third, what sort of political transformation should that external response seek to enact within the target state?

Since the end of the Cold War, increases in global independence and the rise of chronic, brutal civil wars within the developing world have moved feelings of Western vulnerability away from their previous focus on Soviet internationalism and towards concerns over a growth in disorder within the periphery (Zartman, 1995). Of these supposed threats to the West, Robert Rotberg, an advisor on the American Secretary of State’s Advisory Panel on Africa, identifies two main categories (2004). The first concerns Weak States. These include an array of nation-states that may be inherently fragile because of geographical, physical or fundamental economic constraints as well as those that are socially weak because of internal antagonisms, greed or despotism. According to Rotberg, weak states typically harbour ethnic, religious, linguistic or other tensions that may be transformed into violent conflicts by relatively minor events and then, in some circumstances, exported to destabilise the region and threaten Western interests. Other indications of state weakness include inadequate supplies of public goods, poor physical infrastructural networks, falling GDP per capita, high levels of corruption, judicial partiality and weak civil organisation. The Central Intelligence Agency currently lists Haiti, Niger, Lebanon, Chad and Papua New Guinea as examples of weak states.

The second category of state defect is the Failed State. It provides only very limited quantities of essential public goods with much of the state forfeited to decentralised actors. Legislatures and jurisprudence exist simply to ratify the decisions of the
executive which is, itself, dominated by the interests of local feudatories. Literacy rates, GDP per capita and growth are on an acute downward slide, while infant mortality, crime and prices indices are increasing rapidly. The ultimate destination of such failure is collapse in which the state becomes a mere geographical expression without any semblance of order. Substate actors take over and collude with sectors of the former state to become, in Rotberg’s view, a regional and possible global threat. The CIA’s list of failed states, all potentially vulnerable to collapse, includes Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Côte d’Ivoire.

The reasons for the alleged descent into chaos besetting the South in general and sub-Saharan Africa in particular are many, complex and subject to considerable debate. Some commentators blame inherent weaknesses born of decolonisation or the self-aggrandising tendencies of domestic elites, while many, implicitly or otherwise, blame the two former Superpowers for leaving their former clients bereft of guidance and revenue (Ignatieff, 1993; Derluguian, 1998). Generally, though, defective states in the developing world are thought to constitute an imminent and growing threat to the West. The fact that they ‘serve as a breeding ground for many extremist groups is indisputable’ and axiomatic (Carment, 2003:408). For example, the revealingly named report of the bi-partisan Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Play to Win, begins ‘one of the principal lessons of the events of September 11 is that failed states matter – for national security as well as for humanitarian reasons’. Moreover, in implementing its findings and dealing with the more delinquent of the current range of defective states in the developing world, the West will, the Commission goes on to claim, ‘dramatically improve its ability to protect itself, promote its interests and enhance its standing’ (2003:4).

To legitimise such an undertaking, it becomes necessary to ascribe responsibility for the activities of one or more of a defective state’s citizens to its national administration. This has a number of obvious advantages for the West. First, and most obviously, it offers an explanation for the above faults that does not implicate outside forces. Second, it justifies external action to intervene in the internal affairs of domestic regimes and, finally, it implies that such action can only reliably remove the inherent threat posed by reluctant or unwilling states if it produces a project of political transformation (Callinicos, 2004:15). This suggests three questions (which will make up the focus of the following sections). First, if outside forces are not to blame, what is there within defective states to explain their failings? Second, what form should an external response to these problems take and, third, what sort of political transformation should the external response seek to enact within the target state?

In addressing the first question, this paper suggests that, in the West, there has been a resurgence in cultural understandings of social instability. Thus, the first section argues that, for Western policy-makers, the key determinant of state defectiveness is the immutably obscurant and resistant nature of local cultural patterns. Such a view allows relief agencies working in defective states both to ignore their own complicity in existent power relations and the consequences of the West’s response – the focus of the second question and section two. Finally, the third section argues that transforming defective states deemed to be worthy of, and amenable to, remedial action involves deregulating markets, privatising the public sector and using aid inputs to exploit comparative advantages in labour intensity. Achieving this may involve the strengthening of ‘willing’ comprador elites (as suggested in the recent report from the Commission for Africa (2005)), the selective promotion of ‘good’
governance and, in cases of acute debilitation, the imposition of a new structure of sovereignty conducive to greater Western penetration.

**Culture & Delinquency**

In the days of casting the Ottoman Empire as the ‘sick man’ of Europe and intervening in its affairs, policy-makers could simply, and with impunity, blame the ‘foreign mind’ for the brutality of oriental despotisms and the failure of their regimes to provide for their people. While some refinement of these themes has proved necessary since the age of mass immigration into the West, they have, in many ways, survived the decline of Victoriana social theory. This section looks at the re-emergence of such notions of ‘culturism’ which, it is suggested, have two key features. The first is an emphasis on the irrationality and self-destructiveness of Southern resistance to Western supremacy. The second is the notion that this is so deeply and immutably ingrained within developing societies as to be largely irredeemable and thus not amenable to the beneficence of the West. The result, it is argued, is that hierarchical concepts of culture, having entered notions of ‘development’ via colonial continuities and theories of modernisation (Kothari and Minogue, 2002:7-12), are increasingly securitised as the only way to safeguard Western interests.

For much of the Cold War, theories of modernisation have long contained strong cultural emphases. As P. T. Bauer put it, ‘economic achievement and progress depend largely on human aptitudes and attitudes’ (1976: 41). For him and others, the developmental potential of Southern society is limited by a cultural traditionalism reminiscent of the European **Gemeinschaft** (Tönnies, 1957). This presents itself as an orientation towards the past which, reinforced by the ascription of status based on kinship and a general sense of fatalism, prevents people from adapting to new circumstances. This emphasis on the supposed cultural features of the South was deployed by the New Right during the early 1980s as a way of countering multicultural discourses. The argument was that social phenomena incompatible with a ‘modern’ Western **Gesellschaft** (in which traditional values have been relegated to the private sphere, kinship ties weakened through increased geographic and social mobility and fatalism overcome through innovation, entrepreneurialism, scientific rationality and the correlation of social position and merit) are an inevitable consequence of cultural heterogeneity (Ingelhart and Baker, 2000). Unable to define explicitly the innate inferiority of non-Western values without risking electoral rejection from an increasingly multicultural West, it ‘modernised racism and made it respectable … [by moving] discourses structured around categories of hierarchy and superiority to one in which cultural difference is argued to be the key operational factor’ in explaining social phenomena (Duffield, 1998:175). This is perhaps best exemplified by Huntington’s millennial vision of liberal-capitalism’s struggle for hegemony which ‘rebottled 19th-century fears – the Brown, Yellow and Black Perils – into the Islamic, Sinic, Hindu and African “civilisations”’ ostensibly held to be comparable to that of the West’s (Abrahamian, 2003:530).

Increasingly, however, a more radical version of a similar cultural discourse has emerged. This was driven forward over the last fifteen years by the enfeebled of the European left which has dichotomised politics into a choice between the endorsement of the status quo and the empowerment of the extreme right (Moschonas, 2002:107-8). Consequently, their discourse on cultural defence has become the only viable critical vote in many polities leading to the emergence of
racist parties within the national governments of Austria, Denmark and Italy and a resurgence of rightism in France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway and Belgium. It is, however, in the United States, home to some of the lowest voter turnouts in the Western world, where the focus on culture has taken on its most aggressive form. There, attitudes openly ‘speak of a new sense of Caucasian superiority [and] a new desire to subjugate those of other colours and cultures’ (The Guardian, 9 May 2002). In a country where only 18 per cent of the population hold a passport (compared with over 40 per cent in neighbouring Canada), the creation of international hate figures has long proved efficacious (Hansard, 17 December 2002).

East Asian expansionists of the 1940s and 50s, South-East Asian Maoists of the 1960s and 70s, Hispanic socialists and narco-gangsters of the 1980s and 90s have all taken their place alongside the Russian in the American collective consciousness of ‘the other’.1

For the most part, though, these were far away cultures giving rise to far away societies unlikely to endanger the global economic and military core directly. By contrast, the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon demonstrated that the cultures of the developing world and the states and social movements they produce are able to threaten the fundamental institutions of Western superiority. This has radicalised the moderate right, promoted the extreme right and ended the equivocation of Huntington’s earlier thesis of civilisational contest – a change heralded by Silvio Berlusconi’s immediate response to the attacks: ‘we [the West] should be conscious of the superiority of our civilisation’ (The Guardian, 27 September 2001). The result has been a mainstreaming of previously more marginal ‘culturised’ discourses. The widely accepted, though probably inaccurate, identity of the 19 terrorists alleged to have participated in the 2001 attacks has driven forward a renewed interest not only in Arab Islam as an antithetical ideology (the Qu’ran went straight to the top of bestseller lists), 2 but also the cultural patterns, and potential hazards, of the developing world as a general, amorphous vehicle for future defiance (Edgell, 2003).

This interest has produced two visions of non-Western culture. The first is that the South’s resistance to the West, which the events of 2001 are said to epitomise, represents an emotional and irrational combination of anger and envy identifiable in much of the developing world. This is apparently confirmed by the suicidal nature of the 2001 mission (as well as the futile resistance of Afghans and the senseless losses of sub-Saharan intra-state warfare). Although little is known about the motives and backgrounds of the 19 suspects and the Federal Bureau of Intelligence has acknowledged that it has withheld important information regarding their political demands, a general sense that their desire was simply to ‘seek martyrdom’ in a cathartic expression of ‘Muslim rage’ pervades (New York Review of Books, 17 January 2002). As Thomas Friedman put it, ‘their act was their demand’ (New York Times, 24 March 2002). Similarly, although bin Laden and Zawahiri say much less about Western culture than the politics of Palestine and Iraq, their comments are construed to represent a ‘nihilistic subculture’ leading an ‘assault on civilisation’ (Kelly, 2001:2). Resistance to the ‘liberation’ of Iraq was couched in similar terms. As its major cities descended into chaos, President Bush’s Head of Military Intelligence, General William Boykin, was reported to have remarked:

The battle that we’re in is a spiritual battle. Satan wants to destroy this nation, he wants to destroy us as a nation, and he wants to destroy us as a Christian army … We in the army of God, in the house of God, in the kingdom of God, have been raised for such a time as this (New York Newsday, 17 October 2003; Los Angeles Times, 16 October 2003).
This tendency to reduce geopolitics to a contest between good and evil is reinforced by a disproportionate focus on the costs of warfare within the developing world. While atrocities committed by Western troops are seen to be temporary and isolated within an overall framework of pursuing a laudable end, African conflicts are regarded as ‘the result of irrational and ancient tribal hatreds’ in which human rights abuses are to be expected (Keen, 1997:67). For Huntington (by now hurriedly recasting his civilisational model), the barbarism of wars in the South, combined with the social divisions that underpin them, helps to explain the casual brutality and target selection of September 11th (Newsweek, 3 January 2002).

Closely connected to this, a second strand to the culture paradigm has tended to see social ‘ills’, criminality and defective states as broadly unconnected to political or economic concerns. The maxim that ‘neither a democratic nor a capitalist economy is conceivable apart from certain cultural and moral habits’ leads to the view that, in some ‘cultures, people do not strive for progress or development’ regardless of Western beneficence (Novak, 2001:169). For some writers, this appears to reaffirm the findings of earlier modernisation theorists. Lawrence Harrison, for instance, lists 10 ways of ‘promoting progressive cultural change’ which are highly reminiscent of Tönnies’ Gesellschaft and 1960s functionalism (2000:296-299). Mostly, though, culture is regarded as immutable or only very slowly changing. As Daniel Etounga-Manguelle, a former World Bank advisor from Cameroon, puts it, ‘authoritarianism permeates our families, our villages, our schools, our churches. It is for us a way of life. Thus, faced with such a powerful, immovable culture, what can we do to change Africa’s destiny’ (quoted in Huntington 1996:75; see also Etounga-Manguelle, 2000)?

Such a monist and determinist view of the role of culture in society runs contrary to anthropological orthodoxy, yet it continues to exert an extensive influence on the Western political psyche (Crawford, 1998). Explanations for the cultural, material and military superiority of the West, so much a feature of mainstream discourses since 2001, have repeatedly pointed to the obscurant and inert nature of society in the developing world. Victor Davies writing in The Wall Street Journal, for instance, suggests that:

> few in the Middle East have a clue about the nature, origins, or history of democracy, a word that, along with its family (‘constitution’, ‘freedom’ and ‘citizen’), has no history in the Arab vocabulary, or indeed any philological pedigree in any language other than Greek and Latin and their modern offspring (25 February 2002).

In this sense, ‘the new barbarian threat, like that of old, grows out of civilisational backwardness’, writes Brink Lindsey from the Cato Institute. It is, apparently, a product ‘of the failures of the underdeveloped world. Brooding resentment of those failures has mixed with fundamentalist Islam to produce a totalitarian ideology bent on an apocalyptic showdown with the West’ (National Review Online, 27 November 2002). This is, for Paul Kennedy, the ‘real cultural war’ (The New York Times, 27 January 2002).

To conclude this section, then, it has been argued that culturally deterministic explanations of disorder in the developing world, of the ineffectual nature of Southern states and of resistance to Western hegemony have all been boosted and radicalised since 2001. The notion of a global cultural confrontation has moved towards the centre of discourses concerning the developing world in general and defective states in particular. This ‘new barbarism’, as Paul Richards calls it (1996),
has a number of foreign policy implications (which will be discussed in more detail in the next section) in addition to its domestic importance. As John Gledhill perspicuously notes, ‘the construction of an “external enemy” is integral to attempts to define the unity of the United States’. The periphery, he continues, ‘is constructed as not simply barbarism but a site of irrational disorder and social violence’ (1994:163). This perceived chaos threatens to destabilise the West either through increased immigration (which, for Pat Buchanan, might foment a settling of old scores and, ultimately, The Death of the West (2001)) or the visitation of pre-modern, apocalyptical and indiscriminate violence (seen as an archetypal feature of Southern conflicts) upon an inherently vulnerable liberal order. Since the motive for such nihilism is seen to be ‘embedded in local cultures’ (Tuastad, 2003:592), mollifying the unfathomable and largely unalterable volatility of defective states can only be accomplished through a reordered commitment to securitisation – the focus of the next section.

**Military Humanitarianism**

In considering how to respond to the supposed threats of defective states, the South’s perennial failure to adopt the cultural norms of the West has considerable political efficacy. For much of the post-colonial period, it has provided Western policy-makers with a ready-made excuse for global inequity, widespread human rights abuses and environmental degradation which have not implicated agents outside the South itself. Since effecting change through social measures can do little to reform ancient cultural patterns, that are themselves viewed as the determining (or most influential) factors explaining all social phenomena inimical to Western interests, defensive securitisation has long been the framework through which defective states have been approached. For much of the post-Cold War period, two strategies have been particularly influential in determining which defective states to focus upon and which to ignore. The first concerns the notion of ‘pivotal’ states (Chase, Hill and Kennedy, 1998). This is defined by James Miskel, a former director of defence policy on The White House’s National Security Council, as the extent to which ‘a state’s successes and failures ha[ve] major ripple effects on neighbouring states’ (Miskel, 2005:65). According to this view, the West should increase its support for, and influence over, states which are regionally dominant. When combined with concomitant reductions in support for nearby non-pivotal states, a strong client state will emerge which can promote Western hegemony through stability. When initially conceived in the mid-1990s, important examples of pivotal states included Egypt, Algeria, South Africa and India (Chase, Hill and Kennedy, 1996).

A second, overlapping, approach to selecting target states is the idea of ‘seam’ states. Indicative of the persistence of Huntington’s civilisational model, this splits the world into a core of globalised trading nations and a periphery of weak, unstable and unpredictable states dubbed ‘The Gap’ by Thomas Barnett, formerly of the Office of the Secretary of Defence. For Barnett, ‘the Caribbean Rim, virtually all of Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus, central Asia, the Middle East and Southwest Asia, and much of Southeast Asia’ should be seen as a ‘strategic threat environment’. To ‘suppress bad things coming out of the Gap’, seam states such as Morocco, Algeria, Pakistan and Turkey must, he continues, be mobilised ‘to firewall the Core [sic]’ (T. Barnett, 2003:174-5; 2004).

An important example of the influence of this view is the work of the travel writer turned social scientist, Robert Kaplan. His article entitled ‘The Coming Anarchy’ published in Atlantic Monthly in 1994 so impressed the White House that it was,
according to Richard Holbrooke, faxed to every American embassy in the world (1999). In it, Kaplan claims that West Africa, defined only in terms of ‘disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels’, represents a general vision of the future (1994:46). Later, in a book based on the article and similarly entitled, he explains how such a situation has come to pass: ‘in places where the Western Enlightenment has not penetrated and where there has always been mass poverty, people find liberation in violence’ (2000:45). Such an irredeemable condemnation of the developing world was, when coupled with a reading of his earlier (and similarly deterministic) account of Balkan historiography (1993), instrumental in persuading the Clinton administration that the Yugoslav conflagration was an unavoidable consequence of local propensities and therefore best ignored (Tuastad, 2003:598).

The efficacy of regarding ‘the Gap’ as immutably tragic is, of course, readily apparent. The catastrophic intervention in Somalia in 1993, where the United States armed forces lost 18 soldiers and over 80 per cent of aid allocations were said to have been misappropriated through looting and corruption, had convinced Washington that defective states which were not on geo-strategic seams or of pivotal importance were best contained through the type of defensive securitisation implied by Thomas Barnett. Indeed, the tenacity with which this view was held was demonstrated by the West’s procrastination over Rwanda the following year and the limited response to Srebrenica (Europe’s worst abuse of human rights since World War Two) the year after that. In the latter case, however, domestic public opinion made it more difficult for Western policy makers to take ‘refuge in semantics, legalisms and feigned ignorance’, so when Serbian expansionism began to threaten the stability of the region as a whole (with considerable implications for Nato’s second most powerful military watching from Edirne), a more concerted remedial effort was undertaken (Lloyd, 2003:12).

Indeed, the subsequent ‘successful’ implementation of the (ostensibly oxymoronic) notion of a humanitarian war in the Balkans foretold of a new approach to castigating recalcitrant defective states (Lang, 2003). This emergent military humanism became institutionalised by the attacks of September 11th 2001 which, for many, revealed the limitations of attempting to contain or influence ‘The Gap’ through the promotion of pivotal or seam states. Instead, as the White House’s National Strategy for Combating Terrorism reveals, a more proactive approach is necessary ‘to build an international order where more [sic] countries and peoples are integrated into a world consistent with the interests and values we share with our partners.’ To do this, the White House continues, it may be necessary to ‘persuade reluctant states and compel unwilling states through a more vigorous programme of remedial action’ (2003:30, 21).

Such a view is shared by Robert Cooper, a senior aide to Tony Blair and recently Director-General for External Affairs at the European Union. Having affirmed Thomas Barnett’s partition of the world (‘a premodern zone where the state has failed and a Hobbesian war of all against all is underway’; ‘Machiavellian’ modern states who still ‘think of security primarily in terms of conquest’; the ‘postmodern’ West), he writes:

*The challenge to the postmodern world is to get used to the idea of double standards. Among ourselves, we operate on the basis of laws and open co-operative security. But when dealing*
with more old-fashioned kinds of states … we need to revert to rougher methods of an earlier age – force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary to deal with those who still live in the 19th century world of 'every state for itself' (2002:16).

The problem for Cooper, is that, 'today, there are no colonial powers willing to take on the job, though the opportunities, perhaps even the need, for colonisation is as great as it ever was in the 19th century' (2002:17). 'What is needed', he continues, 'is a new kind of imperialism, one acceptable to a world of human rights and cosmopolitan values … which, like all imperialism, aims to bring order and organisation' (2002:17-8).

This new ‘postmodern’ imperialism must, he suggest, take two forms. 'First there is the voluntary imperialism of the global economy: … If states wish to benefit, they must open themselves up to the interference of international organisations and foreign states' (Cooper, 2002:18). This will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Second, there is the imperialism of aid. 'It is not just soldiers that [sic] value come from the international community; it is police, judges, prison officers, central bankers and others. … As auxiliaries to this effort – in many ways indispensable to it – are over 100 NGOs' (Cooper, 2002:18). To put these different strands together is to conclude that, in order to persuade the reluctant and compel the unwilling (as the White House puts it), it may be necessary to use military force; doing this, however, risks the domestic support base of Western leaders. Warfare may cost Western lives, impair Western trading interests and damage the electoral prospects of incumbent Western governments. A preferable solution is to turn to the world of human rights and cosmopolitan values embodied in the third sector – as both a substitute for (in the case of the reluctant), and an accompaniment to (in the case of the unwilling), military action.

The result has been that major bilateral donors have increasingly pressured the growing NGO sector to bear more of the material and ethical responsibility for international action. To do this, aid levels rose from $2.1 billion in 1990 to $5.9 billion in 2000, of which the United States contributed between 20 and 30 per cent of the annual allocation. Aid classified as ‘humanitarian’ (the area of allocation most pertinent to responding to defective states) has risen from 5.83 per cent of the total in 1989 to 10.5 per cent in 2000 (Randel and German 2002). Such an enlargement has permitted the West to exert a greater level of control over the activities of non-governmental agencies. There has, for instance, been a sharp decline in the funds allocated to multilateral agencies in favour of explicitly earmarked bilateral aid. This has had ‘a significant impact on the discretion available to humanitarian organisations’ with the consequence that ‘state interests, rather than the humanitarian principle of relief based on need, drives [sic] funding decisions’ (M. Barnett, 2005:11).

These interests have rarely been compatible with Henri Dunant’s humanitarian principles of impartiality (the delivery of assistance to all), neutrality (the delivery of assistance in a way that does not promote the objectives of any particular party) and independence (the delivery of assistance without significant input from any particular party) (Minear, 2002). Instead, there has emerged an ever-greater tendency towards overtly value-led intrusions into defective states. Indeed, the International Committee of the Red Cross’ efforts to adhere to Dunant’s initial conceptualisation have been extensively derided as ‘cautious, lawyerly’ and suggestive of a ‘complicity with war crimes (Ignatieff, 1999:204; 1998:124). Accepting that trying to adopt a fully impartial stance is ‘ultimately futile’ (African
Rights, 1994:4) has thus opened the way for a greater selectivity in the deployment of resources, more in keeping with the West’s geo-political objectives. Much of this is surrounded by a moralising afflatus of philanthropy. Andy Storey, for instance, concludes that assistance to conflict-affected countries ought not to fall into the hands of an ‘abusive authority’, while Fiona Fox suggests that the reconstruction of defective states ‘should be seized on as a tool to promote peace and justice’ (1997:392; 2001:277). Such consequentialist reasoning is clearly an important departure from the previously overweening need to remain impartial, neutral and independent. Moreover, since it attempts neither to define what form an abusive authority might take nor to distinguish peace from pacification, it is not, by itself, an autonomous political position. Combined with a pronounced lack of local knowledge (reinforced by the generalist and temporary nature of most non-governmental appointments), the overall result is often a meek confirmation of Western policy.8

Here, the value of viewing defective states as driven by cultural patterns is apparent. First, it offers an apolitical entry point for agencies seeking to prioritise their resources and promote reform. This not only adopts a kind of defensive pluralism in which power relations are comprehensively ignored, but also supports an anti-governmental ideology broadly in line with the marketisation preferences of the major donors (to be discussed further in the next section). Consequently, ‘most aid agencies have surprisingly little to say, by way of concrete analysis, about the nature of the alternative political structures that are emerging in protracted crises’ (Duffield, 1998:181). Since, as Mark Duffield suggests, they ‘persist in believing that their response is a mirror image of need … the only useful form of knowledge is that which translates easily into a series of technical solutions.’ The result, he continues, is that instability within developing states is often assumed to be based upon ‘irrational acts stemming from a development malaise’, the mitigation of which is ‘precisely the role of development agencies … as de facto agent[s] of Northern security policy’ (1999:32, 33).

As a consequence, ‘at the policy level, new relationships have been forged between the international security community and humanitarian actors’ – an intimacy officially recognised in 1999 when Medecins sans Frontier (MSF) was awarded the Nobel peace prize and its founder, Bernard Kouchner, was made Pasha of Nato’s colony, Kosova (Abiew, 2003:27). In other words, a realisation has emerged that the lessons of humanitarian intervention offer some insights into challenges involved in coercing nonstate actors in other contexts as well, and lessons from past efforts to coerce terrorists or other nonstate groups for strategic reasons are often relevant to the challenges faced in humanitarian action (Byman and Waxman, 2002:176).

Such a relationship reached new levels of closeness in Afghanistan where ‘the aid community [had long] used the motif of the “failed state” to undermine Kabul’s sovereignty’ (Goodhand, 2004:44). During and following the war of 2002, this ‘community’ became increasingly militarised. American military personnel frequently did not, for instance, wear uniforms while conducting ‘humanitarian’ tasks with civilian organisations (The Washington Post, 28 March 2002). In what James Dobbins and his team from the Rand Corporation noted ‘was a departure from the traditional role of military civil affairs, which focuses on setting conditions for international organizations and NGOs to conduct humanitarian assistance’, much of this was co-ordinated, either formally or informally, through the American-led, NGO consortium InterAction at the headquarters of military planning, CENTCOM,
in Tampa, Florida (2003:140). Its work was supported in Kabul by a civil-military operations task force which directly designed and co-ordinated reconstruction projects and humanitarian assistance across the country.

This was also true of Iraq where the role of NGOs was built into the warplan as Phase 4 through a newly created Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance within the Pentagon under the leadership of Retired General Jay Garner.

'The US government considered NGOs, particularly those based in the United States, as natural partners … In Iraq, as in Afghanistan, the message was clear: the US government and NGOs share the same values and should combine their efforts (de Torrente, 2004:9).

As Secretary of State Colin Powell stated in October 2001, ‘NGOs are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team’ (quoted in Barnett 2005: 2). Although some agencies such as Oxfam, CARE and World Vision recorded their discomfiture with such overt assimilation, there was a general realisation that ‘opposition to the war could risk … marginalisation in a fiercely competitive sector that relied on close links to governments for funding, access to sites of humanitarian crisis and security and logistical support’ (Mac Ginty, 2003:612). In all, then, the geopolitical impact of the securitisation of the NGO sector is a replication of the West’s strategic approach to defective states. As Brian Atwood from USAID commented in 1998, the chaos caused by state failure ‘is threatening our national self-interest. It is undermining global stability and it is making a mockery of our efforts to promote democracy and open-market systems’ (quoted in Duffield, 2002:1065). Overcoming the obstacle of sovereignty and ‘reconstructing’ such threats has thus necessitated a ‘philanthropic imperialism, manifest in military intervention’ and a co-option of NGOs as ‘a non-military extension of a new structure for great power interests’ (de Waal, 1998:155; Dallaire, 1996:211).

Political Transformation

This brings us to the question of what sort of transformation will the West seek to enact within defective states. Here, the West has long sought to back coercive elites as a way of reforming the unwilling, pressuring the reluctant and securing a stable and compliant order within the developing world. Small cabals of pro-Western military leaders (or civilians enjoying the full support of the security sector) exercising considerable force have, since the 1960s, been believed to be a more effective route into the Western sphere of influence than waiting for an organic bourgeoisie to establish comprador links with international capital (Huntington, 1969).

Four factors make the support of security elites within developing countries more prudent than promoting incremental societal change. The first is that military, or military-backed, authoritarian regimes are ideally suited to dealing with social instability (Johnson, 1962). Grounded on the hierarchical discipline of the bureaucratised chain of command extrapolated to include the civilian sphere, their sense of order leads to considerable caution in permitting the free expression of political dissent. The result of this is that security officials are so sensitive to the possibility of disorder that they overestimate the power of actual opponents, react to potential challenges as if they were actual threats and assume that what might happen is likely to happen unless preventative actions are taken (Janovitz and Van Doorn, 1971). Party politics are thus viewed with suspicion at best or, more often, as excessively competitive, manipulative and divisive. This is particularly useful in
suppressing a rise in labour organisation, socialism and resistance to Western influence. It also tends to stimulate weapons purchasing and upgrading, a sector in which the West has extensive interests (Nordlinger, 1977).

A second factor behind the capacity of security apparatuses to push forward social change favourable to Western interests is their tendency to adhere to a monist belief in the national interest. To view the nation as made up of conflicting interests or incompatible parts is to downgrade the importance of the armed forces who are charged with defending it and expressing its power and for whom it provides a source of esteem and legitimacy. Such an identity structure obviates class-consciousness and is thus attractive to Western bourgeois capital (Stepan, 1971).

Third, the broad, largely lower middle-class recruitment base of many security sectors tends to make them less tied to localised factionalism (frequently reinforced by their barrack isolation) and more in touch with careerist aspirations. They are also inclined to be more unsympathetic to the conservative interests of propertied elites than their elected counterparts are. The result is that the security forces are often seen as concerned to promote bourgeois profitability by increasing meritocratic influences generally and, in identifying more closely with the ‘nation’ than with any particular ethnic or religious sub-unit, they are better able to overcome social cleavages and drive through pro-Western policy (Hibbs, 1973).

Fourth, Western policy-makers often regard defective states’ security agents as more perspicacious and assiduous than their civilian counterparts. Many undergo extensive training in the social sciences at academies frequently located in the West and are thus, in the minds of Western elites, better equipped to govern (Perlmutter, 1977). The increasingly broad curricula of these institutions tend to propound a correlation between public policy, wealth generation, legitimacy, internal security and the ultimate need for a ‘guided’ political liberalisation process once industrial links to global capital have been secured. As Paul Cammack puts it, Western leaders have tended to ‘emphasize the need for elite social, political and institutional control in order to overcome … what they saw as ‘premodern’ internal social and psychological attributes’ (2002:162).

Indeed, such elite support has produced considerable obedience. The American NGO, Freedom House, records a rise in states adjudged to be consistent with Western political standards of ‘freedom’ from 43 in 1972 to 89 today (Puddington and Piano, 2005). These countries are so diverse that economic levels, political history, institutional legacies, ethnic make-up, socio-cultural traditions, patterns of civil resistance and other structural features could not have been major factors in, or precursors to, their conformity. Social change in Mongolia, Albania and Mauritania, for instance, can hardly be explained by the presence of comparable European style middle-class political dynamism (Roll and Talbott, 2003). The result has been a vindication of elite support within defective states. It has made clear to Western policy makers that it is not necessary to wait for financial transfers to produce a facsimile of early developers’ middle-class vigour (Shin, 1994). The pattern of elite-led social change within the developing world over recent decades also demonstrates that by supporting leaders who can wield sufficient despotic power to fend off challengers and push through reforms, an unwilling state of significant geopolitical importance could be brought into the West’s sphere of influence without the expense, delay and, given the immutable nature of cultural inertia, probable disappointment of waiting for a comprador bourgeoisie to emerge (Carothers, 2002).
For those left behind by this so-called ‘third wave’ of pro-Western reformism, however, it may be necessary to undermine or remove incumbent elites. Ensuring that reforming defective states produces outcomes favourable to the West could require, for instance, the imposition of shared sovereignty. Advocated by Stephen Krasner as a means for the West to reduce capital exposure in states of emerging economic importance, this would involve host countries ‘making a trust agreement with a trusted third party such as the World Bank. The trust would have its domicile in an advanced industrial country … [and] all revenues would go into an international escrow account’. Aimed at allaying Exxon-Mobil’s concerns over arbitrary contractual revisions of their Chad-Cameroonian pipeline project, such measures, he continues, might be bolstered by ‘more modest options … [such] as leavening developing-country commercial courts with foreign judges’ (Krasner, 2005:78, 80). Clearly, then, transforming defective states focuses predominantly on their association with the West rather than on state elites’ relationship with their citizenry (which tends to assume a subsidiary position to be deployed discerningly or abbreviated by more general geopolitical concerns). So while much is said about the role of conditionalities in promoting political reform, it is perhaps unsurprising that, in the words of Peter Uvin and Isabelle Biagiotti, they have

been constantly violated by those claiming to uphold them … The major states promoting these regimes have systematically sought to avoid committing themselves to their implementation. Whether for political, strategic, or economic reasons, they have wished to remain free to implement regime provisions bilaterally, when they see fit (1996:395-396).

This is amply demonstrated by American aid allocations. Algeria, home to one of the Arab world’s most brutal regimes, is considered neither defective nor unwilling and has, according to Assistant Secretary of State William Burns, recently received large increases in American funding for its security apparatus (World Tribune, 27 October 2003). Egypt, another state near the bottom of Freedom House’s ledger, receives over $1.3 billion a year in military aid and has, since 1975, relieved the US treasury of more than $50 billion of combined assistance (Christian Science Monitor, 12 April 2004). Similar support is offered to many ‘willing’ states on the ‘Not Free’ register, especially those amenable to Western capital penetration and extraction or those of high (i.e. pivotal or seam) geopolitical significance (Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Qatar, Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia are prominent examples of states which exemplify one or both of these imperatives). So, while dealing with reluctant or unwilling states may involve ‘carving them up, absorbing them into larger entities, establishing a transitional authority, or backing a party in the hopes it can win a war and re-establish order’, those who comply with Western-led marketisation and securitisation programmes can expect perennial support despite a range of obvious defects (Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction, 2003:6).

To obfuscate such apparent hypocrisy, considerable energy is given over to conflating marketisation with broader moral standards. As Bush the younger effused, in a speech at the University of Carolina on 9 May 2003, ‘across the globe, free markets and trade have helped defeat poverty, and taught men and women the habits of liberty’ – a homily underlined by the White House’s National Security Strategy which claims that the concept of “free trade” arose as a moral principle even before it became a pillar of economics … [It] is real freedom, the freedom for a person – or a nation – to make a living’ (2002:18). Freedom has thus become, in the words of Arundhati Roy, the ‘Empire’s euphemism for neo-liberal capitalism’ (2003:2). When armoured with a range of charity-sector NGOs, it is also the means
through which the creation of a post-modern empire is legitimised and the true, economic, nature of transforming defective states is obscured.

This is most apparent in states where the character of emergent regimes is unclear, where the West has removed the incumbent administration or where internal instability has facilitated a comprehensive Western intervention. Within such economies, it has become, according to Paul Dunne, obligatory

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\text{to undertake some form of short-term stabilisation programme, to correct balance of payments problems and increase efficiency … [These] include cuts in government spending, reduction in government staff, freezes on wages and salaries and privatization to reduce budgetary deficiencies … imposed by the World Bank and the IMF … as conditions for then providing assistance (2003:37).}
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To do this large disbursements are made to international corporations. In 1995, for instance, contracts worth over $470 million were awarded to Andersen, Booz Allen and Hamilton, Chemonics and KPMG/Peat Marwick for economic restructuring programmes in eastern Europe (Lubin, 1997:351). As a result, NGOs have been operating in a similar environment and often competing with private sector organisations for donor support and have thus become increasingly marketised and undifferentiated from the interests of their sponsors. As Alexander Cooley and James Ron put it, ‘securing new funding is an ever-expanding part of the NGO’s function, pushing other concerns – such as ethics, project efficacy, or self-criticism – to the margins’ (2002:16).

In Afghanistan, where the NGO sector has long used the motif of the defective state ‘to assume and justify its role as a “surrogate government”’ (Goodhand, 2004:44), the Kabul government has, for instance,

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\text{endeavoured to create a bureaucratic system which accords with prevailing international norms determined by the World Bank and others. [As such it aims] … to achieve no more than the provision of regulatory and contractual framework for the necessary functions of the state and the operations of the private sector (Marsden, 2003:94).}
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So, in keeping with previous ‘successes’, such as the ‘liquidation of state properties at bargain-basement prices’ in post-war Croatia and the dilution of Kosovan attempts to protect labour rights in 2001, the West has, through its domination of NGOs, exploited the ‘enhanced trade opportunities’ that make acutely debilitated countries ‘particularly attractive’ (Boyce, 2000:1042; Hethy 2003:418). These prospects are made more lucrative if marketisation can ‘take place even when parts of a nation are at war’ (Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction, 2003:6, 13). For instance, in Mozambique, where almost constant internal instability fuelled by long conflicts with Rhodesia and the Republic of South Africa had reduced the economy to an annual contraction rate of over 6 per cent by 1986, ‘the IMF and the World Bank took the lead’ in designing an Economic Rehabilitation Programme a full six years before a settlement to the civil war was signed in Rome in 1992 (Arndt, Jensen and Tarp, 2000:303). Put another way, ‘the illusion of peace and ordered government encouraged by “post-conflict” language allows … [external agencies] to lay the seeds … of individual property rights and other aspects of neo-liberal economic’ change during hostilities, thereby gaining a head-start in the race to exploit the enhanced trade opportunities which state collapse brings (Moore, 2000:11).
This has recently been institutionalised by the White House through the establishment of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilisation in August 2004. In close co-operation with the National Intelligence Council, its task is to assemble ready-response teams to engage in pre-war planning. These are, as Naomi Klein notes, ‘made up of private companies, nongovernmental organisations and members of think tanks. ... [Some of which] have ‘pre-completed’ contracts to rebuild countries that are not yet broken’. After all, as Klein continues, many acutely vulnerable states are not in a position to resist Western encroachment: such ‘governments will usually do whatever it takes to get aid dollars – even if it means racking up huge debts and agreeing to sweeping policy reforms’ (The Nation, 2 May 2005). The ‘allure of a blank slate’ is thus what truly underpins the desire to transform defective states – the more acutely defective, the more alluring (The Guardian, 18 April 2005). Acts of God or acts of Bush (on what he claims to be the orders of God) are all occasions to transform and profit. For Condoleezza Rice, for instance, the Asian tsunami of December 2004 was a case in point; it represents, apparently, a ‘wonderful opportunity’ likely to pay ‘great dividends’ to the United States (Agence France Presse, 18 January 2005).

Conclusion

This paper has sought to contribute to debates over the current paradigmatic emphasis on the defective state by putting forward three interrelated arguments. The first is that, in order to obscure Western complicity in, or in some cases responsibility for, the defects of states in the South, policy makers have been influenced by, and contributed to, a rise to prominence of cultural explanations for social phenomena in the developing world. While this has long been a feature of Orientalist, Africanist and other area studies literatures, it has, since the rise to prominence of the New Right in the 1980s and, perhaps more importantly, since the attacks on the United States in 2001, emerged as the key means of explaining resistance to Western hegemony. Its efficaciousness to policy makers is extensive. Dividing the world into civilised and uncivilised, for instance, reinforces President Bush’s dichotomy of ‘for us or against us’ – later refined into a specific focus on the reluctant and unwilling. Furthermore, by casting the latter as irrational and immutable, the West’s turn to culture legitimises an unprecedented programme of securitisation through which defective states can expect greater penetration and the constant threat of pre-emptive war.

The second argument this paper has sought to substantiate relates to the West’s attempts to improve its capacity for intervention into the domestic polities of defective states. Here, there has been a gradual move away from policies of containment, which were necessitated by the bipolar tightness of the Cold War and reinforced by the miserable failures of Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia during the first half of the 1990s, and towards a new imperialism. This has its roots in the ‘humanitarian war’ against Serbian fascism and the subsequent annexation of Bosnia and Kosova by a combination of military force and NGO-led dialogism. The promotion and assimilation of humanitarian agencies through changes in their funding and management structures has proved particularly efficacious since 2001. The result has been a subsumption of the international third sector beneath the West’s securitisation agenda, reflected both in NGOs’ marketisation and apolitical complicity in the economic and military penetration of defective states.

Finally, the third of this paper’s arguments suggests that the notion of a defective state implies a process of transformation in order to bring recalcitrant examples into
line with Western political, economic and strategic priorities. For the most part, renovating such states has involved the support of comprador elites deemed to wield sufficient coercive force to drive through pro-Western reforms. The attacks of 2001 demonstrated that the West could no longer ignore states in which such clients did not have a controlling influence. In order to ensure long-term obedience, initiating remedial action in these states entails the imposition of an economic transformation as well as a change of regime personnel. This involves an extensive programme of marketisation with the overall objective of enhancing Western capital’s profitability. In general, it is, along with concomitant political changes, conveyed in moralising tones – a myth made more plausible by the co-option of charity NGOs. States may be rendered amenable to such a transformation by military action, the incremental corrosiveness of the Bretton Woods institutions or an environmental catastrophe.

Tim Jacoby, The Institute for Development Policy and Management, The University of Manchester, Harold Hankins Building, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9QH; e-mail: tim.jacoby@man.ac.uk In preparing this paper, I received considerable support and invaluable comments from Sarah Bracking, Robert Jacoby, Roger Mac Ginty and two anonymous referees at ROAPE.

Endnotes

1. In each period, there was, as now, a tendency to ascribe the faults of the states that made up the focus of US foreign policy to local cultural mores. Douglas MacArthur banned Shinto and revised Japanese educational curricula in the 1940s, USAID obtained virtual control of South Korea’s elite higher education strata through the construction of the Korean Institute of Science and Technology (in 1966), the Korean Development Institute (in 1971) and Korean Educational Development Institute (in 1972) and the National Endowment for Democracy spent millions of dollars supporting Central American institutions (such as the School of the Americas in Panama and the Nicaraguan Catholic Church) perceived to be culturally sympathetic to Washington’s interests during the 1980s (Dower, 1999; Otero, 1995; Robinson, 1992).

2. Of the 19 suspects named and pictured by the FBI, Ahmed Alnami is said to be working as an administrative supervisor with Saudi Arabian Airlines, Saeed Alghamdi, Waleed M. Alshehri and Abdulaziz Alomari are apparently still pilots and Salem Alhazmi is reported to be employed by a petrochemical plant in Yanbou, Saudi Arabia (Los Angeles Times, 21 September 2001; New York Times, 16 September 2001).

3. These are as follows: time orientation; future oriented, hopeful, not fatalistic; work is a good; creativity, achievement and self-respect ensue; frugality, saving is the mother of investment and financial security; education is the key to progress; individual merit for advancement, not family connections; radius of identification and trust must go beyond family; rigorous ethics are found in advanced countries; justice and fair play to be objectively (law) determined; authority should be dispersed and horizontal, not vertical and concentrated; secularism best in civil life, and heterodoxy and dissent encouraged.

4. For instance, William Sewell, a leading analyst of culture, asserts that anthropologists can no longer regard the term in the singular. States, societies and nations, he continues, contain amorphous and fluid cultures susceptible to politicisation and considerable volatility (1999).

5. Because of this, Daniel Warner notes, ‘a political move has been made to call these types of situations “humanitarian” and to involve relief organisations in political crises’ (1999:111).

6. Niall Ferguson, Britain’s current coffee table historian of choice, concurs. The United States, as the world’s ‘indispensable nation’, should, he bumbles, establish a ‘liberal empire’ and, in the case of Iraq, retain effective control over ‘military, fiscal, and monetary policies’ through a ‘viceroy in all but name for decades’. This policy should, apparently, be extended to include a range of defective

7. For instance, in 1988 the UN received 45 per cent of the global humanitarian allocation, compared to below 25 per cent today (Randel and German, 2002:21).

8. In a study carried out amongst 240 International NGOs in Bosnia, for instance, it was found that ‘virtually all donor grant mechanisms had a time frame of one year or less; some were for six months or even three’ (Smillie and Todorovic, 2001:31).

9. Indeed, the US Treasury has calculated that for every dollar given to the World Bank the country as a whole receives two back in the form of procurement ties and other trading advantages (Haynes, 2000).

10. ‘Mainly drafted in Washington’, these measures resulted in ‘price rises as price controls were eased, reductions in food and rent subsidies, reductions in social services and the introduction of fees for health and education’ (Dunne and Mhone, 2003:30).

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Global Flows: Terror, Oil & Strategic Philanthropy

Sandra T. Barnes

US involvement in Africa is growing following threats of terrorism and interruptions in oil production and because of desires by foreign corporations to expand their activities on the continent. The response of American policymakers has been to establish a stronger military presence that will engage in counterterrorism initiatives and police oil installations. The goals and extent of this buildup, and the ideology legitimating it, are new. They are departures from Cold War policies. Similarly, the response of American business leaders to weaknesses in the infrastructure and political order of African states leads them to establish their own forms of community development, known as strategic philanthropy, in order to protect and expand local markets. Despite these major developments, the media are not informing the public. This article examines the implications of these military and business initiatives for African nations and the reasons for lack of information about them.

At this moment of international crisis, Africa is assuming a new and critical role in global affairs. Contrary to popular opinion, United States involvement in Africa is not continuing its post-Cold War decline. In profound ways, the opposite is the case. American policymakers and business leaders see in Africa a special set of threats, a special set of dangers, and a special set of challenges. This essay focuses on three elements in the US response to these perceived threats and challenges, looking especially at what this response means for people on the African continent itself.

First, American policymakers perceive a double danger: the threat of terrorism and the risk of an interrupted oil supply. Their response is to establish a new and more substantial kind of military presence in Africa. The quality of the response, and particularly the political logic that legitimates it, is different from anything that has come before. This article examines the consequences of this response for African nations, especially the security and political issues they raise.

Second, corporate leaders see great opportunities for profit in Africa, but they also see special problems: weaknesses of infrastructure and political order as they relate to large-scale business endeavours. In response, corporations are creating their own kind of interventions. They are using strategic philanthropy so they can relate directly to local communities and civil society within Africa. This means they are making their own independent contributions to community development. This article asks what the implications of these major business initiatives are for African societies.
The third concern is with the American media and its response to the major changes just described. With few exceptions, television networks and newspapers are paying little attention to these new forms of military and business activity. It is important to examine that silence and to ask why it exists and what its implications are for the future.

The Growing Importance of Africa in US Policy

The year 2002 marked a major post-Cold War shift in US relations to Africa. In that year, officials of both the Pentagon and the State Department defined Africa as a significant potential threat to American national security (Volman, 2003b:573; Goldstein, 2004). Earlier, the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa had observed that the policy of putting Africa on the back burner could no longer continue, and later some of Washington’s most experienced Africa policymakers confirmed at a bipartisan meeting that the continent was being seen in a new way (US House of Representatives, 2001; CSIS, 2004). The reasons for elevating Africa to the level of national security threat were terrorism and oil.1

The case for terrorism was made by Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defense, when he addressed military officers and government officials from forty-two African countries. He confirmed that Africa is growing in importance, and he stressed that it is imperative to build institutions, including military institutions, which in Wolfowitz’s worldview play a vital role. To Africa’s military leaders he said that he ‘emphatically disagreed’ with people who apply historical and cultural determinism to the future of countries: ‘I believe that strengthening institutions in Africa has got to be the key to moving forward’, because African states must participate effectively in defeating the ‘scourge of global terrorism’ (Wolfowitz, 2004).

The case for oil as a national security issue was made by both the assistant secretary of state for Africa, Walter Kansteiner, and the deputy assistant secretary of defense for African affairs, Michael Westphal. Their moves were critical because the term ‘US national security’ opens the way to the use of military approaches for protecting oil production (Volman, 2003b:573). The events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent war in Iraq gave emphasis to the fact that this country cannot do without external oil supplies and that African oil and natural gas are critical elements in the supply chain.

Oil & National Security

The United States consumes one-quarter of the world’s oil supply – 20 million of the 80 million barrels produced every day. Much of it – 13 to 18 per cent – comes from West and Central Africa. The US National Intelligence Council predicts that within ten years it may reach 25 per cent, with most coming from Nigeria, Angola, Gabon and the newcomer, Equatorial Guinea (Ebel, 2004:114; Goldwyn & Morrison, 2004:15; Africa Action, 2003). Currently, due to warfare in the Middle East, Nigeria produces more oil than Iraq, and Angola produces half that amount (US Department of Energy, 2004).

The amount invested in the oil trade is immense. Last year the United States spent $17.8 billion on African oil. This amounted to 70 per cent of all US purchases from Africa (US Department of Commerce, 2004). The US does not just buy the oil, however; in many ways it is dependent on African oil. In the past ten years, US oil companies invested $30 to $40 billion in West and Central African oil operations, an
investment they wish to protect. If Angolan or Nigerian supplies are disrupted there are few, if any, replacements outside the Persian Gulf. More than 100,000 jobs in the US are linked to African oil – many of them in Texas, Louisiana and California (Goldwyn & Morrison, 2004:8,16). And the second leading US export to Africa, worth $717.3 million annually, is oil and gas equipment (US Department of Commerce, 2004:9).

The main problem is that the supply is constantly vulnerable. Oil theft, vandalism, seizures of oil facilities and riots all reduce oil supplies. Disruptions and strikes, such as those in Nigeria in 2003, have decreased production by as much as 800,000 barrels a day (Goldwyn & Morrison, 2004:16). Illegal siphoning provides militias with a way to secure money to purchase arms with which to engage in criminal activities or protest various inequities. Foreign oil workers are kidnapped and held hostage to meet the demands of dissidents. In Angola’s province of Cabinda and Nigeria’s Niger Delta – the two largest oil-producing regions on the continent – intense anger has erupted in violence against the oil industry and national governments over the unfair sharing of oil revenue, unemployment and the destruction of the living and productive environment. The well-known writer Ken Saro-Wiwa is one of many activists who lost their lives for engaging in such protests in the Niger Delta.

Local military forces are often used to quell this conflict, but weak governments are not able to bring stability. The consequences may be higher gas prices for consumers, or worse, discontinued operations by oil companies because they cannot function in conditions of extreme high-risk or tolerate conditions that eliminate profit and undermine their investments (Goldwyn & Morrison, 2004:12-15).

The oil companies want to regularise the oil supply, and an argument has been made that good governance and transparency on the African side are the key. Many experts worry that the US does not have an effective energy policy with respect to Africa or the political will to create one. They want an energy policy that is tied to conditions that are as strict as those of the Millennium Challenge Account, but this is unlikely to happen (Ebel 2004:114-16, 125-26). Both a US Senate committee and Transparency International have drawn attention to this problem, pointing out that oil companies themselves are not transparent. Corruption in the form of bribes, unpublished fees and contributions plague every level of the African oil industry, from Western oil executives, to middlemen, to local officials (Stanchich, 2004). Corruption goes even further. During Senate hearings in July 2004, it was revealed that a US bank turned a blind eye to the flow of suspicious money in the accounts of leaders of an oil-rich African country and in violation of the Patriot Act. Leaders of Equatorial Guinea had some 60 accounts and Certificates of Deposit amounting to between $400 and $700 million in a Washington bank – accounts that were closed by the bank a few weeks after they were exposed. It was also revealed that multinational oil companies engaged in questionable payments – at least $1 million – to officials of Equatorial Guinea and their family members, and they invested in joint business ventures with the president, high officials, and again their family members. Until the 2004 report, official US government agencies ignored these under-the-counter transactions. A year before, in 2003, the US reopened its embassy in Equatorial Guinea despite having closed it eight years earlier in protest against appalling human rights violations by the current leader (US Senate, 2004:3-17). The embassy was reestablished in response to oil industry pressures; more than 3,000 Americans work in Equatorial Guinea, almost all in the oil sector. The new embassy
is housed in a small villa owned by an uncle of the president (Agence France-Presse 2003). While short-term demands may dictate practices such as these, the long-term consequences, as history shows – as it did in the Congo and Somalia but for different reasons – can be nothing short of disastrous and can produce levels of conflict that endure for decades.

Despite experts’ complaints that the US does not have an effective energy policy for Africa, the administration does have a de facto agenda that resides primarily within the Pentagon. Providing energy security and maintaining open sea lanes are two of the components that underpin this policy. Three Pentagon officials have expressed concerns about insecurities in offshore oil-producing regions of West Africa and offshore East Africa – where piracy and small arms smuggling are threats. One is US Navy Secretary Gordon England, who stressed that ‘security, stability and reconstruction operations are needed’ in the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea, and that with the assistance of its NATO allies the US ‘will be there to help.’ A second is General Charles Wald, deputy commander of the US European Command (EUCOM), who is reported to spend half his time on Africa-related issues and who indicated that the US is prepared to assist in strengthening African navies. In discussing the strategic interest of US oil imports from West Africa, General Wald was quoted as saying, ‘You start saying to yourself, “I’d like to have some forward bases in Africa”… The world has changed. We’re going to have to make our own security. The halcyon days are over.’ The third is EUCOM’s director of plans and policy, Major General Jonathon Gratia, who expressed concerns over the inability of African states to patrol their coastal waters. General Gratia indicated that this inability is leading US planners to envision a growing potential for maritime terrorism, although this position is debated.

To address these concerns, the US military is preparing itself and especially preparing African militaries to deal with disruptions in oil operations and provide offshore surveillance. The US Navy is increasing its presence in the oil region by spending more time sailing along Africa’s west coast (Lobe, 2003). A US aircraft carrier made a brief visit to the Gulf of Guinea during the summer of 2004 during an extensive naval exercise designed as a show of force. Coast Guard capacities in oil-producing states are also being strengthened. Four Coast Guard cutters and four helicopters were given to Nigeria’s navy; one Coast Guard cutter was given to São Tome; two boats were given to Ghana; and some small craft went to Madagascar, Djibouti, the Seychelles and Tunisia. In addition, joint naval exercises are being held, and security training is being given to sailors. These and other oil-policing measures are closely tied to the military’s counterterrorism initiatives.

**US Military Operations in Africa**

Military spending in the four years following 9/11 has doubled the amount expended in the preceding four years. The total spent or allocated for arms, training and regional peacekeeping operations that focus primarily on training and arming sub-Saharan militaries in the four-year period from 2002 until the end of 2005 will amount to $597 million, whereas for 1998-2001 it was $296 million. At this rate it will take a comparatively few years to equal the $1.5 billion that some believe was spent during the three decades of the Cold War on arms for African allies (Africa Action, 2003).

Over and above worries about oil security, this expanded level of funding arises out of identifiable concerns that terrorist activities in African states threaten stability
and security elsewhere in the world. The concerns are based on the conviction that support networks for Hezbollah are developing in West Africa, terrorist cells are operating in South Africa, the recent capture of Islamic extremists who entered Niger and Chad from Algeria will lead to further unwanted border crossings from North Africa and Osama bin Laden’s call to followers to make Nigeria a global priority may come to pass (Ellis, 2004; Snyder, 2003; Goldwyn & Morrison, 2004:14; Goldstein, 2004). So important are these new counterterror initiatives that the US Armed Forces European Command (EUCOM) was ordered to extend operations into West and central Africa and to consider this region a ‘priority zone in global counterterrorism efforts’ (Goldwyn & Morrison, 2004:14).

The amounts of military spending cited in this essay do not represent the full picture. Military activity cannot be reduced to isolated amounts of money in publicly accessible budgets; it is an entire strategy whose funding is dispersed among numerous government bodies and programmes. Amounts needed to establish and run a full-scale military base, as we will see below in the case of Djibouti, are not included. Funds to send a US aircraft carrier into the Gulf of Guinea, however briefly, or to donate Coast Guard ships and helicopters to African navies, are also not given. The same is true of projects originating in the State Department, which has awarded contracts to private military contractors for services provided in, for example, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire. The Pentagon has numerous freestanding programmes that supply arms and training and that have separate Africa budgets, but it also has three military commands – US Central Command (CENTCOM), US Pacific Command (PACOM) and EUCOM – that divide responsibility for Africa. It is not possible to calculate the entire amount that goes into these operations because spending is embedded within budgets that are not necessarily Africa-specific. Figures for operations are provided below where possible. Otherwise, it is possible only to provide some idea of their extent.

One side of the funding picture consists of US efforts to establish its own military presence on African soil. The US government does this in several ways.

First, there are full military bases. It is fairly well known that an entire military base was established in Djibouti in 2002 to oversee counterterrorism activities in the Horn, East Africa, Yemen and adjacent stretches of the Indian Ocean. It consists of about 2,000 military personnel and employees of Kellogg, Brown and Root, a Halliburton subsidiary (CENTCOM, 2004a, 2004b). It is less well known that the Island of Diego Garcia has US weapons stockpiles, airbases and personnel. It is ignored as an African site because both Mauritius and Great Britain claim sovereignty and because it is used primarily to serve American interests in the Middle East (Volman, 2003a). A third base is believed to be in progress in Algeria.

A second military strategy is the securing of access points or jumping off places known as ‘lily pads’. A series of such facilities, technically called ‘secure cooperation locations’, are being established to refuel aircraft, temporarily house soldiers, store equipment or conduct intelligence operations; they are not full military bases. They are being established at existing African military bases or airfields to provide, in Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s words, ‘freedom of action’ in responding to internal conflicts and to security and terrorist threats, and to allow for temporary occupation by US military personnel when necessary. Access
posts for US military operations are already in use, some more heavily than others, at
Entebbe Airport in Uganda, as well as in Kenya and in Algeria, as indicated.10
Numerous other agreements have been signed (with Gabon, Ghana, Morocco,
Namibia, Senegal and Zambia) or are under discussion (with Angola, Botswana,
Mali, Nigeria, São Tome and Principe and South Africa). Funds for leasing,
equipping and staffing these posts – a not insignificant amount – are not included
here.11

A third example of US military presence is the existence of several special
programmes in southern Africa. These include a special programme in Botswana to
train police in antiterrorism tactics and a cooperative arrangement with the South
African government to support the war on terror through financial, diplomatic and
law-enforcement activities. Funding by the US for military enhancements and
training in these two southern African countries for the three-year period from 2002
to 2004 amounted to roughly $23.2 million (US Department of State, 2004:196-97,
256-58).

Finally, there are plans to place between 5-7,000 American troops in up to a dozen
African locations. General James Jones, the NATO supreme commander and the
commander of EUCOM, stated that 2-3,000 of these military people will be placed in
West Africa to undertake brief assignments as quick-reaction teams of air, ground
and sea forces (Lobe, 2003). Because there are now fewer US troops on the ground in
Africa than there were 20 years ago, experts are urging that the number be increased
quickly (CSIS, 2004:32).

The other side of the funding picture involves the ways in which the US is
strengthening African military capabilities. The US government does this through
several mechanisms.

First, there are plans to increase African countries’ peacekeeping capacities. One of
the most dramatic plans, announced in June of 2004, is a project to train 75,000
military peacekeepers worldwide, with most coming from African nations. This
project is part of the $660 million Global Peace Operations Initiative to which the US
has tentatively committed $100 million.12 Second, there are ongoing programmes
involved in training the military in African countries. From 2002 until the end of
2005 these programmes will have spent $250.6 million. One of the programmes
trained some 2,000 military officers from 47 African countries in 2003; at that time
similar numbers were projected for 2004 and 2005.13 Third, there have been joint
military exercises in recent years involving ten African countries (Benin, Côte
d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda) and joint
naval, air force and military medical operations (Volman, 2003a). Fourth, are
informational seminars that include networking activities between US and African
military officers. These are staged regularly in the US and in Africa by the Africa
Center for Strategic Studies, an arm of the Pentagon’s National Defense University.14

A fifth mechanism exists in the form of ongoing weapons supply programmes. For
the four years 2002-5, $211 million was allocated to give weapons to, or authorise
purchases of weapons by, African countries through the Pentagon.15 Sixth, there are
two new counterterrorism initiatives for the whole Sahel region, on which $225
million is being spent. They are the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative, a
$125 million training and weapons-provision project involving nine Western
African countries (Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria
and Morocco), on which $7.75 million has been spent so far; the East Africa Counter-
Terrorism Initiative (EACTI), a $100 million project designed to carry out military training for security and control of people and goods at borders and along the coast and involving five East African countries (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania) (Pope, 2004). Seventh, a special Africa Regional Fund supports counterterrorism training and assistance in a select number of African countries using initiatives not included in the programmes listed above. It was authorised in 2004 to spend $3 million of a $12 million budget (US Department of State, 2004). And finally, the US provides funding to United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa which is also separate from the direct military assistance mentioned above.

There are puzzling inconsistencies in these efforts to ensure stability and security, just as there are contradictions in US policy with respect to transparency in the oil industry. One of them is that efforts to promote stability and strengthen the African military by providing arms, military training and peacekeeping operations are undermined by America’s failure to help block a huge small arms trade that operates illegally in Africa. At the same time that the US builds military capacities, it leaves in place the conditions for the emergence of illegal militia and criminals and the violence they perpetrate. Former Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker calls this violence an ‘outrage’ that will not end until the US joins cooperative international attempts to bring it to a halt (CSIS, 2004:30).

A Global Military

A profound ideological divide exists between those who favor a Pentagon-centered involvement and those who want US-Africa relations to include a broader combination of diplomacy, humanitarian aid and poverty eradication. A recent Heritage Foundation report favors the Pentagon and maintains that if the military gives Africa high priority, US political leaders and policymakers will have access to more knowledge of the continent, better intelligence, more awareness of African issues and greater success if and when Washington needs to intervene to protect its interests. To these ends, the report proposes that CENTCOM create a subregional command structure for Africa – something that does not now exist (Carafano & Gardiner, 2003).

A stronger rationale, one that takes a global perspective favoring military domination in foreign policy determinations, is the one put forth by Thomas Barnett of the Naval War College. Early in 2003, Esquire Magazine published an excerpt from Barnett’s book, *The Pentagon’s New Map* (Barnett, 2004). Esquire honored Barnett as one of its ‘Best and Brightest’ and asked him to make a presentation to its staff similar to the one he makes repeatedly at the Department of Defense. After the briefing, the magazine’s editors were impressed and wrote that they will ‘never read the news the same way again’ (*Esquire*, March, 2003:56). Barnett’s guiding question is: ‘How can a superpower today influence history for the better?’ He responds by arguing against past policies of containment, and instead sees ‘empire’ as the answer to problems of conflict and instability.

Barnett divides the world into three unequal parts, in much the same way that Immanuel Wallerstein’s world systems theory sets out three regions of the world in relation to the rise of global capitalism (Wallerstein, 1974). One category comprises the so-called core states – the global North – which are wealthy, stable, and thick with global network connectivity, particularly in terms of security arrangements and financial and media flows. A second category consists of the peripheral, or gap,
states – the global South – in which there is poverty, neither security nor global connectivity, and in which the poverty, political repression, conflict, and disease incubate the next generation of global terrorists. There are also, according to Barnett, mediating, or seam, states which sit at the borders of gap states, allow terrorists into the core, and need to be cultivated to ‘suppress bad things coming out of the gap’; his only seam state on the African continent is South Africa (Barnett, 2003:174-75).

Barnett believes that economies and democracies cannot be strengthened unless conflict is eliminated, and conflict can be eliminated only through the military. In his view, security is the ‘most influential public-sector export’ the United States has to offer. If a world region is peaceful, he writes, there will be strong links between that region’s military and the US military; there will be permanent US military bases and long-term security alliances (Barnett, 2003:228).

Much of this security export is already in place. America now has 725 military bases placed strategically throughout the world, not counting numerous secret bases and 969 bases on US soil. One scholar warns that this is an empire not of colonies, but of military bases (Johnson, 2004).

The Role of the Military in Postcolonial Africa

On the other side of the ideological divide are policymakers – primarily from the State Department, Congress, NGOs, and international bodies – who argue against a lopsided military and Pentagon-based approach to foreign affairs. They see in Africa another Cold War buildup in the making, and warn that when the US propped up dictators who were friendly to the West and armed weak African militaries, these policies destabilised the fragile mechanisms of governance that were inherited at independence. Therefore, they advocate policies that focus on a mix of tactics: diplomacy; enhanced intelligence; assistance to indigenous NGOs that are involved in local governance; promotion of transparency in business; and even some military policies – but especially those that privilege military training. No policy, they argue, can be weighted in a single direction (CSIS, 2004).

No one is more eloquent than Senator Russell Feingold, who cautions that the Pentagon should not drive foreign policy or be in a de facto position to use its vast resources whenever or wherever it decides to engage. In his words,

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\text{subordinating basic human rights to accommodate larger strategic goals ... comes back to haunt us. In the past, institutions of state and civil society were ‘utterly destroyed ... leaving civilians few tools for building a better future and warlords ample opportunity to loot the wealth of their own countries (CSIS, 2004:149-57).}
\]

The destructive consequences of supporting dictators and building military strength are palpable. In postindependence years, up to 2001, there were 80 successful military coups d’etât, 108 failed coups, and an additional 139 well-documented coup plots (McGowan, 2003:339). Coups lead to factionalism, which leads to more coups. Military regimes are not accountable to the public, and therefore they promote even greater levels of corruption and authoritarianism than those of their predecessors. When the US supports conditions that strengthen the military, its policies fly in the face of its own stated position, which is to promote democratic forms of government. The paradox is that the US national security interest can lead to a military buildup that subverts the very premise – the reduction of conflict – upon which it is based.
Again, Equatorial Guinea is instructive. At the same time that experts warned the US government not to repeat Cold War mistakes of propping up dictators, the State Department authorised a private, for-profit military company of former Pentagon officers to work with President Nguema to strengthen Equatorial Guinea’s Coast Guard and its ability to protect off-shore oil operations being conducted by Exxon. Nguema came to power through a coup; he leads a one-party state and he has been charged with glaring human rights abuses. Yet relations with Equatorial Guinea were reestablished at the urging of oil companies, and military expertise was provided to help protect them (Frynas, 2004:527–28; Wayne, 2002).

While I cast my lot with the policymakers who favor practices that lean mainly toward diplomacy, humanitarian aid and assistance to grassroots NGOs that promote democratic forms of participation in the public sphere, I believe there is one military effort that may prove worthwhile. A case can be made for providing logistical support to regional peacekeeping entities such as the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) or the African Union (AU). They have been critical in quelling civil war in Sierra Leone and are now playing a role in policing the Darfur conflict. This kind of assistance places responsibility for security in the hands of an African multinational collectivity and neutralises a military buildup within a single state. It also neutralises the influence of any single state, including the United States. Of course, the notion of fighting terror or reducing conflict militarily is a thorny issue, and it is one for which I do not have all the answers. I do know, however, that this is a key problem and one the US must solve with honor and with honest concern for the consequences any policy will have for African people in twenty to thirty years.

Global Capitalism & Corporate Philanthropy

At the same time that the US is establishing new and more elaborate military security in Africa, the corporate world is providing its own form of security. The message that conflict and poverty are bad for business is giving rise to a fresh set of business practices that are making their way throughout the world by means of a new kind of corporate philanthropy. In the past three to five years, corporations have been attempting to increase their value and shield themselves from a multitude of negative forces – including the ramifications of working in weak states – by engaging in local community development projects. These projects are known as ‘strategic philanthropy’ (Porter & Kramer, 2002:57).

The strength of this phenomenon is shown by how much is being invested. Multinational firms spend from one-half to four per cent of their annual in-country operating budgets on community development. In Guinea, Alcoa (a leading Bauxite mining firm there) spends about $5 million a year, an amount that slightly exceeds 4 per cent of its annual operating budget. General Electric is spending $20 million on a project to improve health infrastructure in South Africa (Roner, 2004). Of the five Shell companies operating in Nigeria, four have community development offices. One devotes $60 million a year, or 3 per cent, of its in-country operating budget, to community development. The USAID budget for Nigeria is about the same: $63.9 million. The amounts are not extravagant if it is true, as former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker claims, that large companies realise a 26 to 28 per cent rate of return from Africa – one of the highest rates in the world (Snyder, 2003).
This new type of corporate social development should not be confused with old-style company philanthropy— which certainly continues. It does not include random contributions to charitable causes or one-time donations say to an orphanage in Nairobi, or Merck’s dramatic donation to international agencies of the drug ivermectin which controls river blindness. Neither does it include the work of foundations that have been created from corporate earnings, such as the Gates Foundation.

The new philanthropy is an in-house operation, although two consulting firms have been established recently to advise companies on how best to enter the development field. It is devoted to sustainable development projects such as improving infrastructure, education and agriculture, or providing seed money for growing local businesses. Some of the community projects are innovative and creative, such as one undertaken by Daimler-Chrysler in South Africa. This company developed ways to use sisal in the interiors of their automobiles and then helped local farmers return to sisal production so they could supply company needs. Richards Bay Minerals, a mining company also in South Africa, set up a training and advising center for vendors, street hawkers and other informal sector workers, simultaneously providing them with microcredit opportunities and subcontracting relationships (Forstater, 2002:37-40). Most companies try to fit their own core strength to the local community and find ways to maximise their development investments. To demonstrate that social development adds value, corporations increasingly subject their projects to stringent evaluation and performance standards known as ‘performance-based development’. These standards, as a former corporate development officer explained, are equivalent to, or possibly exceed, anything in the NGO, foundation or government world.20

Corporations point out that strategic philanthropy is inevitable because intensive competition in the global marketplace will soon force them to function in the poorest regions of the world. Rather than compete for an ever-smaller slice of existing markets, they must create ‘opportunities at the bottom of the pyramid’, which in turn require them to create conditions in which they can operate more successfully (Forstater, 2002:38). Recently companies have begun to use promises of community development to compete with one another. For example, business interests in China and India are locked in a bidding war in which each is offering millions of aid-for-oil dollars in return for oil concessions in Gabon and Angola (Agence France-Presse, 2004).

This new wave of corporate philanthropy has its own ideological foundations that date back to 2002. One of Harvard Business School’s well-known theoreticians of corporate competition, Michael Porter, argues that modern business succeeds only if it engages with the totality of society and only if it considers economic and social goals as interconnected. Porter positions himself in opposition to Milton Friedman, who held for a generation that business has a social responsibility only to increase profits.21 Porter counters that in today’s business environment, an enterprise cannot expect to compete and survive unless it is integrated into and contributing to the full social context in which it operates (Porter & Kramer, 2002:58-60).

The new turn in corporate social development has structural ramifications that are at the very heart of the relationship between the corporate world, local communities, the state, and global entities. At the deepest level are issues of accountability. Multinational corporations occupy an anomalous position in the politico-economic fabric of the African state. They are accountable to the state and dependent on it for...
their very ability to function. They pay taxes, a percentage of profits, and even rents to the state and its elite leaders. But these payments rarely trickle down to citizens in the localities where a business is located. Angola is now rife with violence over this very issue (Williams, 2002:31–33; Goldwyn & Morrison, 2004).

There are often no structural mechanisms whereby multinational firms are accountable to the local public outside of the institutions of the state, even though they may provide jobs, contracts to local service providers and other benefits that can help grow a local economy. They may even advocate on behalf of a community, serving as informal mediators between local and state layers of government. The levels of involvement are varied; some corporations are well integrated into local community life, while others function within walled enclaves that are intended to protect them from their communities of operation.

The point is that strategic philanthropy intensifies local-corporate relationships. It provides an avenue for corporations to become integrated into the civic and social fabric in which they operate. Community development is a mechanism through which corporations can be subject to the ebb and flow of political life and to the approval or anger of local people. But it is a relationship of inequality. Corporations are the powerful givers; local communities are the receivers. By setting themselves up as donors in the development sector, and by inserting themselves into civil society, corporations place recipients in a position of dependence in which responsibility for performance is reversed and in which the local public becomes accountable to them.

Corporate philanthropy does have the power to provide great benefits to the recipients, and it does offer some solutions to problems of world development. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, recently encouraged corporations to join the fight against poverty in Africa, warning that the unequal distribution of global wealth can only produce conditions that will ‘undermine and ultimately unravel the open world economy’ (quoted in Forstater, 2002:37). One important positive response is that companies are leveraging funds and creating huge community development partnerships with UN organizations, other international bodies, governments and globally-based NGOs. Among other benefits, these leveraged partnerships can help dilute the patron-client relationships that permeate community development projects run by single donors such as corporations. Another significant response is a law passed recently by the civilian government of Nigeria requiring oil companies to contribute 3 per cent of their operating budgets to the Niger Delta Development Commission, which a short time ago completed a master plan for community development in the Niger Delta region. In addition to providing such mandatory development contributions, some companies maintain their own separate and internally run development programmes.

Many firms realise that in order to maintain a place in the global economy they must take extreme measures to address global inequalities. Yet there are contradictions embedded in current philanthropic practices. Mechanisms have yet to be developed to deal locally with power imbalances produced by strategic philanthropy. Companies have yet to deal with islands of privilege – corporate enclaves or targeted communities – that are created when development is localised. They have yet to address conditions that create additional layers of in-country haves and have-nots and the conflict this situation produces. No case is as powerful as that of the Niger Delta where violence is the response to perceived inequalities among receivers and non-receivers of corporate benefits (Cesarz et al. 2003). Multinational firms have yet
to deal with corrupt practices that divert taxes, royalties, and profits paid to the state into private coffers rather than to in-country spending that would benefit the general public.

I do not wish to take away from the welcome contributions firms are making to development endeavors. But despite these benefits, the new strategic philanthropy does not address the systemic problems that plague African economies. In subtle ways, in fact, this approach contributes to even greater levels of dependence on external capital flows than existed previously.

More than thirty years ago, Walter Rodney described Africa’s structural position within the global economy, and his description is still salient. On the eve of independence, the wealthy industrialized states of the North dominated the capacity to extract resources from poor states. They controlled the means to produce commodities from extracted resources and they dictated the terms of trade by which resources and the commodities manufactured from them circulated throughout the world. There has been no change. Rodney’s vivid portrayal of ‘flag independence’ still holds (1982 [1972]:13–28, 279).

There are no provisions in the new strategic philanthropy to address the systemic power imbalance in the global flows of capital that produce and reproduce African poverty. This structural imbalance – nothing more, nothing less – is the Achilles heel of global economic and political systems today.

Global Media

As I have stated, I am concerned with information that flows through the media about the security measures just described. How much of the popular media is devoted to these issues? I ask this question because it relates directly to how much the general public knows about military operations and corporate philanthropy and the specific ways these global flows of power and resources are playing themselves out in Africa.

Nearly four hundred articles about Africa were published during the last three months of 2003 in four major US newspapers: the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune. Not one article discussed the growing US military presence in sub-Saharan countries, although three discussed terrorism or radical Islam. The US newspapers were silent, even though a French news service during that same period pointed out that the US was inaugurating its new ‘lily pad’ policy and even though National Public Radio had already described the new military installation in Djibouti, questioning its effectiveness for counterterrorism. The media said even less with respect to oil, about which there were only three peripheral articles, or corporate philanthropy, about which there was nothing.

A few publications have begun to call attention to military initiatives and their relation to oil production and counterterrorism programmes in Africa. But these stories seldom spread widely within the newspaper world or into non-print media outlets, especially television. The little information that is made known about the military buildup in Africa has not had a snowball effect, with one significant exception – the radio. In October 2004 National Public Radio devoted a two-part broadcast to military training initiatives in the Sahel, commenting that they represent a fundamental shift in US tactics toward Africa. The broadcast stated that some African military officials find current US military aid self-serving, and that
Instead of training they would prefer logistical support like the support the US is supplying to the African Union for its work in Darfur.26

Serious information about the growing US military presence in Africa, while marginal in the popular media, is found in print and on the internet in limited-circulation publications such as *Africa Action*, the *ACAS Bulletin*, *Africa Focus*, the *Africa Society of the National Summit on Africa*, *Washington Notes on Africa* and the British-run *Jane’s Defence Weekly*. They are doing a conscientious job of informing professional Africanists, interest groups that lobby for Africa and policymakers. With the exception of *Jane’s*, these publications are often led by Africanists who bridge the divide between academia and the public sphere.27 It was from *Africa Focus* (2004), for example, that one could learn about the Senate hearings on Equatorial Guinea. It was from the *ACAS Bulletin* (2003), *Africa Action* (2003), and the writings of Daniel Volman (2003a, 2003/2004) that one could learn of the volume of weapons and training that is being supplied to African countries.

If the mainstream media fails to inform the public on the issues discussed here, what does it find newsworthy? Unfortunately, I can only echo the well-worn litany that insofar as Africa is concerned, ‘if it bleeds it leads.’ During my own three-month survey conducted at the end of 2003, mostly pessimistic articles about African politics, conflict or the health crisis appeared in the news. Much of the rest was devoted to human suffering, culture and the arts, and blatant sensationalism – a small but powerful genre.

The point is that the choices made by the media of what to stress and what not to stress shape public knowledge and public understandings. Contributors to the journal *Issue*, a publication of the African Studies Association, make a convincing case that during a forty-year time period, 73 per cent of the news stories about Africa were negative about both politics and society (Schraeder & Endless, 1998:32).28 Added to this negativity is an acute lack of depth in explanations for the causes of conflict and disaster. To be sure, the media have time and space constraints. But this means writers often resort to short-hand explanations for unfortunate events. Nothing is as familiar as the consistent attribution of violence to ethnic, tribal or religious cleavages in situations that cry out for historic, socioeconomic and contextually nuanced explanations. Instead the short-hand explanations are converted into stereotypical notions that simplify the human condition with easy essentialist labels. Howard French, the former dean of Africa reporters for the *New York Times* and a passionate believer in the importance of representing African affairs as fully as possible, laments the fact that identity issues – by which he means that overused pigeon-hole known as ethnic conflict – are far more complex in reality than they are in news reports (French, 2004).

Equally troubling is the silence that surrounds US involvement in Africa. A study of news services and television indicated that less than one-third of one per cent of the coverage – some of it measured for eight years – is devoted to African countries. The percentage goes up a little during times of extreme violence, as in Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Sudan. Yet this study found that the amount of coverage is more sensitive to GNP and imports of goods and services than to any other factors. Violence may temporarily increase coverage in a particular country, say, the Sudan. Yet for a country in which there is conflict but also a more robust economy – Bosnia, for example – the amount of coverage is disproportionately higher.29
But there is another factor at work. In the US the silences as well as the choices of the media are shaped by America’s special relationship to its African American population and the deep history of racism that pervades every sector of American society. The interpretation of events by the media and then by the audience is shaped by this historical legacy. This goes a long way toward explaining the disproportionately large degree of negativity that permeates our knowledge of Africa and the sometimes dismissive and preemptive ways in which Africa is treated in American policy determinations.

Despite its paucity, media information can and does influence the agendas of people who shape foreign policy. It is even a key source. But the degree of negative spin put on that information can have dramatic consequences. The journal *Issue* demonstrated that the US was first drawn into Somalia by media coverage but was then forced to disengage when coverage intensified and public pressure on legislators increased. An instructive comment came from Senator John McCain, who told a Senate committee that most of what he knew about Somalia came from the media (Schraeder & Endless, 1998:29-30).

**Conclusion**

This essay concludes with the media because I believe there is power in knowledge. I believe that there are profound ramifications when knowledge is consistently mired in negative idioms. Afropessimism is rampant. We tolerate – by which I mean the general public tolerates – what is happening because we have few models with which to construct complex explanations for unfortunate events or hopeful scenarios for what is to come. We expect negativity; we are conditioned to accept the worst. We shrink from involvement because the outcomes are never good.

I also believe that our silence legitimates the actions we observe. We tolerate military buildup and the possibility of policing oil installations because we have too little information with which to construct an understanding of what is happening or why. We have insufficient knowledge to comprehend the consequences of actions taken by those who make policy on our behalf. We laud corporate philanthropy, yet we have little understanding of the systemic conditions that undermine its ultimate effectiveness. We tolerate security measures surrounding the extraction of oil because it relieves us from dealing with the Middle East. We promote the militarization of Africa, ignoring the fact that once again, as with the Cold War, we are creating client states, playing into the hands of powerful military elites and strengthening the hands of corrupt leaders. We have failed to interrogate the meaning of ‘terrorism’ itself, and instead we accept the label without delving into the political and economic conditions out of which it evolves. The notion of terrorism – like that of other ‘isms’ such as socialism, conservatism, or liberalism – allows us to legitimate self-interest indiscriminately and demonise whoever and whatever deviates from that self-interest.

There are those who believe, and I agree with them, that public attention has been diverted to issues of terrorism and the kinds of military buildup and economic security measures that hinder true economic and political growth (Reuters, 2004). We dare not lose sight of the fact that the most threatening problems facing the world today are poverty and equity. Only by addressing these problems at their most fundamental, structural, systemic levels will the world have a chance to experience the kinds of security and stability that I would like to call a global flow of peace.
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Endnotes

1. Africa’s growing importance in US policymaking circles also is due to factors not considered in this essay, those being the HIV/AIDS health crisis and continuously high levels of internal conflict.

2. Anger over revenue-sharing and lack of transparency in oil company payments to government have resulted in a separatist movement in the Cabinda region of Angola (Williams, 2002:31-33; Goldwyn & Morrison, 2004:2, 12).


5. Lobe (2003) based his article on remarks made by General James Jones, Supreme Commander of NATO and Commander of EUCOM.


7. A breakdown of amounts is given below.

8. The firm Pacific Architects and Engineers was hired by the US State Department for $10 million to assist in the Liberian operations of 2003. The same firm also has worked for the US in Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire (US Department of State 2003; Cilliers, 2003).
9. A US Navy P-3 aircraft and about one hundred US soldiers used Algeria as a base from which to assist Chad in March 2004 in a successful attempt to eliminate a guerilla group believed to be sympathetic to al Qaeda (Jane’s Defence Weekly, 4 August 2004).

10. The US reportedly is using the Entebbe base to assist the Ugandan government with its counterinsurgency campaign in the northern part of the country (Plaut, 2004).


13. The three programmes and amounts being spent are as follows: (1) The ACOTA programme (Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance) is budgeted at $15 million for 2005 and from 2002 until the end of 2005 will have spent $53 million; (2) The ARP programme (Africa Regional Peacekeeping), which trains, equips, and assists African soldiers in local peacekeeping efforts, is budgeted at $45 million for 2005 and will have spent $154 million for the same four years; (3) The IMET programme (International Military Education and Training) in 2005 is budgeted at $10.8 million and will have spent $43.6 million from 2002 to the end of 2005. See US Department of State (2004); US Department of Defense (2004).

14. The most recent seminars were held in Uganda in October 2004 and in Washington, DC, in February 2004. See www.africacentral.org/Dev2Go.web?Anchor=acss_programs_sls04&rnd=32498.

15. Annual amounts spent by and authorised for weapons purchases through the Pentagon are: 2002 = $57.2 million; 2003 = $68.9 million; 2004 = $39.9 million; and 2005 = 44.9 million. See US Department of State (2005); US Department of Defense (2004).


17. The company, MPRI, trains military personnel in Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria and South Africa, and is helping to establish and operate the Africa Center for Strategic Studies as part of the Department of Defense. See www.mpri.com/subchannels/int_africa.html.


20. Some of the corporate performance standards are set by the International Standards Organization (Deirdre LaPin, personal communication, 18 March 2004).

21. I thank John Riggin for bringing this to my attention.

22. Business Partners for Development, located in London, was created by the World Bank, the British Department for International Development (DFID), CARE, and mining, oil, and gas companies. The organization’s goal is to find ways for business, government and civil society to engage together in sustainable community development. See www.bpd-naturalresources.org/.

23. I thank Deirdre LaPin for bringing this to my attention.

24. Cynthia Ntini conducted the survey.

25. They include the Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal, Asia Times, Cleveland Plain Dealer, and San Francisco Chronicle.


27. They include Salih Booker, Caleb Bush, Imani Countess, Bill Minter, Michael West, and many others.

28. The journal was recently renamed African Issues.

US Department of State, Kampala, Uganda, 21 April.


Sovereignty & Democratic Exclusion in the New South Africa

Lars Buur

In this essay I will outline the contours of the attempt by the ANC government to reorder state-civil society relations. This will be done by delineating the form of civil society participation that the government has promulgated in the field of justice enforcement in order to ‘tame’ or direct the uncontrolled aspects and forces of self-organisation emanating from the struggle against apartheid known as ‘people’s power’. The article will argue that the establishment of institutions like the Community Policing Forums (CPF) were created to harbour and give direction to these forces rests on and allows for a particular type of democratic citizenship or normative ethical being, while excluding other types of political-ethical being. The essay illustrates how past ideas about friends and enemies of the ANC are used as the interpretive lens to decode opposition to the CPF.

Since 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) has embarked upon a profound venture to reorganise South African society. The aim has been to undo injustices committed under the apartheid regime by bringing everybody under the same sovereign rule of law: ‘One law for one nation’, as the first page of the new Constitution puts it. This exceeds by far any narrow definition of a project of law and has had an impact on nearly all spheres of society. As Comaroff and Comaroff have pointed out, the project of the ANC is an attempt to ‘fashion a highly enlightened democracy’ and yet

to free itself from a legacy of Eurocentric domination: a postcolony rooted in a modernist culture of legality that seeks, explicitly if uneasily, to make space for cultural diversity (2004:189).

My interest in this essay is not directly in the uneasy accommodation of cultural diversity and custom, and their ambivalent interpolation in the South African democracy and legal system. Instead, I want to explore the attempt to ‘accommodate’ an equally ambivalent domain of the socio-political reality in the new South Africa. In particular, I want to focus on how the state and the ANC have tried both to undo and capture those forms of organisation that played an important role in the struggle against apartheid and upon which the new democracy was going to be based – or at least that was the hope. These were radical forms of democratic organisation that, during the struggle, gained the reputation of being impossible to control, ruled by crowd sentiments and intrinsically prone to violence, creating a ‘parallel’ or ‘popular sovereign’ (Seekings, 2001; Nina, 1995). On the one hand, the political leadership of the ANC distinguishes itself from popular manifestations grounded in...
past forms of mobilisation that are seen as anachronistic or at odds with the new formal constitutional democracy. On the other hand, ironically, the ANC constantly draws on the rhetoric of the past struggle against apartheid and insists that the development of the new democracy is a direct continuation of that history. The question is how such a conundrum plays itself out. Are there spaces, even uneasy ones, for a diversity of forms of democratic participation other than the ones sanctioned by the new state and the party in charge of the state? If such spaces exist, what form do they take? Can a formal liberal democracy like South Africa – not only founded on one law but also achieved through violent struggle – infuse itself with forms of democratic organisation based on other values? Does an adherence to liberal democratic organisation truly mark a contrast to these other forms of organisation, as has been argued? What if, to paraphrase Mbembe (2001), opposing trajectories of democratic organisation are inscribed in the same paradigm? Could the clash between old and new forms of democratic organisation be grounded in contradictions built into the constitution of the new democracy? If so, what are these contradictions and how are they settled?

I approach some of these questions by way of analysing the state’s attempt to reorder civil society relations in community-based justice enforcement in the adjoining townships of Port Elizabeth. Elsewhere (Buur, 2003; 2005), I argued that the use of corporal punishment and other disciplinary devices by vigilante formations called into question both the state monopoly over legitimate violence and the state’s attempt – by institutionalising the Bill of Rights – to regulate and govern the field of justice enforcement in Port Elizabeth’s townships. The use of force by vigilante formations was justified by residents and the vigilante groups themselves, as well as sections of the police, first, by the belief that rampant, out-of-control crime threatens the lives of township residents and the well-being of their communities and, second, as a result of the alleged failure of government and state to safeguard communities against criminals because of the incapacity and corruption of the South African Police Services (SAPS). The failure by the police to deal with crime was explained by their need to adhere to the credo of human rights which was hampering their efforts. The use of force was deemed necessary as an information-extracting device and as a way of inculcating the moral values of township residents, in particular unruly younger members.

For all the celebration of horizontal fraternity (Anderson, 1990) institutionalised by the new South African Constitution and exemplified by the rights-bearing subject equal before the law, many township residents are still excluded from the most meaningful forms of compensation for not taking the law into their own hands: access to jobs (Nattrass and Seekings, 2001; Terreblanch, 2003), participation in the membership of civic consumerism (Khunou, 2002:71-73) and purchase of insurance policies (Buur, 2003). Despite such continued marginalisation, the fiction of unity is strong, as the 2004 election results show, which gave the ANC a 70 per cent national mandate – and over 90 per cent in Port Elizabeth’s townships – further underscoring the legitimacy of both the party and the state as the exclusive guarantors of collective well-being and thus emphasising what Comaroff and Comaroff described as the ‘indivisibility of nation from state’ (2004:190). While the use of vigilante force was understood to represent a critique of the regime of rights, it was also presented as a defence of the new democracy, whose justice enforcement institutions – the Community Policing Forums (CPF) – were failing to meet township residents’ needs. The explicitly stated aim was not to undermine or challenge the new government of the ANC, but rather to assist it; informants constantly reiterated that
In this article, I want to take this argument further and explore in greater detail local attempts to organise societal fields such as justice enforcement through the technique of community policing that is gaining currency. In particular, I want to examine what it means when an apparently neutral or depoliticised global device for inclusion of communities in policing is inserted into the South African context with its particular history of anti-apartheid struggle. This is important, I will suggest, not only because of what takes place in the field of justice. Newly emerging social campaigns and movements contesting state policies, such as the Landless Movement, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), the Sowetan Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) and the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), draw to a large extent on the popular democratic legacy of the struggle against apartheid and are confronted by official, state forms of local organisation that resemble the democratic model applied in the CPF. I will here argue that the ‘other’ of the new democratic dispensation was not only the apartheid regime and its racialised legacy; aspects of the struggle against apartheid also qualify as ‘other’: the mode of popular sovereignty – captured in the slogan ‘people’s power’ and mode of democratic organisation – the ‘people’s court’ – that brought ‘the people’ to power. We need, therefore, to outline the salient features of the ‘other’ of the democratic form of organisation and ethical being that the new legal-political order tries to promulgate. First, I will outline the formal attempts to reorder state–civil society relations through community policing that has followed the mode of popular sovereignty that materialised during the 1980s. I will then explore how past and present forms of democratic organisation play themselves out today.

The Depoliticised Form of the Community Policing Forum

In an attempt to regulate the relationship between the state and the wider public, the ANC-led government established Community Policing Forums (CPF) in 1995. The CPFs had been anticipated from at least 1991, but they were officially introduced through the Interim Constitution (CRSA Section 221, Act 200 of 1993), which allowed for a network of community policing forums to be established at police-station level throughout the country. Only eighteen months into the term of the Government of National Unity, CPFs were legislated through the South African Police Service Act of 1995 (SAPS Act 68 of 1995) and they remain part of law in terms of the final Constitution of 1996 (CRSA Act 106 of 1996). The reform of the South African Police Force (SAPF), symbolically renamed South African Police Service (SAPS), was crucial as an attempt to bolster its legitimacy facing a more than sceptical public, which remembered the role of the police in the torture and quelling of internal resistance to the apartheid regime. Integral to this was the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy’s (NCPS) explicit aim of capitalising on ‘the participation of civil society in mobilising and sustaining crime prevention initiatives’ (Dixon, 2000:14). Earlier draft documents had opened the way for incorporating and recognising organised civic formations emerging from the struggle against apartheid, often referred to as ‘alternative and autonomous, non-state systems of ordering’ (Schärf and Nina, 2001). Instead of cooperation between the state system and non-state forms of ordering systems, the role of community participation is limited to working in partnership with the state police on the mutual identification of and solution of local problems (Section 18(1) SAPS Act 68 of 1995). Initially, CPFs were to work closely with the police through the designated community police
officer, whom each police station is required by law to appoint. However, during the
first years of implementation the CPFs functioned primarily as a civilian check on
police negligence of abuse of power. The relationship with the police structures
therefore often became strained, with little active participation by CPFs in de facto
crime prevention and agenda setting, which as Dixon has illustrated became
’skewed in favour of the state, its agents and institutions’ (2000:14).

Despite this, considerable energy was put into the formation and education of CPFs.
Members of CPFs are formally, democratically elected at an Annual General Meeting
(AGM) by the communities adjoining a police station. A CPF comprises a
chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Various portfolios for youth,
crime prevention, schools, gender and business are either identified at the AGM or
appointed subsequently by the board. The CPF and each sub-committee elect their
own chairperson, secretary and so on, and they work according to the stipulations
laid down in the CPF constitution; thus mirroring the various tiers of government
and the ANC itself, both in organisation and in adherence to constitutionalism. CPF
participation rests on basic standards of democratic behaviour that emphasise
accountability and equality. Such behaviour would disregard specific racial, ethnic
and social, class mores as the basis for democratic organisation which should be
hierarchically encompassed under the constitution. Furthermore, the rules laid
down in the CPF constitution must be respected and participants are accountable to
the forum. Most CPFs have an office with a phone in the police station and ideally
hold daily meetings with the Community Policing Officer to synchronise police
activities with the work of the CPF. While CPFs have access to limited funding and
may receive training in human rights and strategic crime prevention, few resources
are generally used on concrete activities. From the beginning, the relevant legislation
stipulated that a CPF form safety and security structures (popularly known as S&S)
to work under its jurisdiction. In Port Elizabeth, S&S structures first became a
concrete reality after 2000 (Buur, 2003). Made up of locally elected or appointed
members, S&S structures are organised around the lowest level of local governance:
the ward. S&S members may serve on CPF sub-committees and may receive human
rights sensitivity training.

Even though non-state popular justice self-regulation has continued to play a
crucial role in local justice enforcement up through the mid-1990s and to the present –
often in conflict with the state initiative – the CPF is the most visible expression of
the South African state’s community policing policy. It became the main instrument
for the state (and the ANC) to domesticate and to defuse potential antagonisms in the
justice field. While local extra-state justice enforcement structures proliferated in the
townships of New Brighton and Kwazakele outside Port Elizabeth after 1999 (see
Buur, 2003; Buur and Jensen, 2004; 2005), the New Brighton CPF could claim that it
initiatives taking care of justice enforcement, the CPF was the only initiative that had
official approval. They could, with certainty, assert that every project related to crime
fighting ought to be conducting its work in the name of the CPF and be regulated by
its constitution. Other structures had local community support, but they also ran the
danger of being classified a priori as anti-ANC because of their unofficial status. The
CPF can, as such, be interpreted as an attempt to contain the energies of ‘the people’s
power’ in state and dominant party practices – what we with Canetti (1988) can
understand as a move from ‘open’ to ‘closed’ masses – through the use of
‘governmental communitarianism’ (Delanty, 2003:87; Rose, 1999). This can clearly
be seen as a positive, structured and coordinated attempt to mobilise and harness
active democratic participation and self-management in justice enforcement
alongside the police services. In this sense, the CPF can be seen as an attempt to
accomplish a form of democratic socialisation by capturing township residents in participatory forums that in a variety of ways compel citizens to act according to standards of democratic behaviour played out under conditions regulated by a more or less well defined set of democratic procedures. Considering the extremely violent history of democratic nation-state formation in South Africa, this is, after all, no small matter.

However, and this is often overlooked in the present celebration of ‘participation’, it also implies the imposition of a potentially proactive model of policing on (underdeveloped) countries which, some would claim, lack the democratic history that underpins the CPFs’ role in long established democracies (see in particularly Bayley, 1995:91). The introduction of CPFs has, quite legitimately, been seen as an imposition of ‘Anglo-American state-police-centred policing’ (Dixon, 2000:15), part of the enforcement of a particular form of liberal democracy with no or little relevance to the South African experience, which is guided primarily by a need for social stability while pursuing economic growth, rather than community priorities (Brogden, 2004). It has even been suggested that it forms part of ‘a new colonialism’ (Dixon, 2000:8; Brogden and Shearing 1993:95), mainly governed by the requirements of ‘overseas aid’ (Brogden, 1996:225). As is well documented (see Brodgen and Shearing, 1993; Brogden, 2004; Dixon, 2000), the emergence of CPFs during the South African political transition forms part of wider systems of globalised governmental change in which the community and its representatives become the spaces that order the interface between citizens-subjects and global institutions (see also Rose, 1999; Garland, 2001). As I have illustrated, the South African CPF model includes the use of a spatial matrix based on the local governance unit of the ward for ascendancy, which is more often than not at odds with the organising basis of non-state formations in the field of justice (see Buur, 2005). The CPF can also be seen as a formal redrawing of the space for governance between the authority of state on the one hand, and the liberty of rights-bearing, autonomous, individual subject-citizens of the nation on the other, as Rose has pointed out (1999:167). One can debate, however, to what extent it is solely autonomous individuals that are produced and not individuals conditioned by political allegiance to the ruling party.

While this particular form of redrawing extrapolates certain representatives of the community and transports them into the apparently neutral or depoliticised space of the police station, it also encourages and harnesses a particular form of political subjectivity in the South African case, whose ‘other’ must be outlined in some detail to explain why CPF in South Africa was an appealing model for reordering state-society relations. This point has never really featured in the various rigorous critiques of the CPF model; these tend to conclude with the argument that what is needed is a greater reliance on ‘bottom-up’ and localised modes of justice enforcement based on ‘what works’ (Brogden, 2004:649). In the South African case, ‘what works’ comes with a particular history, one on which the ANC, for a number of reasons, did not want to base its new democracy.

Local Justice Enforcement & Political Contestation

In South Africa, local justice enforcement has been intimately related to the changing meaning of vigilantism (Buur, 2003; Buur and Jensen, 2004). Until the mid-1980s, the concept of vigilantism was generally used in the same vein as categories like ‘popular justice’ or ‘informal policing’, which referred to ordering activities that were undertaken outside the ambit of the apartheid state (Bundy, 2000). The term
'captured manifestations of social ordering' related to the maintenance of peace and order, some of which had a 'conservative' bent, addressing issues related to rapid urbanisation such as generational, class and gender conflict and emphasising the moral codes of African culture and tradition; others had either a 'para-military' component or a 'progressive' attitude to social cohesion, addressing, for instance, civic issues (Seekings, 2001:85-86). In the 1980s, the concept came to denote two different things. Most importantly, it came to denote ‘reactionary’ tendencies in the black populations and to refer specifically to conservative vigilante groupings that fought violently against anti-apartheid components in the struggle in black townships and homelands, more often than not secretly backed by the apartheid regime. As Hayson has shown (1989:2-7), this shift coincided with a more structured infusion of modern counter-insurgency warfare in South Africa after 1985, with emphasis on ‘low intensity conflict management’ with its roots in military theories emerging from the French general Andre Beaufre and the American colonel J. J. McCuen. The logic of these theories was institutionalised by the apartheid regime from the mid-1980s, first in its ‘total strategy’ and later in its Joint Management System approach, which dissolved conventional boundaries between military and civil society and focused on ‘winning hearts and minds’ (known as WHAM). An integral facet was the emergence of the regime’s hidden hand or ‘third force’ which involved ‘the clandestine creation of surrogate armed forces [which] appear to emerge spontaneously from the “people” themselves’ (Ibid. p. 3). It is in this context that ‘concerned residents’ groups’ or, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 1998) calls them, ‘conservative’ or ‘reactionary vigilantes’, emerged in townships around South Africa. It is generally agreed that the apartheid state was involved in fuelling violence through what famously became known as ‘third force activities’ run by secret and extra-judicial security force units. Nonetheless, as the TRC made clear, not all vigilante activity was a product of state engineering:

Intolerant actions and coercive campaigns of the UDF3 and its adherents mobilised genuine disaffection and anger amongst black residents, forming the basis for retaliatory actions by so-called ‘vigilantes’ (TRC, Vol. 2, 1998:302).

The mid-1980s saw the emergence of another potent understanding of what would come to be conceptualised as vigilantism or mob justice: that of the ‘people’s courts’ that formed part of building People’s Organs for People’s Power. Some regarded ‘people’s courts’ as a continuation of the forms of self-regulation and community discipline that had long been a feature of rural and urban communities in South Africa (Bapela, 1987; see Schärf and Nina, 2001 for a recent summary). With the two key mobilising slogans adopted by the ANC and the ANC-aligned UDF – ‘people’s power’ and ‘making the country ungovernable’ – the notion of self-regulation was radicalised and adapted to the political struggle and as such went ‘beyond its traditional roots’ (Suttner quoted in Nina, 1992:2). The slogans referred to attempts both to dismantle the apartheid government and its security forces, and to displace the authority and reach of the apartheid state by seizing control of administrative, welfare, policing, judicial and other functions in the townships, thus creating an alternative sovereign. ‘Building People’s Organs for People’s Power’ was introduced as a campaign in early 1986 following the collapse of the government-created Black Local Administrations. Here, residents started forming alternative structures such as street committees, area committees, people’s courts, school committees, residents’ associations and so on, acting in the name of the ‘liberated people’ (see Nina, 1992; Seekings, 2000; Schärf and Nina, 2001). The dual face of ‘ungovernability and organisation’ created a parallel authority that ‘was seen as part of a process
of organising the future society’, as a prefigurative endeavour for the future democracy (Nina, 1995:7; see also Mayekiso, 1996).4

The hope was that, along with taking the best from struggles for equality within the Western legal system – for gender, youth, women and gay rights, for example – the ideas behind ‘people’s power’, its courts based on its ‘own structures of legality’ (Nina, 1992:3), would be carried over into the future liberated state, where notions of popular participation would prevail. Some commentators argue that, up to mid-1986, in the six to seven months when they functioned in an optimal manner, the ‘people’s courts’ were relatively well organised and politically disciplined (Nina, 1992; Mayekiso, 1996; Seekings, 2001). However, with the declaration of various states of emergency from 1986 onwards, the killing, imprisonment or exile of most UDF township leaders and the counter-insurgency strategies of the apartheid regime, the picture became far more chaotic and contingent. People’s Courts sometimes meted out severe punishments – the infamous ‘necklace’5 being the most notorious – for crime and for other forms of behaviour considered deviant by township activists. Mob toyi-toying (an ‘amble-stepped’ quasi-military dance) became associated with the enforcement of the ANC/UDF’s ungovernability strategy in township schools and streets, as did the ‘harassment’ of political opponents. Harassment took various interlinked forms: gatherings in front of the houses of people classified as enemies, which were then attacked or burned down; the burning of people classified as enemies (the infamous askaris),6 the building of burning tyre barricades and so on.

‘Conservative’ and ‘struggle’ vigilantes are described separately above, but their development and intensification were simultaneous and intertwined. Channelling dissatisfaction against the regime in an attempt to gain control over the uncontrollable masses created its own uncontrollability, manifest both as outbursts of extreme violence and as potent circulating fears of hidden evil forces using opponents of the UDF to undermine the democratic revolution – fears that persisted throughout the 1990s and well into the new millennium (a subject to which we will return below).

The Ambivalence of ‘the People’

We know that the State used its considerable resources to wage a war against some of its citizens. We know that torture, deception, murder and death squads came to be the order of the day. We know that the liberation movements were not paragons of virtue and were often responsible for egging people on to behave in ways that were uncontrollable. We know that we may, given the present crime rate, be reaping the harvest of the campaigns to make the country ungovernable (Tutu quoted in TRC, 1998:17).

The leadership of the various strands of the liberation struggle later acknowledged before the TRC that they did not have control over the youth. At the hearing on the UDF, Mr Patrick ‘Terror’ Lekota, former UDF leader and current Minister of Defence, had the following to say about ‘necklacing’ by UDF activists:

We accept political and moral responsibility. We cannot say these people have nothing to do with us. We organised them; we led them. When we were taken into prisons, they were left without leadership and many of them, angry even at our arrest, did things which were irrational (TRC, Vol. 5, 1998:383).

The then Deputy President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, was less reconciliatory; he made it abundantly clear to the TRC that such groups ‘were controlled by
communities themselves, not by ANC headquarters’, implying that, had the party controlled the communities, the situation would had been different. By saying this, he avoided taking responsibility for a whole range of human rights violations committed by aligned supporters.

The exchanges between the TRC and the ANC/UDF were notoriously ambiguous: ANC and former UDF leaders tried to maintain that the unrest formed part of its strategic intervention, while at the same time they had to acknowledge that ‘the people’ and various formations acting in their name did things that were deeply disturbing and outside the movement’s control. Simply to say that the youth acted on their own would have been to reject key elements of the internal struggle. Ambivalence arises because, in order to keep political face with their constituency, ANC and UDF leaders needed to appropriate a domain of the struggle against apartheid that they never fully controlled, while simultaneously they had to distance themselves from it to maintain their stance on human rights in the eyes of the international community (Buur, 2001). The images and fears of mob justice that troubled the political class in the apartheid state as well as the leadership of the ANC are not necessarily over, as Desmond Tutu’s, TRC Chairperson, explains. What I want to draw from this short summary is that, during the struggle of the 1980s, when sovereignty was entrusted to the people, they became a scandal and an embarrassment for their leaders. The ‘people’ therefore could not be the agent for the development of the future society. When one takes into account the ANC’s socialist exile past, it is clear that the state and party would have to take the role of directing societal transformation: ‘Formally, it is a state based on a democratic constitution, a state which is obliged to serve the aspirations of the majority’ (ANC Strategies and Tactics, 1997). However, the emergence of a ‘truly democratic state’ depended on the transformation of the old machinery and such transformation had clear Jacobin overtones: ‘the location of the motive forces of the revolution at the helm of the state, as the classes and strata which wield real power’ (Ibid.) could only be the ANC (see also Jensen, 2001).

Given that history, along with current political mobilisation in the name of ‘the people’, democratic consolidation and the challenges to it can be analysed by examining the relationship between ‘the people’ and the guardians of the people, and how that relationship is organised. As a first approximation, it is worth considering Agamben’s answer to the question, ‘What is a People?’ (2000:28). According to him, the Western political concept of ‘people’ is inherently ambiguous because ‘what we call people was actually not a unitary subject but rather a dialectical oscillation between two opposite poles: on the one hand, the People as a whole and as an integral body politic and, on the other hand, the people as a subset and a fragmentary multiplicity of the needy and excluded bodies’ (2000:30). The double nature of the concept of ‘people’ as that which already is and that which has yet to be realised – the citizen and the poor, underprivileged and excluded subject aspiring to become a citizen – fits well with the idea of ‘achieving people’s power’ of the 1980s and with the ANC’s present democratic project, since its aim is the merger of people and People. Agamben traces the attempts to stitch up this constitutive fracture in Western political history where its subject has, in different contexts, taken different forms but has always functioned as the ‘pure source of identity and yet has to be redefined and purify itself continuously according to exclusion, language, blood, and territory. It is what has in its opposite pole the very essence that itself lacks; the realisation therefore coincides with its own abolition’ (2000:31). The question is then: is the ANC’s attempt through the CPF to create order and to
organise the justice field through a set of practices and institutions underpinning a
democratic liberal political model capable of doing so in a manner that allows for
pluralism. The specificity of modern democracy is exactly that it recognises and
legitimises conflict over ideas about how society should be organised. Allowing for
fierce contest over such ideas and over the right to defend such ideas is never
questioned.

Democratic Form & Exclusion

In the following, I will consider to what extent the CPF model, as a depoliticised and
neutral form of democratic participation, shapes inclusion and exclusion. In
particular I want to explore what can be termed the internal limit for participation in
the CPF. As I have already suggested, the formation of CPFs is marked by normative
and ethical prescriptions defining a good citizen by particular qualities: equity
allowing for community participation and accountability to the constitution. While
these ethical standards form part of basic democratic behaviour and as such are
used broadly to characterise democratic participation in different contexts, I will
suggest that they become adapted and appropriated in specific contexts that not
only capture residents in participatory forums but produce such forums’ by
foreclosing the options for participation in the field of justice enforcement.
Furthermore, opponents to the CPF become recast as untenable people, who cannot
be included in democratic forums.

The vice chairperson of the CPF for New Brighton police station, on the outskirts of
Port Elizabeth, indicated how the normative-ethical nexus is understood in the work
of local justice:

In a nutshell, this structure of the CPF is for no political purposes at all [...] we want people
who are committed, to ensure that they do represent the interests and aspirations of the
community, not to represent their party political interests interview, March 2001.

Recalling my earlier comments on the formal properties of the CPF the particular
socio-political circumstances of township residents do not seem to matter: this
seems to be an implicit critique of the conditions for democratic forms of
participation in the past based on ethnic and political belonging. The only proviso
seems to be that participation ‘represents the interests and aspirations of the
community’ for particular political persuasion, solidarities or social membership.
That the depoliticised form was intended to avoid the reproduction of past violence
was confirmed when the vice-chair spelled out that the CPF was an attempt to shun
participation based on forms of organisation that drew their legitimacy directly or
indirectly from forms of allegiances to ‘people’s power’. However, much hinges on
how one defines ‘the interests and aspirations of the community’. It seems to be a
direct paraphrase of the 1980s political rhetoric that constituted part of the language
of the UDF and the ANC. As the vice-chair explained the problem, with democratic
participation:

We always do accept all people, but the problem is that we must make sure that there is an
element of accountability. Where would an individual account? What if a particular person
having joined as an individual, happens to misbehave, how are you going to deal with that
particular person? (vice-chair, March 2001).

His remedy for making members of the CPF accountable was to implement the term
‘structured organisations’ (political or non-political), because such organisations
become ‘liable and responsible for the activities of that particular individual’. Over time, the CPF in New Brighton settled on a model in which the CPF engaged solely with recognised political and civil society groups who were then invited to send representatives to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The executive body of the CPF was elected from this pool of people, who understood that they were accountable to the representatives electing them and, in turn, presumably representing the will of the people. In this model, an election must be understood within the democratic tradition of the ANC which is based on internal discussions and external unity. Officially, the AGM elected the executive, but at the 2001 AGM and all subsequent AGMs that I attended, participation in the election was based on caucusing by the representatives participating in the meeting who appointed or pointed out the executive board, who then in turn set up the various subcommittees of the CPF. Open elections were never held.

Where did the representatives come from? As it was explained to me, the representatives formally electing the CPF came from different political organisations, church groups, civic, business and sport associations. In reality, hardly any organisations participated, other than members of the ANC tri-party alliance (ANC, SACP and COSATU), the ANC Women’s League, the ANC Youth League and so on. One PAC representative was present, as were two members of a well-known church who were also members of the ANC, but they were not included in the various caucuses where decisions were taken. As the local councillor described it, the type of democratic organisation the government/ANC pursues with regard to the CPF includes ‘people who are coming straight from their organisation: AZAPO is supposed to have a representative, the PAC is supposed to have a representative, ANC, South African Communist Party, Women’s League or whoever, they must be part of the CPF’. Individuals attempting to participate in the AGM or members of autonomous non-state justice enforcement groups (usually firm ANC members but not delegated by the ANC or its alliance members), were either turned away or excluded from participating in the election of the CPF or its various sub-committees.

Like an election in this scenario, the concept of accountability also needs to be understood in context. To be accountable to the people of the township did not mean accountability directly to ‘the people’ or the community they represented as such, but rather to the organisations that presumably represented them. If there were problems with an individual representative, the organisation that had sent the person to the AGM/CPF was the sanctioning body responsible for discipline if this person ‘stepped out of order’. Here people who do not belong to any known formal group cannot participate. Although the CPF operates within a liberal democratic tradition and attempts to be inclusive, in practice it became operationalised according to exclusive categorisations and generalised profiles of representative groups or populations. In this case, the groups are based on formal political organisations, to which democratic rights are allocated.

**Unknown Forces Among Us**

The CPF obsession with the screening of possible members operating outside the party-political domain dominated by the ANC is fuelled by the recollection of ‘old struggle/friend and enemy’ schemes. In Port Elizabeth, such memories circulated around the ‘conservative’ group *AmaAfrica.* That this was more than fifteen years after the last clashes between UDF and AZAPO supporters that tore Port Elizabeth’s townships apart in the 1980s, somehow did not diminish the attraction of the past as an explanation for present signs of dissidence. When the vigilante group *Amadlozi*
emerged in 1999 in New Brighton, attracting a large following by 2001 (as I have described elsewhere, Buur, 2003; Jensen and Buur, 2004; Buur, 2005), it was interpreted through the lens of the past; this became abundantly clear the first time I interviewed the councillor from the ward where Amadlozi held its quasi-court sessions:

When we formed the UDF, we also got other organisations which were used by white people, you know. Organisations like AZAPO, they were fighting against the UDF […] People were killed like flies at that time. If you check [the historical material] you will find that everybody was dying and they were using other people against other people by telling their minds to change [make activists into Askaris through torture], so they could use AmaAfrica. We still have those people between us.

Like semantic contagion, the slippage between people ‘used’ by some malevolent elements forming part of the apartheid state apparatus with reference to AmaAfrika; the explanation of ‘third force’ activities; the fact that AmaAfrika had started out as a concerned residents’ group against the violence of the UDF youth; and then finally, fifteen years later, a new group called the Amadlozi emerged on the scene also called concerned residents (although this time fighting against crime) and led by a former UDF activist, a former MK-cadre and one old AZAPO activist – all of these factors pointing in the same direction were conspicuous. The circulation of past struggle narratives about evil forces, enemies of the ANC, that use and misuse groups and individuals has been a common theme in South African politics. The idea of a ‘third force’ functions to explain why things go wrong in particular contexts. The reiteration of ‘third force’ and dissident narratives has a remarkable capacity to reconcile local and global concerns, because it forms part of a lived semantic universe, a constant subtext for understanding apparently innocuous and mundane incidents. The recycling of ‘third force’ narratives in the context of opposition to the CPF was indeed giving meaning to apparently innocuous and mundane everyday incidents such as crime and criminals released from prison. Consider how the local councillor explained the phenomenon of crime in 2001:

If you look how high the crime rate is in our country, you will find there is a ‘third force’ around. There are people who are used by some of the old regime to do crime, because if a criminal is caught by the community and is taken to the police, within two days you will find out that they got out of the cells. They did have guns, where did they get guns? So they are used by some of the people (interview with local Councillor, 2001).

Here, everyday incidents are given meaning by drawing on the emotionally loaded history of past conflicts. To use the release of ‘criminals’ as an indication of ‘third force’ activities aimed at ‘spreading chaos’, as she explained it in the township and thereby discrediting the ANC/government – which is the implicit subtext, showing that it cannot deal with crime – is an attractive hypothesis, perhaps because of its simplicity. When I asked if the councillor had come across evidence to substantiate the claim that the police gave criminals weapons the answer was, predictably enough, a clear ‘No, but I have seen criminals with weapons’. The same can be said about the fact that just as most people handed into the police would be released after taking their statements or because of lack of forensic evidence this does not necessarily mean that there is a conspiracy operating. The ease with which ‘third force’ narratives give meaning to everyday incidents like these shows how past narratives are used today to explain rather contingent events; events nobody can really do anything about but which nonetheless require fixing. Or, to paraphrase Jensen (2001:116-117), it gives an indication of how events are localised in one locus
of evil that exonerates the ANC, the councillor and others working for the new South Africa of any guilt for crime and violence.

One should not overlook the fact that references to the ‘use of people by evil forces and to *AmaAfrika* as elements fighting the UDF’, have a different twist today. It is no longer possible to point out with the same certainty the exact identity of the evil or hidden forces. As democracy becomes more consolidated, the answer to the question ‘who exactly should be blamed for violence and crime in townships?’ has become *homeless*. The recycling of the ‘third force’ narrative in the context of present-day crime and police responses to it plays partly on popular perceptions and readily available images of inadequate police transformation. More specifically, it plays on the perception that the police opposed the transformation of the new South Africa and were actively trying to destabilise it through the use of certain (black) elements (in this case township criminals who rob, kill and rape). To draw on the image of secret apartheid agencies or ‘networks of the past’ as the ANC often do when no other explanations can be used (see for example ANC 1996) is easy because the negotiated political settlement ensured the jobs of many former apartheid officials in the new state apparatus. Although fear of the *Amadlozi* was not only related to ‘third force’, the indication is important because of the semantic universe it draws on, that, seen from the viewpoint of the dominant party, is more or less the same as being anti-state or anti-ANC. In other words, what the revocation of the ‘third force’ narrative does whenever it is used is to delegitimise, *a priori*, any claims that communities or opposing organisations may have.

### From Adversary to Enemy of the State & Party

The abstract but still fairly concrete interpretive lens of ‘evil forces of the past’ and ‘used’ vigilantes is powerful. I will suggest that it moves activities by competing forms of justice enforcement and individuals challenging the CPF into the domain of the untenable. From being merely ‘unaccountable’ and therefore in need of order and democratic socialisation achievable by capturing and containing township residents in participatory forums to coerce and compel them to act according to standards of democratic behaviour, these groups and organisations are moved into the category of ‘combatants’ because they create dissidence. If indeed the central category of democratic engagement is the adversary, as Mouffe (2002:9) suggests – the ‘opponent with whom we share a common allegiance to the democratic principle of “liberty and equality for all” while disagreeing about its interpretation [but without questioning] opponents’ right to fight for the victory of their position’ – then the account of the CPF in New Brighton reveals some serious flaws in the particular manner in which the liberal model is appropriated. Even though the interpretive lens is shaped by the past, it is equally about the present and the fear of the emergence of political opposition to the ANC.

As the vice chairperson phrased it,

> [when] vigilism comes into the community, it will explore weaknesses that are there within the community and capitalise on those weaknesses, trying to embrace and associate itself with the community and thereafter reflect its true colours (vice chairperson of CPF 2001).

His real fear was that the *Amadlozi* would develop into a vigilante group that was anti-state or even anti-ANC (the ANC being the organisation he himself represented in the CPF) because ‘the motive behind *Amadlozi* … it’s political. These guys, most of
them, have been disillusioned within this political organisation (the ANC) they belonged to. Now they are trying to create a following’. Therefore, one had to be cautious, as the councillor asserted: ‘If we do not take it seriously when it starts, if we keep on letting these people operate in our communities, we are going to get the same thing’.

Because of Amadlozi’s popularity and extensive following (see Buur, 2003; 2005), even with the disapproval of the established structures and ANC leaders in New Brighton, hundreds of people continued to come to their meetings. Local officials and state functionaries feared that a viable political opponent would emerge challenging the ANC’s control. What the councillor and the vice chairperson feared, I will suggest, was that the sovereign will of the people represented by the ANC would be challenged by a group or formation over which it apparently had no control. This, of course, says a lot about how local ANC cadres perceive politics and democratic contestation. More importantly, however, it points to the deeply political nature of issues related to crime and apparently ‘neutral’ forms of governance in South Africa, constituting arenas for the playing out of a range of struggles not obviously related to specific justice enforcement. Here, the classification of crime prevention and community participation makes a difference; any hint of ‘third force’ activities and ‘vigilantism’ and the wider domain of associated violence and past political struggles associated with such concepts a priori undermines any claims to legitimacy – placing potential adversaries in the enemy camp.

Conclusion

This essay outlines the reordering of the relationship between the state and civil society in the justice field which the new government of the ANC began after 1994 through the creation of Community Policing Forums. Drawing on fieldwork from Port Elizabeth’s townships, I have suggested that the constitutive fracture in the concept of ‘the people’ can be a useful way of approaching the reordering process. This is the case not only because the struggle against apartheid was fought in the name of ‘the people’ but also because acting in the name of, and for ‘the people’, points both at the source of identity and at what has not yet been achieved. The implication is that the CPF can be approached from the perspective of governmental sovereignty where ‘the people’ can be defined as the constitutive category of the sovereign political structure. I pointed out that, in the 1990s, apartheid-era fears of a ‘third force’ converged with contemporary fears of vigilantism, threatening the already uneasy transformation towards democracy. Like social movements, autonomous non-state justice enforcement in present-day South Africa draws to a large extent – and often in unwitting and contradictory fashion – upon an array of past symbols and concrete activities of ‘people’s power’. In invoking these associations, members of non-state formations – such as concerned residents’ groups, all modelled on past forms of sovereign organisation – exercise their partisanship of the new nation-state in a way that is at odds with or defies correct organisational practice and behaviour according to the new legal-political project. These formations become an embarrassing presence that must be abolished, but that also legitimise the plethora of legislation, the foundational values of human rights and the attempts to organise civil society.

While some sections of the struggle constituency hoped that the democratic form of ‘people’s power’ from the 1980s would become the basis for democracy in the new South Africa, I have suggested that, because of the excesses of ‘the people’s’ actions during the 1980s, this was not to be. Instead, the CPF represents a positive and
productive attempt to mobilise, enrol and harness active participation and self-management in justice enforcement in a structured and coordinated fashion. The party and state intended to achieve democratic socialisation through the capture of residents in participatory forums that would compel them to act according to basic standards of democratic behaviour such as accountability, equality and respect. I suggested that the formal or ideal model of the CPF did not require any particular entrance fee. All that counted was that residents behaved according to the standards of ethical behaviour in the public domain which, at least in principle, is open to all, as individuals or groups. In other words, the institution of the CPF was, in concept, indifferent to political or other forms of persuasion. As my analysis unfolded, however, it became clear that this ideally apoliticised model for participation was far from indifferent to residents’ socio-political world or to the salient properties of the past re-emerging in different shapes as fears of ‘hidden forces’ and as practices modelled on past modes of democratic participation. Exploring the internal frontier for participation in local justice enforcement, I suggested that this was marked by the exclusion of those residents who did not belong to the political party; more specifically, of those who were not affiliated to organised formations belonging to the tri-party alliance of the ANC. The nexus on which the legitimacy of the CPF rests can thus be said to be less direct or popular participation by the general population and more adherence to a particular kind of proceduralism founded on representative constitutional democratic behaviour, along with threats posed by dissidents. Formations that do not conform to the particular model with which the CPF works become illegitimate.

Exploring further the fears feeding this appropriation of the ideally neutral form of ethical participation and political subjectivity, it became clear that it was not only informed by fear of the ‘unruliness of mob justice’ of the 1980s, but also by the wider semantic universe of ‘third forces’, ‘concerned residents’ or merely opposition to the ANC. The decoding of apparently innocent signs as opposition to the CPF, such as the release of captured criminals by the police or criminals, made all opposition illegitimate. I suggest that for local CPF and ANC leaders the double-sided danger that vigilantism represents both historically and currently – ‘counter-revolutionary’ reactionary forces and uncontrollable youth – has to a large extent structured the attitude of local state representatives to local justice enforcement. It is therefore worth exploring further how this vernacular semantic universe contributes to the radicalisation of opposition, which allows and justifies the state in employing far more drastic measures against its opponents.

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Endnotes

1. The first part of the following section has appeared elsewhere (Buur, 2003; Buur and Jensen 2004; Buur 2005) in slightly different forms. The versions complement and develop each other.

2. It stands for the United Democratic Front.

3. While UDF leaders later emphasised that it was not an official campaign of theirs, they also acknowledged that the campaign appeared in publications and public speeches by UDF leaders (TRC Volume 2, 1998:303).

5. Neckling, or burning someone alive with a tyre around the body, is widely associated with people's justice. Police statistics indicate that there were around 700 to 800 people necklaced or burnt to death in the period from 1985 to the end of 1989 (see TRC Final Report 1998).

6. Askaris were former MK operatives who were caught and forced through torture to betray their former activist comrades and work for the security police. Thus because they were technically traitors they were regarded with hatred and contempt and considered the lowest of the low, by both sides.


8. The AmaAfrika shared many of the characteristics of conservative vigilante groups elsewhere, but were perceived to have an ideological basis in Steven Biko’s Black Consciousness Movement, or ‘Afrikanism’, which formed the ideological underpinnings of the PAC and AZAPO.

9. Umkhonto we Sizwe (isiXhosa for ‘The Spear of the Nation’), the ANC’s military wing during the war of liberation.

Bibliographic Note


Too often macroeconomic trends and long term growth prospects are considered in isolation from the very real effect of the physical, social and economic structures. This is particularly so in the case of Angola as its huge flows of revenue from mineral exports collide with the legacy of external debt. However, the interaction of the overarching macro trends with existing political and regional divisions magnifies the difficulties of resolving either the economic or the political problems that have prevented progress for several decades. This paper discusses the ways in which the political divides that have existed for centuries not only remain important even in the post-colonial era, but interact with macroeconomic trends to generate a path of growth and development that is unique to Angola. It is argued that a long term political accommodation involving a solution to Angola’s internal political tensions requires addressing all of these issues simultaneously since they all contribute to the current problems and line up precisely the same groups in opposition to each other. These ‘axes of polarisation’ include coastal vs. interior, rural vs. urban/industrial, Mbundu/mestiço vs. Ovimbundu and MPLA vs. UNITA. This discussion proposes a way to overcome these problems and achieve sustained long-term growth.

It is almost inevitable that any evaluation of Angolan prospects for long term growth and development will focus first and foremost on oil and to a lesser extent diamonds. The reasons for this are obvious: the extent of oil dependence in Angola is extreme. In fact, it is well beyond that of almost all other oil exporting countries, and is well beyond that of any other oil exporter in Africa (see Table 1 over). This, together with the glaringly obvious economic distortions that come from the high levels of oil-funded spending, makes it superficially attractive to attribute to oil the primary causal role not only in Angola’s short run economic problems, but also in its long term growth and development prospects as well.1

While it would be silly to deny that oil (and to a lesser extent, diamonds) plays a dominant role in the country’s macroeconomy, it is also true that this income, when viewed in a longer historical perspective, can be seen as reinforcing regional and political divisions some of which have been evident since the earliest days of Portuguese conquest and colonisation. These historical features of the Angolan political and economic landscape have interacted with the oil syndrome in a way which has resulted in a more pronounced case of oil-induced economic distortions than would otherwise have resulted, and also in a far more vicious and destructive
civil conflict than might otherwise have occurred. However, in perspective it is these underlying structural characteristics which will remain a fixture in the Angolan context – not the oil and diamond income. Even the most optimistic projections of revenue from these sources see a peak and eventual decline over the next two decades.²

It is important to be clear: it would be a mistake to try to understand Angola’s economy and future prospects without taking into account the interplay of oil-caused distortions with other important features of the Angolan economic and political landscape. As will be discussed in more detail below, large flows of mineral income are important not simply because they represent a large prize to be fought over. In addition, the fact that such large sums of foreign exchange are injected into the economy by whoever wins them causes pervasive macroeconomic distortions that interact with pre-existing structures in a mutually reinforcing way.³ However, to argue that mineral income from oil and diamonds constitute the basic framework through which Angolan political economy must be viewed even in the long run would be equally mistaken given that oil, though it will last for years to come, will not last forever, while structural characteristics based on geography and natural resource endowments in addition to long-standing ethnic divisions will remain in place indefinitely.

Students of the Angolan agony of the 1980s and 1990s cannot help but conclude that a substantial share of the blame for the constant relapse into war and destruction lies in a simple power struggle over oil and diamonds.⁴ Additionally, there is also the issue of the personal quest for power on the part of Jonas Savimbi and the personality cult that was cultivated in the party and the areas it controlled. However, it is likely that even if the ‘one bullet solution’ that some advocated to end Savimbi’s career had been implemented successfully during the 1990s, there would have been no lack of candidates to succeed him. During that period, UNITA controlled an estimated $380 million a year of diamond income⁵ and was the primary political party of the millions of Ovimbundu who comprise nearly one-third of the Angolan population. Indeed, although UNITA is clearly much weakened following Savimbi’s death and the achievement of peace, there are numerous aspirants to his role as leader and spokesman for the Ovimbundu people.

Thus, it is very difficult to separate the current conflict from oil and diamond money and it is not the intent of this paper to try. Rather, it is argued here that any long run view of the future evolution of Angolan politics and economic growth must take into

| Table 1: Oil Dependence of Selected Developing Countries* |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Country** | **Non-renewable Resource Revenue as % of Total Government Revenue** | **Non-renewable Resource Exports as % of GDP** |
| Chile     | 8.6             | 10.1            |
| Kuwait    | 59.3            | 39.7            |
| Norway    | 14.4            | 12.1            |
| Oman      | 77.3            | 35.9            |
| Papua New Guinea | 11.4 | 27.9 |
| Saudi Arabia | 28.7 | 39.2 |
| Venezuela | 58.2**          | 19.1            |
| Angola    | 84.0***         | 48.5***         |

account the economic distortions caused by these resources which include the political power struggle that it engenders: pitting those with access to mineral income against those without. That this opposition of interests would cause political or physical conflict is obvious and has been the basic issue facing Angola since independence in 1975. But Angola also has additional and pre-existing political and economic fault lines which, rather than being cross-cutting as in many other countries, fall along precisely the same lines in Angola, thus reinforcing each other rather than providing for alternative patterns of conflict or coalition. And it is these that will condition political and economic development in the long run rather than the perhaps more acute polarisations arising from oil and diamond income at the present time.

Even if the problems of disposing of mineral wealth are dealt with (or the oil runs out eventually) the pre-existing historical animosities and tensions that exist in the country will remain, and will have to be dealt with at the same time if a truly equitable and sustainable political accommodation is to be found. To deal with only one of the dimensions of the current polarised situation is a recipe for failure since the remaining tensions will tend to reignite the conflict (at least in political terms) if they are not also addressed. Angola is not unique in having historical tensions and dichotomies. Other countries around the world and in sub-Saharan Africa suffer from many of the same issues to a greater or lesser degree. However, what is striking in the Angolan case is that these pre-existing divisions are all aligned in such a way as to cause the polarising forces to line up precisely the same groups in opposition to each other over each of these issues.

The most obvious of these divisions is that between the people on the coast and those in the interior. In the simplest geographical sense, those who control access to foreign markets exercise, in any country, economic power over those in the interior. In the Angolan case, this power resides in coastal cities, particularly Luanda and Benguela, through which foreign trade occurs.

The second ‘axis’ of polarisation is that between agricultural populations and urban/industrial populations. This is a division that has analogues in virtually every country that has undergone economic structural transformation from a low income and predominantly agricultural economy to a high income industrialised one. In the United States, for example, this tension was exemplified in the late 19th century by William Jennings Bryan and the Populist movement, which based itself primarily in agricultural areas of the midwest, in opposition to Eastern urban industrial interests. In Angola, a similar division exists, and is aligned so as to place in opposition the same people who find themselves on opposite sides of the port/interior dichotomy above.

The third division is ethnic: the inland Ovimbundu planalto vs. the mainly Mbundu and mixed blood urban industrial elites. As in many parts of Africa, ethnic allegiances and identities are often more important than national ones, and this is as true in Angola as it is elsewhere. Both groups are linguistically and culturally distinct from each other, and often view themselves as historically opposed, as indeed has been the case for centuries. As in the above two axes of tension, this one lines up in precisely the same geographical and economic manner, thus providing yet another mutually reinforcing support to the overall nexus.

It should come as no surprise that internal political alignments reflect the three dichotomies above. Indeed UNITA has long had its base in the agricultural
heartland of the country, the mainly Ovimbundu areas of the central highlands while the MPLA has as its primary base of support the urban/industrial areas of the coast. However, this divide has been exacerbated by the superimposition of geopolitics – UNITA had been for many years supported by the United States and South Africa, while the MPLA with its avowedly Marxist origins, was supported by the USSR and its proxy, Cuba. It is clear that oil has played a major role in the importance assigned to this particular internal conflict in the eyes of the superpowers – other sub-Saharan African countries without oil have not merited anything like the level of attention and support accorded Angola even though many have had similar political dynamics at work.

Recognition of the importance of geopolitical concerns has been evident in the scholarly literature on Angola, particularly in such studies as Power (2001), Malaquias (2001), Frynas and Wood (2001), Cilliers and Dietrich (2000) and Hodges (2001 and 2004). All of these writers emphasise the related nature of what has been dubbed ‘petro-diamond capitalism’ and the politics of the Angolan situation. Even though these external geopolitical tensions have abated with the end of the Soviet era and of the apartheid regime in South Africa, the internal political dynamics engendered by them continue to be important. Both the MPLA and UNITA remain influenced by their respective pasts and although UNITA has yet to pose a serious threat to MPLA dominance it is inevitable that it will gradually recover from the near total defeat suffered in 2002.

However, often there is gap between the literature cited above which explicitly analyses the links between mineral income and political conflict and the more technically oriented work typical of international financial organisations which emphasise the policy implications of large oil revenue in terms of maintaining economic stability. This literature (see, for example, World Bank 2004a and 2004b, Davis, Ossowski & Fedelino 2003, or IMF 2004), takes as its point of embarkation the role of oil and diamond revenue in producing macroeconomic distortions seen in many resource exporting countries and typically labeled ‘Dutch Disease’ or the ‘resource curse’.

The real exchange rate appreciation and other macroeconomic problems associated with this syndrome are indeed evident in Angola. Together with the enclave nature of offshore oil production, they serve to make each of the underlying dimensions of polarisation more contentious than they would naturally be (not to deemphasise how bad that can get – civil wars are routinely fought over such issues). In short, these distortions tend to penalise sectors that produce ‘traded’ commodities (for instance, the agricultural areas of the interior) and to reward those which can control the revenue streams generated (i.e. the urban areas and the central government apparatus). But it is the contention of this paper that oil and diamond income is not the underlying cause of these tensions but rather is a transient (at least in historical terms) factor which serves to sharpen them and make them more contentious rather than fundamentally changing their nature or their role in long run trends. It is also the case that attempts to implement policies to address the ‘resource curse’ syndrome must also address the underlying divisions and axes of polarisation since these issues involve the same groups as do issues of resource allocation and investment priorities with which short and medium term macroeconomic policy is concerned.

The next section discusses Angola’s recent macroeconomic trends together with a brief summary of the distortions that occur in oil exporting countries and how this
syndrome has manifested itself in Angola. This is followed by a discussion of each of the four dimensions of polarisation noted above: port vs. interior, rural/agricultural vs. urban/industrial, Mbundu vs. Ovimbundu and MPLA vs. UNITA. I will also discuss the intersection of these with oil-induced distortions and the prospects for a sustainable growth strategy.

Macro Trends & the Angolan Economy

This section first provides a brief overview of the Angolan economy highlighting the role of mineral income and international debt during the decades of civil conflict that have followed independence. The second part of this section builds on this discussion to discuss the major policy options open to the government for promoting growth and development now that a resolution to the conflict has been achieved.

Prior to independence in 1975, Angola was better known as a coffee exporter than as an oil exporter. Agriculture in general was the base of the Angolan economy, and food crops as well as cash crops played an important role in the country’s domestic economy as well as in its balance of payments. Angola was not only the world’s fourth largest coffee exporter, but also exported over 400,000 MT of maize annually, making it one of the largest staple food exporters in sub-Saharan Africa. Oil, while having been discovered prior to independence, had not yet achieved the high production levels that would be seen in the 1980s and thereafter.

The massive inflow of oil receipts since then has come to dominate not only Angola’s exports, but also the finances of the central government which is nearly completely dependent upon oil receipts and oil-backed loans for revenue. GDP growth in Angola is similarly dependent on oil, with increases in production and/or international prices dominating what growth has been achieved in recent years. The stagnation of the remainder of the economy, which is primarily agricultural and employs the majority of the population, has been largely unchanged throughout the past two decades. The result is that Angola’s exports of both of its major pre-oil export crops – maize and coffee – are now nearly zero.

The enclave nature of oil production is especially pronounced in Angola, where oil literally never touches the territory of the country apart from the Province of Cabinda which is separated from the bulk of the country by Congo. Offshore production is increasing with additional exploration continuing in order to expand output substantially over the next few years with production expected to expand from a current level of approximately 1 million barrels/day to more than double that within the next five years. Virtually all inputs used in production are imported by the concessionaires, including the majority of oil company workers.

The production enclave is matched by a consumption enclave. Oil receipts are used primarily to service foreign debt and to support the government budget which is expended mainly on defence, debt servicing and maintenance of the central government apparatus in Luanda. The resulting boom in spending has resulted in a highly inflationary economy in Luanda in which many of the traditional links to productive areas in the interior have been broken. In effect, Angola has two economies: one reliant on imports financed by oil receipts, while the bulk of the population lives in abject poverty divorced from the formal economy. In spite of the fact that most of the windfall has been spent on imports and has not directly affected the real exchange rate, enough of the additional demand has fallen on non-traded sectors to create a chronic problem of overvaluation which has proven particularly
hard to deal with given the difficulties in reestablishing domestic productive capacity. Indeed, the degree of overvaluation of the exchange rate has become increasingly severe over the past several years. Essentially, the level of inflation inside the country has far outpaced the rate of depreciation of the Kwanza. As a result, those who produce goods which must compete with imports, such as small farmers producing maize in the interior, face prices of inputs and consumption goods which grow faster (due to inflation) than does the price of what they sell (as cheap imports due to the overvalued exchange rate hold down the price). The resulting profit squeeze threatens to put them out of business entirely. Indeed, this is precisely what happened in Nigeria in the 1980s as their oil driven exchange rate appreciation caused Africa’s largest agricultural exporter to become its largest importer. Figure 1 shows the extent of depreciation in Angola since 1999. The present level of the index, 51, indicates that producers in trade exposed sectors such as agriculture are now facing prices about half what they were only three years earlier relative to domestic price levels.

Government expenditures have exceeded oil receipts, due both to large military expenditures necessitated by the war and more recently by the military expeditions sent to support factions in the conflicts in the two Congos, and the need to make payments on the external debt, which stood at approximately $10.9 billion by the end of 2003. At present, a substantial part of oil production is devoted to servicing debt, although there are more new fields scheduled to enter into production in the near future. While in the short term it will avoid a crisis by allowing financing gaps to be covered, in the long term it will merely postpone the inevitable adjustment at which time the gaps will be larger, the imbalances more severe, and the debt larger.

The government has periodically announced reform programmes designed to end the periods of hyperinflation that have plagued the country since the beginning of the 1990s. Unfortunately, none of these has proved successful for a sustained period of time, with control measures which are capable of repressing inflation for a time
but which do not address underlying problems of fiscal imbalance and money creation to finance the resulting deficit. This pattern has continued to the present, with the most recent IMF public statement on Angola hailing a decline in inflation to ‘less than 50 per cent’ in July of 2004. However, even this has only been possible at the cost of substantial arrears in government payments to workers and has still left the government deficit at 7 per cent of GDP.\(^7\) Tables 2-5 show the evolution of the Angolan economy over recent years, illustrating some of the extreme dislocations that have recurred during that time.

Relations with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have been important to Angola though the relationship is not entirely analogous to those between these institutions and other African countries. Angolan elites have their own source of hard currency income from mineral exports and so are not dependent on World Bank or IMF approval to maintain their positions or lifestyles. They have the option of simply refusing to go along with policy prescriptions from outside, a position which has been reinforced by the MPLA’s military victory over UNITA. This victory was won without the need for the concessions and compromises which inevitably accompany negotiated settlements.

Nevertheless, the MPLA is currently making strong efforts to come to terms with the IMF. Doing so involves two major actions: first, an end to corruption through better accounting and control of oil and diamond revenue (usually labeled ‘transparency’ by the international institutions) and second, an end to rampant inflation. Here the IMF prescription is for greater fiscal control which the Angolans have yet to truly achieve. Instead, they have reduced inflation by buying up excess domestic currency with oil revenues. This reduces inflation but contributes to the exchange rate appreciation at the root of the ‘resource curse’.

Table 6 (p. 279) shows recent trade figures in which oil accounts for 90 per cent or more of exports. In terms of imports, food and other consumer goods have grown to a dominant position, squeezing out imports of intermediate and capital goods which previously were the dominant import items. Overall, the merchandise trade balance shows a large surplus due to the large exports of oil. In spite of this large positive merchandise trade balance, the balance on the current account has been negative in every year from 1987 to 2000 – largely due to the large payments to oil companies and for interest on the foreign debt. Since 2000 increasing oil revenue has allowed the deficit to be substantially lessened, even producing a surplus in some years.

### Table 2: Estimate of Angolan Public Expenditure Compared to Lower Mid-income countries 2002 (% GDP)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower mid-income</th>
<th>Angola</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General government expenditure</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>24.1*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumption sub-total</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public investment</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>47.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank (2002); IMF (2004); Note: * = estimated as the residual after deducting all other measured public spending from total public spending.
Though it is argued in this paper that oil income and its effects are not the most fundamental aspects of long term growth, it is nevertheless true that from the point of view of policy makers, the problems associated with managing oil revenues loom large. Indeed, the interplay of oil revenue and international debt are the two most dominant issues in medium term economic management discussions at the present time. At the most general level, there are two main issues involved with this income: how fast to exploit the various mineral resources and how to spend the money.

With regard to the first issue, there is extensive literature on the dangers of excessively rapid exploitation of oil reserves and expenditure of funds in ways that do not contribute to long term growth and welfare. In particular, Gelb et al. (1988) have shown in numerous case studies, including several directly relevant to the Angolan case, that the distortions which result from large expenditures in the short term can, in the end, leave a country worse off than it was in the beginning. Given Angola’s markedly greater dependence on these revenues than any of the countries whose experience forms the basis for these observations, there is good reason for caution.

Essentially, the issue is this: large inflows of foreign exchange have the potential to generate highly undesirable effects on the domestic structure of production and consumption due to the short run incentives to capture the large rents available. Distortions in the domestic economy can be avoided if the foreign exchange bonanza is spent on imports rather than domestically produced goods and services. In the Angolan case, this is what has for the most part been occurring to date on both the input side of oil production and on the expenditure side once receipts have been received. Even so, a substantial amount of the demand created by the oil windfall has fallen on non-traded goods, particularly in urban areas, where services and housing account for a large share of expenditures by the rich.

However, if we step back from the details of real exchange rate appreciation (real though these problems are), it is evident that these distortions have not caused, but have rather reinforced, the rural-urban tensions that were already inherent in the Angolan situation. Most important, the effects of the civil conflict resulted in de facto isolation of large parts of the countryside. The fact that urban elites could more easily live with this situation by relying on oil revenue no doubt is a contributing factor but does not alter the clearly primary role of the war in the decline and stagnation of the country’s farm-based economic sectors. In addition, it is also important to note that the process of decolonisation itself played an important role, given the departure of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Angola, Fiscal activity 2001-2003 (% GDP)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oil taxation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-oil taxation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-tax revenue</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goods + services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest payments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital expenditure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiscal deficit</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Derived from World Bank (2004a).
most Portuguese planters and virtually the entire rural marketing system in the colonial exodus of 1975. This resulted in a very real disarticulation of the rural and urban economies and a vacuum in terms of physical circulation of both goods and people that continues to be evident to this day.

In terms of government expenditure, there is a tendency towards the ‘normal’ Dutch Disease pattern of high levels of expenditures on labour services, but this is not primarily a product of bloated government wage bills as is the case in some other countries. Though the government labour force is clearly larger than warranted given the large numbers of bureaucrats who work part time, the vast majority of these functionaries are so underpaid that salaries in fact constitute a relatively small share of the government budget compared to other countries at a comparable level of income (see Ministerio da Administração Publica, 2001). Insofar as there is greater expenditure on services in urban centres such as Luanda, this has occurred via the personal consumption decisions of those segments of society benefitting from the bulk of the oil revenue. In addition, it is also important to bear in mind the large military establishments maintained by both sides during the civil conflict of the past years.

What this means in terms of the internal and external structure of the Angolan economy is that the balance of payments has remained severely in deficit while pressures on the real exchange rate have been far less than would be the case if some of the oil funded demand had fallen on domestic production. Even so, it is clear even to a casual empirical observer of the urban economy in Luanda and other cities, that prices are quite high by international standards. Even at black market exchange rates, Luanda is a very expensive city comparable to large cities in Europe and North America, which is a testament to the high levels of demand resulting from mineral income.

If one of the basic problems is the inability of the economy to absorb the large sums of money spent in the short run without detrimental distortions, then one possible solution would be to save some of the money offshore, or to simply pump the oil out at a slower rate. The first option is one that has not been achieved with any great degree of success by any oil exporting country to date. There are simply too many pressures on the government officials – both personally and in their official capacities – to spend the money when it becomes available. Even so, the government can achieve much the same effect by using revenues to pay off past foreign debt to the extent possible. So far, this has not occurred, both because of political issues surrounding debt repayment and because the government has in fact been

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Per Capita Gross National Income, Foreign Debt &amp; Debt Service, Angola &amp; Comparators, 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population (million)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCGNI (Nominal US$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCGNI (PPP US$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total external debt ($ billion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt/GNI ratio (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debt service/export earnings (%)</td>
</tr>
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## Table 5 Angola: GDP Growth, Scale of Oil Rent & Structure of Economy, 1985-2002

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<tr>
<td>PCGDP (1999 PPP$)</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>624</td>
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<td>GDP growth (%/yr)</td>
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<td>7.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
<td>-24.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<td>Agriculture (% GDP)</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
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<td>5.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>64.4</td>
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<td>72.8</td>
<td>66.8</td>
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<td>Manufacturing</td>
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<td>10.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oil Rent (% GDP)</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oil output (000 bbl/d)</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>970</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crop output index</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>204</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank (2004a); World Bank (2004b); BP (2004); 1. 1990-91 = 100
Table 6: Angola: Balance of Payments 1998-2004
(in millions of dollars unless otherwise stated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current account</strong></td>
<td>-1,867</td>
<td>-1,710</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>-1,431</td>
<td>-150</td>
<td>-719</td>
<td>1,450</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trade balance</strong></td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>2,047</td>
<td>4,881</td>
<td>3,355</td>
<td>4,568</td>
<td>4,028</td>
<td>7,239</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exports, f.o.b.</td>
<td>3,543</td>
<td>5,157</td>
<td>7,921</td>
<td>6,534</td>
<td>8,328</td>
<td>9,508</td>
<td>13,971</td>
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<td>Crude oil</td>
<td>3,091</td>
<td>4,491</td>
<td>7,120</td>
<td>5,803</td>
<td>7,539</td>
<td>8,537</td>
<td>12,904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diamonds</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports, f.o.b.</td>
<td>-2,079</td>
<td>-3,109</td>
<td>-3,040</td>
<td>-3,179</td>
<td>-3,760</td>
<td>-5,480</td>
<td>-6,732</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Services (net)</strong></td>
<td>-2,514</td>
<td>-2,442</td>
<td>-2,432</td>
<td>-3,316</td>
<td>-3,115</td>
<td>-3,120</td>
<td>-3,566</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receipts</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>221</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income (net)</td>
<td>-969</td>
<td>-1,372</td>
<td>-1,681</td>
<td>-1,561</td>
<td>-1,635</td>
<td>-1,726</td>
<td>-2,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which: Interest due 1</td>
<td>-504</td>
<td>-569</td>
<td>-597</td>
<td>-539</td>
<td>-354</td>
<td>-268</td>
<td>-339</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current transfers (net)</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial &amp; capital acct</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>1,664</td>
<td>-450</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>-508</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>1,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital transfers (net)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct investments (net)</td>
<td>1,114</td>
<td>2,472</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>2,146</td>
<td>1,643</td>
<td>1,652</td>
<td>677</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium- and long-term loans</td>
<td>-974</td>
<td>-291</td>
<td>-766</td>
<td>-618</td>
<td>-393</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>1,303</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disbursements</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>1,501</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>1,048</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>2,414</td>
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<td>Amortizations</td>
<td>-1,567</td>
<td>-1,791</td>
<td>-2,376</td>
<td>-2,237</td>
<td>-1,441</td>
<td>-1,592</td>
<td>-1,110</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Capital</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>-524</td>
<td>-580</td>
<td>-577</td>
<td>-1,758</td>
<td>-1,016</td>
<td>-757</td>
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<tr>
<td>(net incl. E+0 2002-04)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net errors &amp; omissions</strong></td>
<td>377</td>
<td>-80</td>
<td>-51</td>
<td>-365</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall balance</strong></td>
<td>-1,186</td>
<td>-126</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>-842</td>
<td>-658</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>2,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net international reserves</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>-530</td>
<td>-631</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>-301</td>
<td>-817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(net incl. E+0 2002-04)</td>
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<td><strong>Memorandum items:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Current account (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>-29.0</td>
<td>-28.1</td>
<td>-21.0</td>
<td>-15.1</td>
<td>-15.4</td>
<td>-14.4</td>
<td>-5.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exports of goods &amp; services (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports of goods &amp; services (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>51.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debt service ratio²</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross international resources (end of period)</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>1,198</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>1,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in months of imports of goods &amp; services³</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in months of debt service³</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Banco Nacional de Angola; 1. Including late interest from 1999 onwards. 2. Medium- and long-term debt service due in percent of exports of goods and services. 3. In months of next year’s imports or medium- and long-term debt service. In 2002, using current year’s data.
dedicating future oil production to servicing current debt obligations to such an extent that most of the revenue has gone to this end.

This leads to the issue of international debt, which is perhaps a more enduring legacy of the current era in Angolan economic development than oil revenue will turn out to be. Current figures indicate that the overall international debt owed by Angola is at a level of approximately $10 billion, a figure that is greater than GDP. Unfortunately, this debt was contracted over a period during which productive investment was virtually impossible and the proceeds of loans were used both to pay the expenses of the continuing internal conflict and to finance the needs of the central government apparatus and the elites who control it.

In fact, one important aspect of the Angolan situation has been the widespread diversion of oil revenue from government control, a subject of much contention between the government and outside observers. It is not the intention of this paper to resolve debates regarding corruption or other related issues, but it is of key importance to note that not only has Angola borrowed large sums of money but its only viable source of revenue for repayment at present is oil revenue. In fact, many loans are explicitly based on oil production and that future production is in effect ‘mortgaged’ to finance future debt service. The result is that much of current revenue is not available for financing development having been already promised to foreign banks or other creditors.

This is an important reason why the present situation offers some opportunities which have not been possible in the past. Given the large new oil fields coming on line now and in the near future, there is a window of opportunity for the government to use the additional windfall to make the adjustments needed to get out of the vicious circle of mortgaging increasing amounts of current production to future debt service. The alternative is to spend the money now and continue the pattern of the past, but at a higher level of debt.

The excessive debt accumulated has rendered the second issue – what to spend the oil money on – something of a moot question for the moment since most of the revenue is simply diverted to debt service to the extent that it is not absorbed by the central government or the party apparatus. Nevertheless, Angola does suffer from the same basic problem afflicting most other oil economies, that of a highly overvalued exchange rate, which has the effect of imposing high implicit costs on those sectors most exposed to international trade, either because they produce export products, or because they face actual or potential import competition. Accordingly, the factors of production employed in these sectors suffer, and to the extent they are able, migrate toward uses in which they can earn greater rewards – in this case the urban centres where oil money is received and spent.

In the Angolan case, it is clear that the hardest hit sector is agriculture, together with associated processing and transforming industries. Angola has historically demonstrated a strong comparative advantage in agriculture – a sector which provides employment and income for the majority of the population. Therefore, from the point of view of both poverty and equity, there is a powerful case to be made to avoid overvaluation to the extent possible to avoid penalising this sector.

Even if exchange rate overvaluation persists to some degree, the strong potential for low cost and efficient production in agriculture suggests a government investment strategy directed toward provision of infrastructure and public goods which can
help lower costs of production in this sector. Obvious candidates are rehabilitation of the country’s transportation system, including roads, ports and railroads, as well as investments in agricultural research and extension. All of this is, of course, predicated on a successful continuation of the peace process and resettlement of rural populations in producing areas. In addition, lack of public services such as water and sanitation, as well as electricity and other utilities, are a serious constraint to industrial investment and rehabilitation. Investment in human capital, especially primary education, is another area where high long-term returns can be gained.

It is important to note, however, that the short and medium term policies alluded to in the previous two paragraphs have an important relationship with the longer run structural characteristics mentioned in the introduction and discussed at greater length in the next section. That is, tensions over how to allocate mineral revenue can be seen as yet another chapter in a long running story of conflict between regions of the country which are divided by much more than medium term economic policy interests.

**Historical Dimensions: from Colonial Times to the Present**

The previous section documents the way in which oil dependence has affected Angola and the nature of the economic imperatives that this generates. This section looks at the four major pre-existing axes of polarisation in Angola: port vs. interior; rural/agricultural vs. urban/industrial; Mbundu vs. Ovimbundu; MPLA vs. UNITA. This last section also discusses the role of external geopolitical influences in reinforcing internal political divisions.

**Port vs. Interior**

In any part of the world, those who control coastal areas and/or ports exercise a degree of control over interior landlocked areas by virtue of their ability to control or charge for access to outside markets. Indeed, major conflicts in world history have revolved around just such access to the sea – one need only look at the centuries-long Russian goal to control the Dardanelles, which constitutes a choke-point for its warm water southern ports, or the long running European debates over the ‘Polish Corridor’ and the status of the port of Gdansk (Danzig). In the developing world, just such considerations motivate the long-term tension between landlocked Bolivia and Chile, which wrested Bolivia’s coastal provinces away in the latter half of the 19th century.

There is a real economic foundation for these conflicts: whoever controls access to outside markets can charge a price for the privilege. That means a markup on every import item transshipped to the interior and a tax on every export item that exits the country through the port. The importance of free access to a port has been shown empirically by Bloom and Sachs (1998) who analysed the growth records of sub-Saharan African countries and found that geographical access to a port was a significant determinant of growth prospects. The same logic applies to landlocked areas within a country, particularly when the country in question is composed of provinces which have some degree of de facto autonomy, or the central government apparatus uses control of ports to generate revenue for its own use.

This is no different in Angola than it is elsewhere, with the major ports of Luanda and Lobito/Benguela playing the most important role, but also to some extent the lesser ports of Namibe, Porto Amboim, Ambriz and others. In colonial times as well
as more recently, the central government (be it Portuguese or Angolan) has explicitly and implicitly taxed both agricultural exports (particularly coffee through the government marketing board) and imports of all descriptions, through tariffs and import quotas.

These direct controls and taxes have been supplemented with indirect methods such as foreign exchange controls which have over various periods been used to deny foreign exchange to disfavoured individuals or activities, surrender requirements which have forced exporters to exchange foreign currency for domestic currency, and exchange rate overvaluation, which penalises exporters and importers who cannot get access to foreign exchange in favour of those who the government chooses to give access to its limited supplies. In Angola this category has most often been comprised of government officials and coastal-based trading, processing and manufacturing activities which have operated to the benefit of coastal people.

Historically, the importance of controlling access to foreign markets first arose after the arrival of the Portuguese in the late 15th century. Prior to this time the most important trading routes in Angola and the Congo Basin in general were overland trade routes to the East rather than seaborne trade, as was the case in other parts of Africa. The arrival of the Portuguese signaled the opening of these areas to international trade. Indeed, this was the entire raison d’etre of the Portuguese colonial project in the first place; efforts to colonise in the 1400s and later were better characterised as efforts to either cart off riches such as gold, ivory and slaves or, if military superiority could not be brought to bear, to trade for these items so that they could be brought back to Lisbon and used to support the expenditures of the crown and of the nobility. Early efforts met with success. The Portuguese succeeded in trading for gold in West Africa (given their inability to conquer the well-organised kingdoms of Mali and Ghana), and were also successful in promoting a large trade in slaves from other parts of Africa, particularly the Congo Basin and Angola, to the islands of São Tomé e Príncipe as well as the Gold Coast and also to Portugal itself.

The earliest records of the Portuguese occupation of Angola bear out the discussion above: conflict between the coast and the interior has been recorded as early as 1506 when the outward-oriented future King Afonso of the Kongo defeated the reigning monarch and initiated a period of active participation in the slave trade which dominated European/Kongo relations throughout the early colonial period. In return, the King received exotic goods and other foreign items which enhanced his prestige and control over his dominions. The rapid growth of the slave trade had terrible consequences for the interior of the country. By the 1560s the hinterland of the coastal slave ports had become so depopulated and weakened that it was relatively easy for invading hordes of primitive and reportedly cannibalistic tribal peoples called Jagas from the east to topple the King and, at least temporarily, put a halt to the previous royal trading structure.

The Portuguese response was to give up the old colonial model of trading through the King and to try to impose their own military control directly with a Portuguese army in control of a restored puppet Kongo monarchy. This was coupled with attempts to control areas to the South of the Kongo Kingdom, that controlled by the ‘Ngola’, which provided a source of slaves which bypassed the export taxes imposed by the Kongo monarchy. This proved more difficult than had been foreseen, and the invading army took months to advance to the mainland from their first landing place on a sandy island just off the coast at Luanda. Even then it was more than 50 years before any progress at all was made in penetrating the interior of the
country – eventually accomplished not as conquerors, but as traders working with coastal allies. This pattern of coastal control by the Portuguese, and domination of external trade with interior regions which they could not control directly was to continue for the next three centuries. It was not until the end of the 1890s and the emphasis on direct control in the scramble for Africa among the various competing European colonial powers that Portugal could be said to have truly ‘occupied’ the Angolan hinterland.

This history bears out the longstanding nature of coast/interior tensions that date back at least to the 1600s, if not earlier. The monopolisation of trade with the exterior by the Portuguese on the coast was a fundamental basis of their ability to expropriate economic surpluses, something that has continued in post-colonial times by the Portuguese speaking coastal elites who have replaced the colonialist Portuguese themselves.

**Rural/Agricultural vs. Urban/Industrial**

In Angola, the coast is not only a gatekeeper as described in the section above, but it is also the location of the major urban/industrial centres, particularly Luanda. The interior is the location of the most productive agricultural areas, particularly the central planalto where the principal grain supplies of the country are (or could potentially be) grown. Even in countries where this alignment of coast with cities/industries and interior with agriculture doesn’t exist there remains the tension of agricultural interests versus urban/industrial ones by virtue of the fact that what one party buys, the other one sells and vice versa. To be specific, urban/industrial interests depend fundamentally on two agricultural outputs:

- Food is the primary determinant of urban/industrial real wages since it constitutes the bulk of expenditures for poor working-class people. Indeed, food prices have often been cited as the most important single determinant of welfare and income distribution in a country;

- Industries, and particularly the early developing light industries of textiles and food processing, need agricultural raw materials as inputs.

Rural/agricultural interests depend on urban/industrial outputs in two ways. First, rural populations buy consumption items that they cannot produce themselves from the manufacturing sector. In all but the most primitive subsistence economies, this will include items such as clothing, fuel, utensils, transportation, etc.

Second, farms that have advanced beyond the earliest self-sufficient shifting cultivation will typically buy inputs and implements from the manufacturing sector, beginning with such items as hoes, scythes and ploughs, but progressing to more complex machinery such as tractors, pumps, etc. In addition, to the extent that fertilisers or other purchases such as pesticides are used, these too will come from the manufacturing sectors.

The position of the central planalto (including the provinces of Huambo, Bie, parts of Benguela, Cuanza Sul and Huila) as the ‘breadbasket’ of Angola is well documented historically, and has been also demonstrated in various analyses of comparative advantage in the country. It is from this area that pre-independence grain export surpluses were taken, and where most of agricultural GDP originates. While there are certainly some agricultural activities that can be pursued in coastal areas, the
generally arid conditions in these areas are a barrier to major agricultural development.

The observation that the principal geographical location of agricultural comparative advantage lies in the interior has a very important corollary: in order to maximise the return to this comparative advantage it will be necessary to invest in this area. While it is not the purpose of this paper to enumerate the investments necessary for Angolan agricultural investment, it is safe to say that the needs (as in any country at a similar level of per capita income) are large and include both on-farm investments that are properly the province of the private sector and large public sector investments such as roads, extension systems and research.

These investment needs have the potential to be contentious since at first blush the money would be going to one area of the country seemingly at the expense of the other. However, the experience of many other countries has demonstrated that to attempt to pursue industrialisation without investing in increased agricultural productivity is a self-limiting strategy. As the urban/industrial need for agricultural outputs grows, the agricultural sector must be able to keep pace since the alternatives are either higher agricultural prices and stagnation or else ever increasing imports to supply what domestic producers cannot. Thus, investment in agriculture is a prerequisite for success for all regions, and not just the agricultural sector alone.

Tension between agricultural interests and urban/industrial interests are part and parcel of the politics of countries transitioning from low to high per capita income. Every country which has undergone the structural transformation involved has confronted these issues, including those countries which are currently classified as ‘developed’. Examples include the period in Britain when the ‘Corn Laws’ were debated by David Ricardo and others, or the United States during the populist era when William Jennings Bryan, representing agricultural interests and campaigned on his famous slogan: ‘Don’t crucify us on a cross of gold’.

Both of these examples reflect the tension over rural/urban terms of trade and issues of national policy which pit one set of interests against the other. They are inevitable when a country moves from a low income, predominantly agricultural economy with 75 per cent or more of the labour force located on farms, to a higher income, predominantly urban economy with 25 per cent or less of the population on farms. In Angola, these natural tensions are exacerbated because the agricultural interests are at the same time located in the interior, while the urban/industrial interests are primarily located on the coast – particularly in Luanda. In addition, these agricultural interests are also aligned with one of the main ethnic divides in Angola, which is the topic of the next section.

Mbundu/Mestiço vs. Ovimbundu

The ethnic composition of Angola is, as is often the case in Africa, quite heterogeneous, which includes several major and distinct ethno-linguistic groups. Figure 2 shows the major divisions in the country where it can be seen that the largest single group is the Ovimbundu, a primarily agricultural people occupying much of the central planalto. As was the case with most of the interior peoples of Angola, the Ovimbundu only came under explicit Portuguese domination in the waning years of the 19th century.
The Mbundu, in contrast, were the only main ethnic group in Angola that came under direct Portuguese control from a very early date. This has resulted in this ethnicity being far more urbanised and also far more likely to speak Portuguese than are other groups in the country. In fact, it has recently been estimated that only 15 per cent of the Angolan population speak Kimbundu as their mother tongue, in spite of the fact that Mbundu account for nearly one-quarter of the total population. Indeed, a growing number of Mbundu are now monolingual in Portuguese and have no native speaking ability in their own or other African languages. Over the past 20 years this tendency has become quite pronounced in Luanda among all peoples and not just among Mbundu as the city has become increasingly populated with people who are monolingual in Portuguese.

This is also true of the large mixed-blood mestiço population that is located in Luanda and is, along with many Mbundu, a dominant force in the MPLA (see below). This has been one of the (sometimes only implied) basis for the frequent UNITA calls for ‘Africanisation’ of the government. UNITA is very much an Ovimbundu organisation, and though it has not explicitly identified itself as such, it has always been nearly 100 per cent Ovimbundu in terms of its leadership. It has also made use of its close identification with the Ovimbundu people by making its long time ‘capital’ in Bailundo, the seat of the largest of the Ovimbundu kingdoms that survived through the 19th century.

Evidence of the close association of UNITA with the Ovimbundu population can be seen in the voting of 1992 where UNITA won the presidential race by more than 80 per cent in its three ‘home’ provinces of Bie, Huambo and Benguela (which include the ‘breadbasket’ interior agricultural areas of the planalto), but failed to outpoll the MPLA in any other province except sparsely populated Cuando Cubango. In contrast, the MPLA had a similarly lopsided margin of victory in its own ‘home’ turf of Luanda, Bengo, Kuanza Norte and Malange, but also polled strongly in other areas as well.

It has been reported that in the violence following the 1992 election, there were overt ethnic elements in the fighting in Luanda itself, with Ovimbundu people singled out as UNITA supporters by the dominant Mbundu and mixed blood population of the city. While such ethnic violence is rather the exception in Angola (in marked contrast to such obvious examples as Rwanda or Zimbabwe) this example does show that there is potential for such problems in the future, particularly if people are confronted with stressful or difficult situations.

It is evident that the Ovimbundu/Mbundu divide lines up quite closely with both the port/interior and the agricultural/urban-industrial divides. The
one possible exception to this is the fact that the province of Benguela, which is
predominantly Ovimbundu, includes the major port of Lobito-Benguela. However,
throughout much of the conflict of the past decades the MPLA has controlled the
ports and the coastal areas, though it has never been able to extend its control very
far inland. Thus, the mutually reinforcing nature of these various polarisations
remains clear.

MPLA vs. UNITA & the Geopolitical Influence from Outside
Perhaps the best-documented ‘axis of polarisation’ is that between the MPLA,
historically a Marxist client party of the USSR and its allies, and UNITA, long a
client of the US, South Africa and their allies. The interest of superpowers in Angola
during the post-independence period was far keener than in most other African
countries largely due to the fact of Angola’s large oil reserves. Indeed, both the USSR
and the US took a direct interest in developments (see Shubin and Tokarev, 2001 for
a discussion of the role of the USSR in Angola) though actual fighting was of course
done through proxies. On closer inspection, however, this axis may well be artificial
to some extent, though it is (or at least has been) no less real for having been fueled by
external considerations.

The MPLA is today no longer an avowedly Marxist party, though its command and
control tendencies continue to influence the economic policies of the government.
That these tendencies may have more to do with self-interest desires to control
mineral income than with any real ideological basis is shown by the relatively
seamless transition from ‘Marxism’ to ‘free market capitalism’ in the 1990s, a
transition that was marked less by fundamental economic change than by
fundamental change in political alignments with the US and other large Western
powers. While there are no doubt legitimate roots to the MPLA’s original Marxist
character, it is also true that in fomenting rebellion against a NATO member,
Portugal, the MPLA placed itself firmly on the ‘wrong’ side of the great geopolitical
divide of the time. That this was more a marriage of convenience than conviction is
shown by the fact that the MPLA did not hesitate to use capitalist oil companies to
extract its oil, nor did it seriously alter its basic outlook when it switched sides
thereafter.

UNITA has an even more opportunistic history, as its leader shifted from a one-time
alliance with communist China to a more lasting alignment with the US and South
Africa as it became entrenched as the principal opposition to the MPLA in the 1970s.
While paying lip service to free market doctrine, it engaged in even stricter control of
subject populations than did the MPLA, and can hardly be seen as an exemplar of
democratic or liberal economic principles.

Nevertheless, the fact that these ideological splits, however convenient, did exist
provided a basis for geopolitical interference that was at its roots, fueled by the desire
to control oil and diamond sources and to deny them to the other side. This
consideration has led to a level of superpower interest in the Angolan conflict that
has been absent from other African civil wars. Indeed, it has been argued by
Munslow (1999) that this interest has been responsible for the international
community’s inability to reach consensus on a way out of the Angolan impasse.22

Entirely apart from ideological or geopolitical concerns, the political issues inherent
in the MPLA/UNITA split are fundamental to any long-term resolution to the
Angolan conflict. First is the problem of maintaining a viable democracy as urged by
outside powers, in a situation where the two main parties have a strong regional base. Any victory at the national level by one side or the other runs the danger of being seen by the loser as a ‘conquest’ as much as an electoral loss. Indeed, given the mutually opposing economic interests outlined above, it is likely that simple majority rule at the national level will result in conflict if the winner is seen to be maximising its own economic interests.

Such a situation would seem to support the notion that some sort of federal system, where a great deal of power is devolved to the provincial level, would be one possible recipe for a peaceful resolution. Indeed, recent government moves toward decentralisation are precisely in line with this observation. However, there are two main problems with this: first is the historical tradition of a unified state under strong central control that is an historical legacy from colonial times and which has been adhered to by both political parties ever since. There is no tradition of power sharing or a division of power in Angola and no political culture of accommodations on which to build. The reluctance of central authorities to cede budgetary authority to lower levels even while promoting decentralisation is evidence of the difficulty of such change. Second is the fact that the main prize in the political competition – the billions of dollars of annual mineral income – is not easily divided territorially. In fact, neither the oil, which is located mostly offshore, nor the diamonds, which are located primarily in the northeast provinces of the Lundas, are physically located in the ‘home turf’ of either political party.

To date, the oil income has been a de facto prize of the ruling elite. Rather than being used to develop particular parts of the economy, it has been used to support the activities of the elite in Luanda since economic activity in the countryside was largely impossible in any case due to the long armed conflict. The need to develop a real sectoral and regional development plan is therefore the political problem of the new era in Angola, and is the subject of the next section.

**The Interaction of Macro Trends with Axes of Polarisation:**

**Future Policy**

This section first discusses how the current economic situation in Angola lines up with the axes of polarisation discussed in the previous section. Second is a discussion of the political realities of reaching a viable solution, both in terms of the regional accommodation that would be required, and the need for ruling elites to be willing to acquiesce in a fundamental change in the current situation.

**The Current Economic Situation & the Axes of Polarisation**

Over the next decade, there are two important areas of potential problems in achieving a national consensus on a macro strategy for growth and development. The first is the issue of mineral rents from oil, diamonds and other sources, and the decision as to how and when to spend the income. The second is the difference in economic interests between agricultural regions and urban populations. However, on closer inspection it is apparent that these are really just different facets of the same issue.

Given the current macro trends of growth in mineral sectors and stagnation in trade exposed sectors such as agriculture, the standard prescription for addressing this problem is to invest in stagnating areas so as to prevent them from withering away.
The underlying rationale is clear: if Angola is not to place all of its eggs in one (oil) basket, then it is essential that it retain its ability to produce in those other sectors which historically have provided it with the bulk of its exports since these same sectors will constitute the main economic fall back if and when oil revenues decline in the future. In Angola it is obvious that these sectors are found in agriculture and related processing activities.

Additional benefits from such an agriculturally driven investment strategy would be found in the areas of income distribution and poverty alleviation. Development of rural areas would at the same time promote income growth for the poorest segments of Angolan society, discourage urban migration, and help to reduce and eventually eliminate the huge food import bills currently incurred by the large coastal population centres. Unfortunately, it is precisely these characteristics which present some of the biggest potential obstacles to implementation of this plan.

The problem is this: if an agricultural investment strategy is to be successful, then it must focus on the areas of highest agricultural potential, i.e. the agricultural breadbasket of the central planalto, which is at one and the same time an interior agricultural region whose core is the homeland of the Ovimbundu people and the centre of UNITA support. In short, this strategy would require the MPLA to focus investment directly on their erstwhile opponents rather than on their own supporters, who live in areas which are largely much less favourable in agroclimatic terms than is the central planalto. Indeed, the coastal regions where MPLA control has been strongest are precisely the areas with the least agricultural potential, having insufficient rainfall to support large-scale rainfed agriculture. An enlightened view of the growth and development prospects for the country might help promote such a strategy. In fact, a concerted programme of assistance to the UNITA areas may well be the single most important facet of a true plan for national reconciliation, in addition to having positive benefits for urban areas as well since a resurgent agricultural sector would go far toward lowering food prices throughout the country.

It is perhaps a truism that in order for reform to be pursued, it must be perceived to be in the best interests of those who must make the decision to do it. In the case of Angola, there are particularly high obstacles to achieving this perception, stemming not only from the current structure and distribution of oil-derived foreign exchange inflows and the distortions they induce (see Aguilar, 2003 and Vidal, 2003 for a discussion of the relation between oil revenue and the Angolan elite), but also from the long standing axes of polarisation which form the long run context for growth.

First and foremost in the immediate future is that oil rents are controlled by central government and allocated as dictated by those in charge of it. What this has meant in the past is that the political elite of the MPLA has been insulated from the economic problems afflicting the rest of the population due to their ability to control foreign exchange receipts and purchase needed consumer items from abroad. While most of the population has been suffering from the collapse of domestic production and rampant hyperinflation over the past decades, those in a position of privilege have had preferential access to foreign markets in order to avoid these problems, creating an artificial economy in Luanda which is almost entirely divorced from the rest of the country. Even after two years of peace this situation remains largely unchanged – elites live in a virtual economic enclave with little connection to the larger economy.
What this means is that those currently benefiting from the present situation will not be better off in the short run after implementation of a reform programme which eliminates these preferences and distortions. It is simply not accurate, and certainly not persuasive, to attempt to make the case for change on the basis of a supposed improvement in the situation for the political elite because it will not happen. Rather, a case for reform must rest on the fact that the problems afflicting the Angolan economy are well known, and the trajectory of the economy, and that of the elites who benefit from the current situation, will inevitably result in a less favourable situation in the long run if reforms are avoided in the short run. In addition, there are real questions as to whether political and social stability can be maintained if the ‘stop and go’ economic cycle resumes and the situation for the general public deteriorates. At some point it becomes difficult to hire and pay enough police to contain unrest if the urban poor are subjected to a worsening economic situation while those in powerful positions are so obviously wealthy. If reform is avoided, there will be another period of prosperity for those with preferential access to oil receipts as the new production areas come on line. However, this strategy merely perpetuates the pattern of mortgaging oil production to pay off debt, a pattern which can only continue as long as oil production growth continues to outpace the growth of foreign debt and the cost of servicing it.

This point is extremely important: foreign debt, if it is never paid down (as has been the case to date) never stops growing; oil production growth does. While the outlook at the present time may appear favourable due to the imminent opening of new production, there is no reason to believe that current growth rates in output can be maintained forever. If, in fact, oil production growth cannot be maintained forever, then the day will inevitably come when oil output must once again be dedicated in its entirety to service foreign debt, as would have been the case in a very few years if the new oil fields had not been discovered. It is useful to emphasise that every single country which has enjoyed an oil windfall has suffered from these problems to some degree. Angola is in fact a more extreme case due to the higher degree of oil dependence as compared to other countries. Even Saudi Arabia, where oil discoveries were so huge relative to the economy and the population, that it seemed that they were inexhaustible, is now facing the fact that oil production growth cannot remain higher than expenditure growth forever, and that even in this case, adjustments are needed at some point. The key is that it is clear that adjustments taken early are far less painful and have far greater potential to result in a greater level of welfare in general than would be the case if they were delayed.

One fortunate aspect of the political economy of reform is that there are very few adverse implications for poverty or other social dimensions. The benefits from the current situation are concentrated in a relatively few hands, so removal of them will not affect the vast majority of the population in the short term. In effect, they have little to lose and a reform of investment policy and/or mineral income flows will not make their situation any worse than it already is. In the long run, an adjustment/investment programme has substantial potential to improve the situation of these segments of society, as they can take advantage of growth in such trade-exposed sectors as agriculture.

A Way Out?
It is dangerous for any observer of the Angolan situation to pretend to have found a viable political solution to the economic imbalances plaguing the country with any
certainty. It is certainly true that, for the moment at least, most Angolans are simply happy to have ended the long civil war and have little appetite for a renewal of the conflict. However, the discussion presented here suggests that underlying tensions are bound to resurface at some point but that there are also several possible elements of a long-term mutually agreeable political equilibrium.

First and foremost would be to recognise the obvious regional split differences by allowing political power to mirror these realities. This would imply providing for strong provincial governments with substantial power over affairs within their borders. A federal system, with powers of defence and authority over inter-provincial and foreign trade (among others) reserved to the central government would help promote a feeling of ownership in the system on the part of the various factions involved while at the same time allowing each to express itself politically. This last point is particularly important, and is a strong reason to allow provincial governors to be elected locally rather than being appointed from Luanda since this would allow each faction to be ruled directly by members of their own group while maintaining the integrity of the nation as a whole.

Second, it is important to achieve an agreement regarding an appropriate formula for disposing of the mineral revenue accruing to the government. Fighting over these riches has been at the root of much of the conflict, and a feeling of being cheated out of one’s ‘rightful’ entitlement is the single biggest potential spark for future conflicts. At one point, the outline of one such formula seemed to be visible when it appeared that UNITA would largely control diamond income while the MPLA would control oil income. Lopsided though such an arrangement would have been, it would still have allowed each faction the wherewithal to make investments in its own area without requiring renegotiation at each new expenditure.

But now that UNITA has been relegated to the status of a minority party within the government, the appropriate policy for disposal of oil income is a matter for debate within the ruling party. The question is not which party will control the money but rather which sectors and/or provinces will benefit from the additional expenditures made possible by the oil revenue. Here there are grounds for optimism in that there appears to be a true desire for national reconciliation. This paper has argued for a long term programme of investment, particularly in sectors such as agriculture which is, it has been argued, the mainstay of the non-oil economy and a sector with a large political constituency. However, in the long run, the ability of any government party to channel large sums toward the natural constituents of its opposition would be limited. And that is precisely the point of this paper: there are many powerful and long standing political and economic forces which align themselves in opposition to such a recognition in which there is also an absence of the need for a national debate.

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Endnotes
2. See IMF 2004
3. In evaluating these macroeconomic distortions it is important to recognise that the causal
mechanism is sparked by large inflows of foreign exchange. From a purely economic standpoint (though not from a political one) it is immaterial whether the inflows derive from oil, diamonds or some other source. What is important is that the flows are large compared to the rest of the economy.

4. See Hodges 2001 and Malaquias 2001. It is also true that oil and diamond income have themselves directly contributed to the war effort, often determining the extent and timing of military activity; see Frynas and Wood 2001.


7. See the IMF 2002.

8. This statement refers to Angola’s comparatively low cost conditions for agricultural production and export. Prior to independence and the oil boom Angola exported more than 400,000 MT of maize annually and was the world’s fourth largest exporter of coffee. It also exported a variety of other products and was largely self sufficient in food and fiber products. It is the underlying cost advantage that is the basis for statements regarding comparative advantage. It has been argued in some quarters that continued reliance on these sectors is not in the long run interest of developing economies. In more recent times US and European subsidies have been pointed to as major obstacles to exploitation of inherent cost advantages. Nevertheless, it is the basic low cost conditions themselves (soil, water, cheap labour) which generate the potential for profitable export and there can be little doubt that Angola is well favored in this sense.


11. See Birmingham 2000, especially pp. 45-47.


14. See Henderson 1979; see also Boxer 1969.

15. See, for example, Schiff and Valdes 1992.


17. For a discussion of structural transformation and the changes that this entails, see Chenery and Syrquin 1986 pp.11-118.


19. Though it took the Portuguese more than forty years to conquer Ndongo, the most important of the Mbundu kingdoms, this was finally accomplished by 1621. The final destruction of these kingdoms was accomplished by 50 years later. See Birmingham 1965, pp. 24-42.

20. Hodges 2000, reports that almost half of today’s children are brought up speaking Portuguese as their first language (p. 26).


24. Vidal (2003) documents the evolution of elite privilege within the government from independence to the present time while Aguilar 2003 discusses the relationship between oil rents and the oligarchy.
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Six Months On: What Shift is there in the EU Approach to EPA Negotiations?

Paul Goodison

With the UK presidency of the EU Council of Ministers pending (July 2005), EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson is coming under increased pressure to modify the European Commission’s approach to Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Criticism and pressure for change is not only coming from an increasingly vocal and active campaign by non-governmental development agencies in the UK, Europe and Africa (see http://www.stopepa.org/ for details of the campaign), but also from several more official sources. These include the Africa Commission established by prime minister Tony Blair, the inquiry by the House of Commons Select Committee on International Development into EU-ACP EPA negotiations and the joint position paper adopted by the UK Department of Trade and Industry and Department for International Development.

Commissioner Mandelson has responded to this criticism by modifying and extending the rhetoric on the centrality of development concerns to the EC’s approach to EPA negotiations. However it is still unclear to what extent the Commissioner’s rhetoric is being taken up in practice by EC trade negotiators and EC aid officials. As the Zambian trade minister, Dipak Patel, has recently declared:

what Peter has said in his speech to the LSE [London School of Economics] was excellent, but perhaps his negotiators need to read it more than we do.

This briefing reviews the evolving approach of Commissioner Mandelson to the EPA negotiations in the light of these criticisms by looking at the issues faced in three main areas:

- the ‘flexibility’ to be allowed on the extent and time-frame for the introduction of tariff-elimination commitments by ACP countries;
- the importance of addressing ‘flanking measures’, in particular with reference to raising the ability of ACP countries to confront the EU’s developing food safety policies;
- the links between the current rhetorical approach to EPA negotiations and the forthcoming WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong.
What is a Pragmatic & Flexible Approach to EPA Negotiations?

The first quarter of 2005 has seen a growing body of opinion being expressed on the extent of reciprocity that should be required from ACP countries under EPAs and the time-frame for their introduction. The Africa Commission set up by Tony Blair argued that liberalisation should not to be forced on Africa ‘through trade or aid conditions’, with new trade agreements being constructed in ways which ‘reduce reciprocal demands to a minimum … individual African countries should be allowed to sequence their own trade reforms, at their own pace, in line with their own poverty-reduction and development plans’. The House of Commons Select Committee report took a similar view, arguing that least developed countries (LDCs) ‘should not have to offer reciprocal market access to the EU until they have graduated from LDC status’ and argued for ‘better alternatives to EPAs to be provided’. It expressed concern that in ‘presenting the alternatives as a second-best option, with no development component, the Commission is going against the spirit of what was agreed in Cotonou’ and was placing ‘the ACP in the position of having no real choice, and reinforces their unequal position in the negotiating process’.

In a direct reflection of the conclusions of the Africa Commission report, the UK DTI and DfID issued a memo on the UK position on EPAs which called for them to become instruments for ‘long term development, economic growth and poverty reduction in ACP countries’. More specifically, it called for each ACP regional group to make its ‘own decisions on the timing, pace, sequencing and product coverage of market opening in line with individual countries’ national development plans and poverty-reduction strategies’, with regional groupings having ‘the flexibility to move towards more open markets along a non-linear path if necessary’. It called for EPAs to ensure that ‘ACP regional groups have maximum flexibility over their own market opening’, with an unconditional 20-year plus for market opening, and argued for the EU to commit itself to the immediate opening of EU markets ‘with no strings attached’, and with simple and liberal rules of origin. In this latter regard, the Africa Commission went further, calling for a simple 10% value-addition criterion for African products to be granted ‘originating status’ and hence to benefit from the nominal duty-free market-access provisions granted under the Cotonou Agreement and the Everything But Arms (EBA) agreement.

Commissioner Mandelson appeared to respond to much of this implicit criticism in his speech to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Mali on 19 April 2005, when he maintained that the EC would be ‘very pragmatic and flexible’ with regard to the reciprocal tariff-reduction commitments required of ACP regions. He further maintained that ‘safeguard mechanisms for vulnerable sectors … will clearly be part of the package’ negotiated under EPAs. This echoed his somewhat reluctant admission before the House of Commons Select Committee that ‘if necessary he would seek a revision of Article XXIV in order to incorporate his desire to create asymmetrical reciprocity over a considerable period of time, “as befits the needs and the rate and the pattern of development of the ACP countries themselves in their particular regions”.’ This appears to go against the standard EC view that reform of WTO rules on free-trade areas (article XXIV) is not needed, since the existing provisions provide sufficient flexibility for the conclusion of development-oriented EPAs.

It was this kind of discrepancy between the Commissioner’s pronouncements and established EC positions which led the Zambian trade minister to conclude that Commission trade negotiators rather than the ACP needed to read more closely the
Commissioner’s speeches. However, is there really so much space between Commissioner Mandelson and his officials? Probably not, for while talking about ‘flexibility’ and being ‘pragmatic’, Commissioner Mandelson continues to take the view that ‘ultimately, artificially insulating ACP economies from the global economy creates dependency and therefore vulnerability, and we must ... bring about the necessary integration.’ Even if it is acknowledged that this will require ‘time’, ‘great care’ and ‘support for the most vulnerable’, he is firmly of the opinion that there can be no ‘blanket exemptions and permanent carve outs’, but rather there should be a ‘breathing space for countries on a case-by-case basis until they are in a position to comply.’ Commissioner Mandelson thus makes it clear that from his perspective ultimately the objective of EPAs is full liberalisation; the issue is simply over what time-frame should be allowed for this journey to full liberalisation to be completed.

It is here where the confusion arises. For many, the length of the time-frame and the extent of the exclusions and exemptions should be based on the attainment of clearly defined development benchmarks, for example LDCs graduating out of their least-developed status as a result of the structural development of their economies (as the House of Commons Select Committee suggested). For the EC however, it is felt that the ‘breathing space’ should refer to a specific pre-defined time-frame, so as to provide a stimulus for the implementation of the necessary internal policy reforms in ACP countries, with extensive commitment to tariff eliminations being made within these agreements. Traditionally the EC has taken a fairly hard line on the time-frame, insisting on 10 to 12 years for the full implementation of any agreement. More recently however, there has been some degree of flexibility with 15 years unofficially being suggested as the transitional period. This however still falls far short of the ‘unconditional 20-years-plus for market opening’ called for in the DFID/DTI paper. In terms of product coverage, according to IDS reports, EC officials have indicated that they would be anticipating the elimination of tariffs on 76% of current southern African imports from the EU, 79% of current central African imports from the EU, 80% of current eastern and southern Africa imports from the EU and 81% of current west Africa imports from the EU. For regions consisting largely of LDCs this constitutes an extensive programme of liberalisation.

Within the framework of the ‘EPA-light’ concept, it is argued that with regional market integration still in its infancy in all African regions involved in EPA negotiations and with a long way to go before functioning regional markets will have been created which actually give rise to real trade flows and provide an environment for investments to develop regional production structures to serve regional markets, it is impossible to determine in which product areas tariffs will still be required in order to nurture the development of regional industries to supply regional markets. This is particularly problematical in the agriculture and food products sectors, where the process of CAP reform, linked to EU enlargement, is transforming the price competitiveness of EU agricultural and simple value-added food products. This process of reform and EU enlargement is far from complete, and African negotiators can have no clear understanding of the scale of the competitive challenge which will be faced in the future in priority areas for the development of regional supply capacities given the current structure of African economies. How, therefore, can they determine which areas should be subject to tariff reductions and which areas should be subject to exclusions, special arrangements or special safeguards in the tariff offers that they will need to formulate in the coming 18 months?
It is in this context that the ‘EPA-light’ concept is suggesting a phased negotiation of reciprocal tariff-reduction commitments, with, in the first instance, the absolute minimum being done in terms of tariff elimination in order to secure WTO compliance, in line with a very limited definition of the total product coverage which should be applied in reciprocal trade arrangements between a developed giant like the EU and largely least developed economies. This would allow the focus of EU-Africa economic cooperation to shift to the key issue of building real regional markets and establishing an effective framework for investment in the development of regional production to serve regional markets, within the framework of wider regional development-integration programmes.

The issue of further tariff-elimination commitments could then be revisited in say 8 years, to determine where further tariff removals would act as an additional stimulus to enhanced regional competitiveness. Where the development of real regional markets and investment flows had been effectively stimulated and the impact of CAP reform and EU enlargement on the price competitiveness of EU exports was better known, then further tariff-elimination commitments could be envisaged, where this supports the regional competitiveness agenda. In this way the risks implicit in the ‘slippage’ of what are highly ambitious (although developmentally narrow concepts) regional market integration schemes in Africa, can be minimised, and careful attention can be paid to securing the intended pro-poor development outcomes.

This type of approach would appear to be implicit in the criticism of the current EC approach to EPA negotiations contained in the Africa Commission report, the House of Commons Select Committee report and the DTI/DfID position on EPA negotiations. However the question arises: to what extent is the EC and the wider body of opinion in EU member states likely to be open to this type of approach?
While there is likely to be considerable support for the UK position amongst the governments of Sweden, Finland, Holland, Ireland, Belgium, Germany, France and even Denmark, there is likely to be indifference if not downright hostility amongst new EU member states. This being said these new member states, particularly in eastern Europe, are more concerned about the aid diversion effect of EU development policy than the trade effects, and could well be won over to the UK position, if these types of concessions in the content of EPAs were seen as having fewer financial implications than the Commission’s current proposed approach.

The Importance of Addressing ‘Flanking Measures’

In his recent pronouncements Commissioner Mandelson has placed growing emphasis on the development-aid dimension of EPAs and how this will help ACP countries meet the new challenges they will face in the global trading environment. This dimension is used in particular to differentiate EPAs from the non-reciprocal EBA preferences which African LDCs enjoy. It is implied that this development-aid dimension of EPAs will equip LDCs to take advantage of the kind of trade preferences which they have been unable to exploit under the non-reciprocal EBA arrangement. It is implied that better targeted aid under a successor to the current 9th EDF will equip African countries to take full advantage of the closer trade relationship that the EPAs imply. However the assumptions behind this rosy projection of future African capacities to exploit trading opportunities stands in stark contrast to the current experience of EU aid deployment. Commissioner Mandelson has recently taken a much higher profile on issues arising from the EU’s food safety policy, which falls under the portfolio of Markos Kyprianou, the Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner. Commissioner Mandelson has taken up the call by Mr Kyprianou’s predecessor, David Byrne for more aid to deployed in developing the capacity of ACP countries to meet EU food safety standards. Indeed, he has gone further and has spoken of the need to find ‘ways in which we can combine extra compliance time with support for capacity building to ensure that trade flows’.14 In typical fashion however this has been qualified by the stipulation that this must be done on ‘a case-by-case basis’.15

The seriousness of the challenge posed by stricter EU food safety standards (which are an integral part of the trajectory for CAP reform) cannot be underestimated. In the eastern and southern African configuration for EPA negotiations food and agricultural exports represent fully 55% of the region’s exports to the EU. IDS research has shown that ‘the application of new SPS requirements has already limited the poverty-reducing effects of some agricultural activities in Africa. For example, the number of smallholders that are able to engage in horticulture exports in Kenya has fallen sharply in recent years’.16 This is a trend which raises the question of the need for ‘reform of the unconstrained nature of SPS setting in the EU … if Africa is not to be further marginalised in world trade’.17

It was no doubt this type of research which led the Africa Commission to call for the better design of EU food safety standards so as to ‘minimise the barriers they may create’ and the provision of ‘urgent’ assistance to African countries in meeting EU food safety standards. There is however little sense of urgency on this issue within the EC services dealing with aid deployment to African countries. No attempt has so far been made to support national efforts to mobilise resources for addressing food safety control issues. National officials dealing with these issues in African countries tend to get shifted from pillar to post, as EU aid officials focus more on ‘bedding in’ the new system of ‘de-concentrated’ aid management, rather than
assisting governments in responding to the challenges arising from a rapidly changing trade environment. Help from within EU delegations to African countries in mobilising resources to get to grips with the food safety compliance challenge is largely absent. Even where such help has been demonstrated it has tended to fall foul of administrative indifference in Brussels and a lack of effective follow-through on rhetorical commitments by the Commissioners responsible.

The reality of EU aid commitments and disbursements is such that, in a context where the new crucial EU food-and-feed control regulation comes into effect in 2006, there have to date been no attempts to free up existing NIP funds for addressing this urgent issue despite that fact that payments obligations for over €8,600 million will only fall due in 2007, 2008 and 2009. It is entirely conceivable that given the importance of food safety compliance issues to Africa’s trade with the EU, funding could be freed up from existing NIP funds to finance initial diagnostic studies of the state of national food safety control systems and the implementation of emergency programmes of upgrading to EU food safety standards so as to avoid any disruption of current food and agricultural trade flows on food safety grounds.

However, despite their much heralded close cooperation, Commissioner Mandelson and Commissioner Michel (the EU Development Commissioner) have not yet taken the necessary steps to allow the freeing up of existing NIP funds to meet priority areas, with the existing aid commitment/payment obligations from which funds have been diverted then being fully met under a first round of funding approvals within a 10th EDF.

Equally, despite Commissioner Mandelson’s call to look at ‘the bottlenecks in existing programmes' which so reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of EU aid deployment in addressing all manner of supply-side constraints which are time sensitive in a context of trade liberalisation, there is no evidence that this is likely to give rise to a comprehensive review of the causes of delay in EDF aid deployment and a dynamic programme of action to address these bottlenecks. Of course Commissioner Mandelson cannot be held responsible for the shortcomings in EU aid deployment as this falls outside of his portfolio of responsibilities. However, he should perhaps exercise a little more caution in talking up the aid dimension of EPAs, when on the ground in ACP countries there is a growing frustration over the inability of the concerned authorities to secure allocated funding for priority actions arising from the evolution of EU trade and agricultural policies.

Where the EC is following through on the Trade Commissioner’s rhetoric is in integrating ‘EPA support in the ongoing regional indicative programmes’ and in placing ‘regional integration and EPA implementation … at the core of the EC response strategy’ under a successor to the 9th EDF. This is in many respects a highly cynical manoeuvre. First, because the EC has far more discretionary power over the deployment of regional funds than it does over NIP funds and has, under the Cotonou Agreement, used these discretionary powers to finance a range of global

<table>
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<th>All ACP Commitments &amp; Payments (million euros)</th>
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pan-ACP programmes which it favours (from debt relief via the World Bank, through the global fund for HIV/AIDS to the Commission’s own water facility). The second cynical aspect of this development in EDF aid deployment is that by expanding support to regional secretariats, which play a central role in EPA negotiations in most African regions, the EC is generating a form of institutional financial dependency which leaves regional secretariats highly vulnerable to EC pressure when ‘push comes to shove’ in the hard-headed process of trade negotiations.

This being said, the increasing rigidities in the EU aid deployment process are such that even African regional secretariats which are playing key roles in the preparation of EPA negotiations are finding it increasingly difficult to get money out of the EU aid system for ‘time-sensitive’ initiatives associated with a dynamically changing trading environment. There is thus a growing gulf between Commissioner Mandelson’s rhetoric over the centrality of the development aid dimension of EPAs and the ability of the EU aid system to deliver support on the ground to ‘time-sensitive’ activities. In this context, Commissioner Mandelson’s assertion that the EC’s recognition of the importance of the development aid dimension of EPAs will

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**Addressing the Urgent Priorities of Food Safety Compliance & the Impact of EU Sugar-sector Reform**

Within the EU aid system there is no shortage of funds. The problem faced is the long pipeline in moving from aid programming, to primary commitments (signing of the financing proposal), secondary commitments (signing the actual contracts for the implementation of the activities agreed) and disbursement (the actual payments made for services rendered or goods supplied). This process ties up billions of euros for many years and means that the EU aid deployment system is poorly equipped to provide assistance in responding to the challenges arising from a radically changing trading environment. If the EU aid system is to assist African countries in getting to grips with the challenge of food-safety compliance, sugar-sector reform and the implementation of EPAs, then a new approach will be needed. In the short term, consideration should be given to:

- The EC instructing its delegates in ACP countries to facilitate (to the extent necessary) the re-deployment of existing NIP funds which will not be spent until 2007, 2008 and 2009, in support of emergency programmes of food-safety compliance, sugar-sector restructuring or preparations for EPA implementation;

- The establishment of provisions under the proposed EU budget-financed sugar-restructuring facility and the post 9th EDF instrument for the financing of cooperation with ACP countries, for the reimbursement of existing planned projects and programmes from which funds have been temporarily diverted to address trade-related priority issues.

This would undoubtedly constitute a radical step from the perspective of EU aid management. However it should not be beyond the administrative capacities or institutional imagination of the EC to find a procedure to deliver assistance in areas which are such glaring priorities and where current EU rhetoric is so far removed from the day-to-day reality of EU policy delivery.

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mean ‘increased money under the new financial perspectives’ is simply a commitment to expanding the level of funding within the EU aid system which remains unspent.

**The Commissioner’s ‘Charm Offensive’**

The clearest articulation by Commissioner Mandelson of the wider concerns which inform, if not drive, the EC’s current rhetoric on the development dimension of EPAs was his speech at the LSE on 4 February 2005. This saw the launch of what Commissioner Mandelson referred to as ‘an action plan for progress,’ designed to make ‘the multilateral trading system work at long last in the interests of the world’s poor’. According to the Agritrade summary of this speech, this proposed action plan had 13 main elements:

- delivering development through market opening at the multilateral level;
- maximising the use of special and differential treatment in the WTO;
- promoting South-South market opening;
- establishing pro-development rules and standards;
- promoting greater convergence of food safety standards, whilst paying attention to the cost implications for developing countries;
- addressing preference erosion;
- a generalised extension of the EBA by all OECD countries;
- improvements to rules-of-origin provisions by harmonisation across all OECD markets;
- introducing a strong development dimension into the EPA negotiations;
- establishing mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of development assistance within the EPAs;
- establishing internationally a special trade adjustment fund which goes beyond existing IMF and World Bank efforts, with the EU going it alone if an international consensus is not possible;
- improved coordination of EC and member state aid and trade policies;
- greater transparency on the impact of trade preferences on development, via the presentation of an annual white paper on the impact of trade preferences on EU imports from weak and vulnerable countries.

According to Commissioner Mandelson’s vision this ‘pro-poor’ trade agenda would be pursued in the coming months via the WTO negotiations, coordinated action in the G8 and unilateral EC action both within and outside of the context of the EPA negotiations. However, this announcement has been met with a degree of scepticism, not only by the Zambian trade minister but also by Caribbean private-sector representatives who suggested that Commissioner Mandelson would have to work hard to energise the Brussels bureaucracy if he is to create ‘the development mechanisms necessary to drive an economic revolution in the developing world’.
Reflections on the Action Plan for Progress

This constitutes quite an agenda for action. It reiterates the importance of addressing problems created by standards and stricter food-safety controls, a long-standing commitment, where to date there has been little movement.

It highlights the importance of rules of origin and harmonisation across OECD markets, yet ignores the EC’s repeated rejection of the extension of AGOA style derogations from rules of origin for clothing and textile exports to the EU – involving the introduction of a single-stage processing requirement for originating status to be granted to African exports to the EU.

It emphasises SDT for developing countries, whilst overlooking the reluctance of the EC as an institution to see the principle of SDT applied to the provisions of Article XXIV, in ways which would allow far more flexibility in the definition of what constitutes a free-trade area where LDCs are involved in free-trade area arrangements with developed economies.

It talks of the strong development dimension of EPAs and the need for special trade-adjustment facilities and improved aid effectiveness, whilst ignoring the current constraints faced in the EC in responding in an expeditious manner to ‘time-sensitive’ projects related to trade negotiations, trading capacity and addressing supply-side constraints on competitiveness.

It talks of the benefits of multilateral liberalisation, while ignoring reports that the process of preference erosion which is underway will leave many current preference-dependent economies suffering net losses from multilateral liberalisation. The talk of South-South market opening and the extension of EBA preferences to LDCs by all OECD countries, also ignores the fact that even in trade with the EU, African suppliers still tend to focus on traditional markets and have shown little capacity to diversify markets to other EU countries, even where duty-free access is provided.

What was most notable in Commissioner Mandelson’s speech was the implicit recognition that there was a need to convince developing countries, particularly those in the ACP, that they actually had something to gain from the current round of WTO trade negotiations. This is in fact a real challenge. CAP reform, bilateral liberalisation and multilateral liberalisation are all eroding the margins of preference which ACP countries have traditionally enjoyed. While African LDCs could potentially benefit from a generalised application of EBA market-access arrangements by all OECD countries and simpler, harmonised rules of origin, given the pattern of exports to the EU which tend to focus on traditional national markets, it is far from clear whether such benefits would actually be realised, given the increased importance of non-tariff measures in inhibiting market entry. Indeed, according to a recent paper produced by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the annual loss of income transfers in agriculture as a result of preference erosion in the most preference-dependent economies is likely to be around $402 million, with welfare losses of $318 million.25 Indeed, ‘estimates for the sugar sector alone range from $288 million to $297 million’.26 This rises still further when quantity adjustments are added in, bringing losses to between $350 million to $447 million, with some estimates suggesting losses even larger than this (up to twice as large).
Significantly, given the emphasis in Commissioner Mandelson’s statement on the benefits to be gained by multilateral market opening, South-South market opening and improving rules of origin, this Commonwealth report notes the multiple economic handicaps faced by many preference-dependent economies and concludes that in this context, preference erosion constitutes ‘a significant negative external shock’, with these countries being ‘unlikely to be able to finance the necessary adjustment to a more liberalised trading environment without external assistance’. In this context, it suggests the need to establish an improved framework for supporting preference-dependent economies, since the ‘existing support framework for preference-dependent economies is not sufficient’.

Commissioner Mandelson’s reference to the establishment of a special trade adjustment facility, with the EU going it alone if necessary and the need for ‘a new facility for Africa on infrastructure and trade’, need to be seen in this light. Unfortunately, the task of convincing ACP countries (which includes many preference-dependent economies) that they have something to gain from a further round of multilateral tariff liberalisation is made more difficult by the conclusion in the Commonwealth Secretariat report that ‘the scale of the losses implies preference-dependent economies will incur net losses from multilateral liberalisation’. This is bad news for Commissioner Mandelson and accounts in large part why the Commission is working so hard to ‘talk up’ the development benefits of trade agreements both at the level of the WTO and EPAs.

In addition, it makes Commissioner Mandelson’s statements on the importance of addressing preference erosion particularly pertinent. However, the assertion that since the process of preference erosion affects only a limited number of sectors, this issue could probably be addressed ‘through enhanced trading opportunities and through readjustment assistance’, rather neglects the critical aspect of the specific nature of the ‘enhanced trading opportunities’ to be opened up and the modalities for the effective and timely delivery of ‘readjustment assistance’. Would the ‘enhanced trading opportunities’ for example, include doubling the current duty-free access for Swazi and Zimbabwean sugar, thereby allowing for increased exports to the EU to replace the revenue lost from lower EU prices? Will the necessary administrative changes take place inside EU aid management systems to allow readjustment assistance to be provided within a time-frame which helps countries to prepare for the impact of preference erosion, rather than simply helping them to respond to the profound economic and social adjustment effects flowing from preference erosion?

There is little evidence to date that real thought is being given to these issues. Since the launch on 24 January 2005 of the EC working document on the ‘Action plan on accompanying measures for sugar protocol countries affected by the reform of the EU sugar regime’, there has been little sign of concrete steps to allow an early deployment of EDF aid in support of first phase sugar-sector restructuring/diversification activities. In terms of the market opening which will be required of African countries as part of the Doha Development Round, the EC has repeatedly stressed how ‘practically nothing’ will be required from G90 countries, which includes all sub-Saharan African countries except South Africa (and by implication Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland). However, this needs to be seen against the background of Africa’s trade orientation towards Europe and the ongoing EPA negotiations, which are not about tariff reductions but about tariff elimination, with the EC wanting to see tariffs eliminated on between 76% and 81% of current imports from the EU and the EC wanting to see WTO+ agreements on trade
in services and in trade-related areas. This throws statements referring to how the EU is seeking ‘practically nothing’ from African countries in the DDR into a rather different light, for what this EC position effectively represents is an effort to enhance the margins of preference which EU suppliers will enjoy on African markets over other suppliers, once EPAs are implemented.

The fact that the August 2004 WTO framework agreement effectively secures international endorsement for the current trajectory for CAP reform is also an area of concern for African countries. CAP reform is enhancing the price competitiveness of EU agricultural and simple value-added food-product exports to Africa. Under the process of reform, despite a 50% decline in average cereal prices since 1991, EU15 cereals production increased from 180.9 million tonnes in 1991/92 to 242.2 million tonnes in the 2003/2004 season (a 33.7% increase). This expansion of low-priced EU cereals production has been a major factor fuelling the growth in EU exports of cereal-based food products and poultry meat parts to West African markets which have increased significantly since 1996. What is more, while some argue that this expansion is a transitional phenomena which will fade away once ‘decoupled’ support programmes are fully introduced, EC projections of likely levels of production in EU15 and EU25 countries up to 2012 suggest that this change will simple slow down the rate of expansion of EU production and not reverse it. This is particularly so since the rolling out of the CAP in new member states is, in eastern Europe, stimulating increased investment and increases in agricultural production which on average are over twice the rates of increase in production in EU15 countries. This raises fundamental questions about the non-trade distorting nature of new CAP instruments, instruments for which the August WTO framework agreement has secured international acceptance and endorsement. It is against this background that Trade Commissioner Mandelson is placing such emphasis on being seen to be taking the concerns of developing countries and particularly African developing countries, seriously. His recent statement to west African cotton farmers delivered in Bamako on 19 April 2005 is illustrative of just how far the EC is willing to go in selling itself as a friend of Africa in global trade negotiations. In this speech Commissioner Mandelson set out EU proposals for expediting assistance to west African cotton producers. According to the Agritrade website, he committed the EU to ‘exceptional treatment for cotton in the WTO negotiations … calling for the WTO membership to fast-track cotton in agricultural negotiations.’ He argued that this means ambitious agreements to:

- eliminate all forms of cotton export subsidy in developed countries;
- provide duty-free access for cotton imports by all developed and advanced developing countries;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>% Change 2002-2011</th>
<th>EU10 (EU15)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>+ 12.02%</td>
<td>(+ 5.80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coarse grains</td>
<td>+ 4.92%</td>
<td>(+ 0.38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cereals</td>
<td>+ 7.69%</td>
<td>(+ 3.10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry meat</td>
<td>+ 37.16%</td>
<td>(- 0.40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig meat</td>
<td>+ 15.38%</td>
<td>(+ 4.07%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>+ 13.99%</td>
<td>(+ 11.21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skimmed milk powder</td>
<td>+ 5.51%</td>
<td>(- 40.88%)</td>
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substantially reduce trade-distorting domestic support for cotton producers in developed countries.\textsuperscript{37}

He also highlighted the increasing level of EU aid to the cotton sector including:

- an additional €210 million over four years for the worst-affected cotton producing countries;
- the willingness of the EU to provide ‘significant direct government budget support, in addition to pre-existing development assistance’;\textsuperscript{38}
- the scope for additional support from the FLEX instrument to deal with short term crises;
- the provision of €25 million for a World Bank global index insurance facility;
- ‘a very significant overall increase in development assistance to meet the Millennium Development Goals in Africa’,\textsuperscript{39} in order to promote ‘broad based development across the region’,\textsuperscript{40} including a possible ‘new facility for Africa infrastructure and trade’.\textsuperscript{41}

This looks a very impressive catalogue of EU support to the west African cotton sector, particularly so when one considers the singular absence of any similar EU response to the crisis in the coffee sector in the eastern and southern African region. However, it needs to be seen against the backdrop of the vast under-spend which exists under EDF assistance programmes to the region, the French government’s desire to spread the burden of budgetary support, and the wholly inadequate performance of the FLEX mechanism which replaced the Lomé Convention’s more functional STABEX (export stabilisation) scheme.\textsuperscript{42} With regard to the commitment to a new facility for African infrastructure and trade, it remains to be seen just how this is to be established and operationalised given the backlog and delays experienced in existing EDF-financed programmes.

In this context, what lies behind all the rhetoric and recent decisions to fast-track EU support to the west African cotton sector? Well, Commissioner Mandelson rather gave the game away when he stressed that ‘increased development assistance can be leveraged to even greater effect if we collaborate in the multilateral trade arena to drive through a reform strategy which controls and reduces global trade distortions in cotton’\textsuperscript{43}… and appealed to his west African audience to ‘use the DDA together to answer your pressing and legitimate concerns and build a trading system that meets the minimum requirements of fairness’.\textsuperscript{44} Herein lies the key to Commissioner Mandelson’s growing emphasis on delivering on the development dimension of EPAs; namely, his concern that African ACP countries may not wholly believe that they have anything to gain from a new WTO agreement on tariff reductions, trade in services, trade-related areas and a duplicitous ‘stitch up’ on permitted and prohibited forms of agricultural support. This does however potentially open up an opportunity for African trade negotiators and economic planners. In the run up to the Hong Kong Ministerial meeting in December 2005, a window of opportunity exists to extract significant trade concessions from the EU which deliver real and immediate benefits to African economies. It remains to be seen whether African political leaders can exploit this window of opportunity (a window which is potentially easy to exploit as a result of the mounting UK-based criticism of the EC’s current approach to EPA negotiations) to secure a framework for future trade
relations with the EU which retains the economic policy space for the development and nurturing of regional development integration, which focuses on the structural transformation of national economies, based on enlarged regional markets and a vision of equitable regional development.

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Endnotes

6. For all quotes form the House of Commons Select Committee report see the following webpage: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmintdev/68/68.pdf.
10. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
17. Ibid.


22. Ibid.


26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.


32. This even applies to the Caribbean island economy of St Kitts and Nevis, where the last sugar harvest is already underway.

33. EU-25 production was 287.3 million tonnes.

34. Significantly more in the case of poultry production, but less for production of cheese which is affected by quota restrictions on milk production.


37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. The EC revealed in February 2004 that from 2000-2002 only 6 of 51 FLEX applications were considered eligible, with a mere euros 35.65 million being committed. It was acknowledged that more flexible eligibility criteria would have resulted in some euros 255 million being paid in response to 51 applications for support. According to the Commission this would have represented a 600% increase in the use of the instrument. While the FLEX system has been reformed there is no evidence to date this has significantly increased commitment rates given the disagreement within EU institutions on the application of the new criteria.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.
African Leaders and Corruption

M.H. Khalil Timamy

This paper explores the reasons why African leaders in quasi-democratic regimes (Bongo’s Gabon, Biya’s Cameroon, Chiluba’s Zambia, Muluzi’s Malawi, Moi’s Kenya, Mugabe’s Zimbabwe etc.) have used their political position to embezzle economic resources – a process which often involves the mass pauperisation of their ‘subjects’ and the deepening of their dependence on the patrimonial favours of the ‘ruler’. The paper seeks to understand the motivation of extreme corruption defined both in terms of involving large amounts – such as the billions of dollars taken by Sani Abacha (which continues to be lodged in a UK bank) – and systemically, where embezzlement becomes the strategic essence of governance. Where extreme corruption is systemic, it also involves deliberate measures to undermine the financial basis of oppositional political groups thereby reducing their adversarial potential. Clearly, financial power translates into functional political power, thus perpetuating the domination of the political party to which the corrupt leaders belong.

A closer inspection of the behaviour of rulers in extremely corrupt regimes (and this does not apply solely to Africa) shows that the motivation for graft is the maintenance of political office in the first instance, rather than personal consumption. Given the excesses associated with political leaders they become driven by the instinct of self-preservation to widen disparities in financial power between themselves and the opposition. As a consequence, in extremely corrupt regimes national budgets are reduced to a degree which prompts a wide-ranging and destructive collapse of wealth-creating institutions.

This paper uses the technique of allusion to examine corruption as a political weapon in quasi-democracies since this venal phenomenon is methodologically and empirically difficult to capture (most underhand deals are struck behind thick veils of secrecy).

In his 1957 inaugural address to the newly independent state of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah cited corruption as a vice that risked gravely harming millions in Africa striving for freedom and justice (Nkrumah, 1961:110). Three years later, when Tanzania was edging closer towards political independence, Julius Nyerere went even further, arguing that Tanzania (then Tanganyika) risked adding another, potentially greater enemy to its list of the three often-cited enemies: poverty, ignorance, and disease – that of corruption. For people to have absolute confidence in their government, Nyerere declared, it would be paramount to ensure that taxes raised were properly spent in waging war against these four enemies (Nyerere, 1966:82). Nyerere contended that corruption was a greater enemy to the welfare of the people and ‘... should be treated in almost the same way as you treat treason’ (Ibid.). He even questioned whether people could reap the true benefits of independence if corruption was allowed to continue and added that ‘people’s confidence in their government, including the very founda-
Several decades later, the worst fears of both Nkrumah and Nyerere seem to have been confirmed. Since independence, rulers in many African states have been exploiting public institutions and government-controlled agencies (and the public resources at their disposal) to distribute rewards and exact punishment in the exercise of political power. To a significant extent, practices of patronage and paternalism have been employed to secure and maintain unassailable control at the helm of national affairs, with totalitarian tendencies becoming the defining characteristics of most leadership forms in Africa. Political leaders in Africa, driven by the logic of self-preservation, have exploited for themselves avenues for rapid accumulation, on the one hand, and effective means of political and financial emasculation of their political enemies, on the other. Within this logic, a fundamental component driving the dynamics of political control and economic domination has been the pull of tribal loyalties in the calculus of both the rulers and the ruled. And in this interplay, the state became the central medium used by rulers in the pursuit of unspoken agendas, in seeking narrow developmental goals, and in striving for political continuity.

This paper first, explores the historical context of corruption in Africa. Second, discusses the theme of embezzlement of public resources using a model of budgetary capture – how corrupt rulers are able to target national budgets to accelerate the pace of rapid personal enrichment. Finally, it conceptualises these events within a political theory of embezzlement. Cases of corruption, for instance, are based on circumstantial evidence. Indeed, most corrupt acts are committed furtively and under thick shrouds of secrecy, so much so that conclusive incriminating evidence is rare.

Given the sensitive nature of corruption, and the personal risk to those exposing it, the technique of allusion is, in my mind, a preferable instrument to the technique of enumeration and illustration, though the latter will be invoked from time to time.

The Historical Context of Corruption

In his highly acclaimed US television series, The Africans, Professor Ali Mazrui narrates a story about a superior telling a young auditor in a newly independent Ghana ‘that Kwame Nkrumah had just killed an elephant (i.e. colonial state) and that there was enough for everybody to chop (emphasis mine)’. In this metaphor, the economic state, likened to an elephant that the colonialists had fed on and selfishly barricaded from the Africans, had just been massacred and was invitingly awaiting opportunistic spoilage. Moreover, the phraseology creates the impression that the state was not an integral part of the new order and its people, but an alien force that had all along appeared distant elusive, and tangibly remote. Now that Nkrumah had managed to kill this apparently inaccessible beast, the politically liberated could partake of it. And the fact that the wild beast, i.e. the state, retained its non-integral aura among the colonially free citizens made it fair game all the more. This illustrates a process of informal socialisation of state property, common to corrupt states in Africa where the perception is not of state property belonging to the people as a whole, but as being at the personal, and inexhaustible, disposal of politicians.

Thus, one of the economically lethal legacies of colonialism in Africa has been the perception among the governed in the post-independence era that the state and its resources belong to, if anyone, a force alien from them. For example, in many parts of East and Central Africa, when employees misus-
ing state resources are casually asked why they are acting the way they are, the stock answer has invariably been that the damage suffered to state property should concern no one since the resources belong to the government. (Such comments are usually blurted out in a dismissive manner, and are often accompanied by a swiping gesture of the hand).

This ingrained perception of the state being a force apart equates profoundly with the view held by many free riders that ‘open access’ resources, generally referred to as the ‘commons’, belong to no one and are, therefore, fair game to all. Within this view, the state is seen as a public good characterised by the properties of non-rival consumption and non-excludability. Clearly, this ‘cognitive failure’ has been responsible for the economic ruin of states just as ‘market failure’ has led to the destructive degradation of environmental systems. Indeed, graft in Africa has been widespread partly because the wider public has not been socialised into believing that it organically enjoys specific property rights over the state, only those with ‘open access’. Bereft of this outlook, many citizens have, as free riders, contributed to the ‘tragedy of the state’, a phenomenon akin to what Garret Hardin (1968) called the Tragedy of the Commons in the context of adverse changes afflicting open access environmental systems.

Thus, the experience of colonialism led the African masses to, correctly, view colonial state institutions as forces of usurpation of African resources. It generated the mentality that the state, and all the material resources at its disposal, belonged to ‘another’, and it was in this context that systemic corruption began. As Williams observes:

... corruption is the product of wider historical, political and economic processes... If corruption is integral to rather than an appendage of African public life, it can only be properly comprehended within a broader understanding of the character of political and economic activity in Africa (1987:7).

When colonialism ended, African leaders stepped into the shoes of the departed foreign rulers, inheriting the institutions of alienation, and often behaving in ways not too dissimilar from their erstwhile masters. It soon became apparent that, in essence, the change from a colonial administration to an African one was merely a change of guard, as the new leaders rapidly began to misuse and misappropriate public assets. Consequently, to the wider masses, the state did not shed its image as a force apart, but continued to display exclusive features of a colonial type, as the new leaders entrenched a culture of fraudulence and public embezzlement. Thus, in turn, the masses (re)turned to the view that state resources were fair game whenever an opportunity presented itself. Thus grew the culture of economic embezzlement and the free-riding orientation of the masses towards government property.

The culture of corruption also took hold in the civil service and within parastatals of many post-independent countries, where nepotism was rife in appointments, with those in authority employing their kith and kin as well as people hailing from their villages. So widespread was the culture of patronage and clientelism that the values of transparency and accountability had no place in the evolving political situation. In all these acts of nepotism involving employment, state resources were being expended to achieve narrow tribal and private interests.

It is in this regard that the issue of growing illicit use of public assets by extremely corrupt leaders in a bid to shield themselves from the machinations of rivals or political enemies needs to be understood. The pressure to meet
the demands (for example, employment or a school place) of tribal members and village neighbours, tended to intensify their tribal consciousness. This inward disposition, by leaders and bureaucrats across the tribal divides, began to increasingly assume a profoundly partisan and political character. The idea that there is ‘strength and safety in tribal numbers’ suddenly acquired a strategic meaning in societies that invariably have been multi-tribal in composition. Such a rationalisation, inspired by the logic of self-preservation, nudged those in power to pursue courses of action that strengthened tendencies of tribal coagulation at the expense of non-members. To fortify themselves, the leaders resorted to corruption as a convenient device to appropriate state resources to reward the political loyalty of kin groups. In this way, corruption came to represent the perpetuation of certain types of exclusion and governance in society. Dommer observes that corrupt influences of this kind may include prebendalism where state institutions and structures are harnessed to generate the largest share of benefits to insiders, or in the extreme case, to kleptocracy (1997:486-491).

Szeftel (2000) observes that, where tribalism is exploited to enhance exclusiveness, the potential for corruption tendencies to precipitate destructive consequences becomes very real, as rival factions behave in kind (2000:429-430). Szeftel invokes the Prisoner’s Dilemma model to fathom the potential implications of tribally driven corrupt practices:

*The factions are engaged in a distinctive game of Prisoner’s Dilemma. If they can co-operate in order to modify corruption and appropriation, there might be some reward for all groups and the looting of the state might be moderated. But the logic of ethnic competition drives them on and seemingly justifies their behaviour in the eyes of their supporters. If they don’t maximise rewards, another faction will. Thus, all continue looting even to the point of institutional disintegration and development disaster (2000:437-8).*

In addition to Szeftel’s explanation of corruption as embodying a holistic logic, other authors have also pointed to specific instances where corruption has utility to political leaders. For Theobold, for example, corruption in Africa is used to pacify potential opponents, to redistribute wealth and though mostly confined to hegemonic forces, imperatives of exclusion from the spoils can be used to punish the uncooperative (1999:493). Meanwhile, Chabal and Daloz (1999) argue that the reason why corruption is so extensive and an integral part of the social fabric of Africa is because it plays a vital social role.

### Contemporary Forms of Corruption: Budgetary Capture

Budget allocations to various ministries represent large flows of resources, and are often subject to different types of misappropriation: procurement of supplies, often carried out by powerful officials, through means which bypass formal channels of tendering known to economize on the use of scarce public resources; the re-ordering of policy priorities on the part of those with political influence in order to fulfill their own requirements; and the arbitrary and discretionary nature of development project selection. This latter often leads to the purchase of projects with little, or no, developmental value, which, even when properly delineated, can still involve inflationary costs through over-invoicing and other manipulations. This reduces public resources that could otherwise have been spent improving the quality of public services. These types of embezzlement are also common in municipal, provincial and local authorities. For example, in Kenya, the Anglo-Leasing scandal (see below) illustrates non-transparency in project procurement, and the initial unwillingness...
of the government to reveal the identity of financial recipients suggests a promise of immunity to future potential parties to embezzlement.

Even when corruption is perceived in economic terms, the influence of politics looms large at the level of state actors. It is at this level that political involvement lends itself to criminalisation. Bayart et al. identifies several attributes of this phenomenon: the use of the organs of state for private purposes; the illegitimate use of the instruments of coercion for private ends; the existence of an informal power structure—a shadow clique surrounding the official occupant of a senior political office and influencing and controlling his actions; and the participation of this shadowy clique in corrupt economic activities, illegal under national laws and criminal in international law (1999:25-26).

Meanwhile, from the contents of various Auditor General reports, in particular, and their scathing observations about grave irregularities concerning budgetary expenditures by governments, it is possible to discern general patterns of embezzlement by political elites which could generate insights or the pathology of rent-seeking maximisation that has so far governed opportunistic vampirism in some sub-Saharan countries.4

Let us suppose Robberyia is the name of a hypothetical African country whose budgetary resources are mismanaged by a corrupt political elite. Although Robberyia has the trappings of a quasi-democracy, in truth, its rulers use robbery with violence to ‘win’ heavily rigged elections once it has a head of state who routinely violates party and national constitutions. Every year, Robberyia’s Chancellor of the Exchequer reads the budget to the multi-tribal nation, an event that summarises how much money the economy plans to raise through taxes and other means, and how the revenues will be allocated for development and recurrent expenses (government expenditure). The expenditures are expected to cover the public sector wage bill, fuel, stationery, transport, water, telephone, rent, security, medicines, repairs, operation, and maintenance activities (i.e. a whole raft of day-to-day expenses). In addition, the budgetary resources are expected to finance infrastructural investments such as transport, education and health facilities. The interventions are meant to promote social justice through redistribution of income and wealth, and improve overall economic efficiency.

However, in embezzled or misappropriated economies such as Robberyia, leaders do everything in their power to keep the public sector wage component of recurrent expenditure at a minimum in order to capture as much as possible for companies fronted by the political elite. Thus this scenario would represent that part of recurrent government expenditure that takes care of electricity, telephone, water, fuel, stationery, medical drugs, security, cleaning and other services, and costs related to operation, maintenance and repair of government institutions and facilities. Their private firms would provide cleaning, security and other services for a rent-seeking fee; would ‘win’ tenders to supply stationery, fuel, defence uniforms, lubricants, etc. to public institutions; and to newly privatised energy, water, and telecommunications companies (where they have massive shareholding or controlling interests).

Thus, the Robberyia government would rebuff all efforts by the public sector workforce to secure wage increases and allied benefits due to parochially partisan vampiristic interests which would not wish to see the relatively large windfall rent compromised or sacrificed. Acquiescence to wage increases would run contrary to the dynamic logic of vampirism. If these increases in public sector wages are conceded, then the vampiristic
leaders of Robberyia could perhaps still capture the large extractive rents if they agree to allocate a proportion of the budgeted development expenditure to meet the wage demands. But to do so would be tantamount to losing extractive rents from ‘real’ planned development investments (‘real’ being a notional, and often excessive value) expected to be drawn by the elites’ front companies. Again, the Robberyia leaders would not be willing to ‘make such financial sacrifices’ in this zero-sum game. They would rather line their pockets from budgetary resources earmarked for development investments in road, bridges, and other engineering projects.

Additionally, there are bogus expenditures – where a vampiristic leader, through trusted cronies – exerts pressure on the government Exchequer or his Treasury office to effect payments to front companies for work never done. Either way, the political elites of Robberyia would maximise the flow of extractive rents from public resources for projects never started or implemented even though they would formally have been budgeted for. Therefore, in a corrupt African state resembling Robberyia, political elites give undivided, opportunistic attention to maximising extractive rents from public resources, through exploitation, diversion and minimisation – also termed the pathology of debilitating budgetary capture. Within this logic can also be added the unbudgeted expenditures, which may or may not end with a physical and/or public good but are more often spent on personal consumption, where miscellaneous budget lines – although supposedly to cater for contingencies – have been grossly inflated and abused. Similarly, the presence of ghost workers in Africa’s public sector, where vampiristic authorities conspire with heads of salary departments to share income streams of workers long dead, retired or fictitious, can also enhance a bogus expenditure.

The poor subjected to this logic suffer from progressive immiseration, whatever the economic public policy context. For example, privatisation designed to ostensibly increase the efficiency of parastatals become yet another opportunity for elites to capture shareholdings and rents, even in companies made dysfunctional in the state sector by previous misappropriation of public funds. At the same time, goods largely consumed by the poor like bread, kerosene, and second-hand clothes, are targeted for taxation, a move almost punitive in its poverty-increasing effect, as economic inefficiency reduces the revenue base. Only by punitive taxation can the finances be generated to satisfy the leaders’ pathological dynamic for budgetary capture, not least because the elites themselves evade taxation and custom duties in an institutionalised manner. Tax evasion is an addition to the public immiseration caused by embezzlement of pension funds and money belonging to public banks; the persistent over and under-invoicing in transactions across the range of public sector institutions; and the fire sale of all types of public assets to overseas investors for a personal rent. Infants, the aged, women and other vulnerable persons – who run into millions – have been swindled by leaders with a reputation for ‘preaching democratic water and drinking corruption wine’, despite a veneer of quasi democracy in Robberyia.

A Political Theory of Economic Embezzlement

What whets the appetite in unaccountable, corrupt regimes to amass incredible amounts of fortune? How can one account for the urge to accumulate vast quantities of capital and wealth? Liberia’s Samuel Doe is reported to have amassed wealth equivalent to half the country’s annual domestic product with close associates enjoying commercial opportunities and personal favours as a
means of securing their loyalty (Reno, 2000:46). To amass such a level of fortune, a head of state does not rely on the glacially slow legal and conventional methods of income generation. Political experience called for haste in the aggrandisement process, i.e. speed was of the essence. The motives that induce this behaviour may vary according to circumstances, time and serendipity, and include the imperative of self-preservation. At the initial stages, the agenda may be driven by deep-seated egalitarian sentiments or the need to establish an equitable order across society. But this quest faces resistance from entrenched forces who begin to sense that their hitherto dominant political interests are being reined in, such that the agenda gets enmeshed with emerging exigencies, hitherto unforeseen, which compel the powerful elites to incorporate more self-serving measures, undoubtedly rationalised by reference to the common good but involving punitive measures nonetheless.

Almost invariably in Africa, parties that formed governments during the one-party era were also the ones that won the first multiparty elections in the 1990s. Although there have been exceptions to this general pattern such as in Zambia and Malawi, in the majority of cases several factors have worked in favour of incumbent regimes retaining power. Preeminent among them has been the inordinate financial muscle they enjoyed while, conversely, the opposition camp was critically indisposed financially. All over sub-Saharan Africa, opposition parties have made incessant demands on incumbent governments to inject, as a matter of policy, financial resources into their respective electoral machines.

However, it has been in the interest of parties in government to maintain financial poverty in the opposition camp, and even, according to the political theory of economic embezzlement, to increase it in order to undermine capacities for political mobilisation and electoral competition. For example, the parliamentary events in Zimbabwe in early April 2001 brought the issues of chronic financial incapacity of opposition parties into sharp relief. Mr. Mugabe’s government introduced two bills designed to criminalise receipt of any overseas funds or political support in kind (e.g. equipment) by opposition forces.

However, even succeeding political administrations in Zambia, Liberia, Malawi, Zaire, Ethiopia, Nigeria (under the military regimes), have misappropriated public wealth to alter the balance of political power, this also occurs in Mozambique, Angola and Sierra Leone. Such strategic manoeuvres by the erstwhile opposition have generally been pursued with speed because, in the game of adversarial power politics in poverty-stricken, quasi-democratic Africa, time is of the essence. For example, in Chiluba’s government, degeneration was rapid and finger-pointing common. Two years after the MMD took power, the leader of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, Mr. Jackson Shamanda, asked:

If the ministers say they are corrupt and involved in drugs, who are we to believe otherwise? (Africa Events, 1994:6).

Such dynamics of time and speed have featured prominently in post-Moi Kenya as well. The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) headed by President Mwai Kibaki defeated the then incumbent party, the Kenya National Union (KANU) in the national general elections held in December 2002 largely because KANU had become a byword for chronic high-level corruption. NARC, sensing the anti-corruption mood prevailing in the country, promised the electorate that, if elected, it would mount an uncompromising clean-up crusade – a policy which proved highly popular with the electorate. The abuse of public office for private gain would, emphasised NARC, be met by zero-tolerance.
Within a year and four months of assuming power, the NARC government became dogged by embarrassing disclosures that a number of highly placed government officials and ministers were party to grave corruption scandals involving hundreds of millions of dollars. The most infamous was the Anglo Leasing corruption scam, which involved two single-sourced turnkey contracts irregularly awarded to the Anglo Leasing and Finance Limited (ALFL), who were to source project finance, which the Kenyan government was eventually to service at commercially exorbitant rates. The first deal, amounting to £21 million, required ALFL to provide terrorism-proof passport-making equipment to protect against forgery and photo-substitutional frauds. The initial open competitive tendering process was overturned by the NARC government in 2003, when the Ministry of Finance negotiated a turnkey project with ALFL that cost more than three times the original option. The second scandal was also a single-sourced turnkey project, where ALFL was awarded a US$40 million contract, again through dubious means, to establish three forensic laboratories and headquarters for the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Those subsequently implicated in rent-taking – two senior ministers and their respective permanent secretaries – are known to be trusted members of President Kibaki’s inner circle. When no government action was forthcoming save officials’ platitudes, the British envoy to Kenya, Sir Edward Clay, delivered a seismic salvo on the matter. In a remarkably revealing statement he made in July 2004, he asserted that the corrupt government officials were driven by ‘... greed and a desperate sense of panic that leads them to eat like gluttons’ (italics mine). In terms of the model here, Clay’s reference to speed and time in his characterisation of the officials’ venal gluttony is pertinent. The government was profoundly rattled by the envoy’s diplomatic projectile; but instead of addressing the serious corruption allegations pointed out by the High Commissioner, the government initially became evasive and defensive. Eventually, however, former permanent secretaries Joseph Magari, Zakayo Cheruyiot, Sylvester Mwaliko and John Agili were charged with corruption in connection with the Anglo Leasing scandal on Wednesday, 16 February 2005. The Attorney General, Amos Wako summarised in Court that since 1993 he had received a total of 57 investigation files from the anti-corruption police unit, the anti corruption commission and the CID, but with prosecution having been concluded in only five cases and a remaining 23 cases in process or awaiting trial (Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, 2005).

Against this backdrop of Kenya’s immediate post-Moi phase of high official corruption, the question that arises is why a government, whose coalition party campaigned vigorously, resolutely, and unambiguously on an anti-corruption platform has several of its high-ranking ministers and officials (many of whom are known to be very close to the Head of State) deeply implicated in venal practices? Conservative estimates pitch the theft at approximately US$87,500,000. It should be borne in mind that NARC’s limited financial resources prior to the 2002 general election were no match to KANU’s formidable resources – except Kibaki’s Democratic Party (DP) faction of the NARC coalition which was of modest means; the rest were largely indisposed on this front.

Given the political stakes involved in the next general election in 2007, some in the Democratic Party of NARC, who lead key ministries by virtue of Kibaki’s Presidency, are perhaps strategising in financial terms well ahead of the forthcoming electoral contest. They certainly have access to rent-seeking opportunities, and this paper contends that the motive is the principle of political self-preservation. It is thus not surprising that those men-
tioned adversely in Kenya’s multimillion dollar corruption scandals belong mainly to the DP wing of the coalition.

Indeed, successive rulers in sub-Saharan African countries have felt insecure at the prospect of electoral competition in the context of this model of corruption, where political supporters must be bought and political opponents impoverished. For example, an incumbent from a minority tribal group may be viewed by other stakeholders as doing little for them, thus encouraging oppositional groups to form. In extreme cases of tribal discrimination ‘sense of grievance and rebellion’ emerges in the exploited group and civil unrest can result (Keen, 2000:31). However, if the head of state secures decisive support from the leaders of the national army he appointed, and also enjoys loyalty from the police, parliament, and other state organs with potentially coercive powers, then his political continuity is almost assured. This may be the case especially if he has already demonstrated his resolve to employ Machiavellian tactics of oppression, intimidation, brutal suppression and blackmail against dissidents. However, after a while, the leader begins to recognise that, in a society typified by widespread poverty and where mere existence is a struggle, the stick employed to keep people in line can be brandished with greater effectiveness if supplemented by the carrot: a head of state can win considerable political mileage by entrenching the patronage system even further. He can signal publicly, but with some diplomatic aplomb, to individuals or groups that they will stand to gain if they behave themselves. Thus, he can buy their silence or secure their grudging cooperation by distributing favours through political appointments, land allocations, cash payments or easy credit access. Even favours to loyal and close supporters can be seen as a political insurance policy: a hedging exercise designed to bolster the defences against a potential re-assertion of conflicting tribal loyalties or counter initiatives by established enemies. Reno makes the following point with respect to rulers and patronage-based embezzlement in shadow states – defined as regimes underpinned by personalisation of authority and the private use of national assets (2000):

To make patronage work as a means of political control, the rulers must prevent all individuals from gaining unregulated access to markets … (he) will minimize the provision of public goods to a population … Removing public goods … is done to encourage individuals to seek the ruler’s favour … (2000:46-47).

Thus patronage as reward is accompanied by an imperative to manufacture scarcity in the public provision of similar goods, and tempered by the calculation that no favoured individual or group should, in consequence, become too rich as to emerge autonomously powerful or completely self-reliant. In the estimation of corrupt rulers, therefore, the extension of protective rewards should be in amounts and at rates that perpetuate dependence. In other words, benefits from the ruler’s favour must not be generalised but remain a private good (Reno, 2000:52), which again encourages embezzlement and militates against social provision.

The instinct for political self-preservation against real and imagined adversaries, including the active encouragement accorded to loyal allies from other tribal communities to participate in this preservation, is one of the most powerful reasons for massive financial aggrandisement. In other words, astute heads of state, as consummate political operators, are not born thieves; on the contrary, their kleptomaniac tendencies stem from, or are triggered by, the forces of political circumstance. But the strategy of taking on real and imagined political enemies in an adversarial but misgoverned re-

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gime does not only involve the rapid accumulation of immense wealth and vast financial resources (to equal or surpass the enemies pecuniary capacity), but also combines lethal initiatives to cripple the economic might of the opposition forces, which in turn makes the sources of financial generation belonging to the opposition, including businesses, the subject of orchestrated impoverishment.

So, when leaders dip their fingers in public tills, it should not be concluded too readily that it is rapacious greed, for its own sake, that prompts them; rather, this thievish behaviour could well be rooted in imperatives of political expediency, for better or for worse; this is much akin to the principle of necessitarianism. If incumbent leaders harbour the view that a previous administration was biased in, and tribally-inclined to, favouring certain tribal communities in the allocation of political and economic resources, then initiatives at broad equalisation (for purposes of restorative tribal equity) are regarded by supporters as a case of necessitarianism: it is a question of righting past wrongs. In this way, the ghosts of past iniquities seem to haunt an affected state and encourage new aberrations.

Of course, some leaders have diverted public resources for personal enrichment in a bid to satisfy their egos. Vanity, including the quest for symbolic immortality through self-royalisation, is also part of the motivations for large-scale robbery and personal misuse of public resources. Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic fits well into this model. Others aggravate for reasons of political imagery and the God-like effect they potentially generate. Mobutu descending from heaven as witnessed in Zairian television screens was a case in point. Felix Houphet Boigny’s (Côte d’Ivoire) tendencies combined the aspect of political preservation with the dimension of spiritual exhibition (constructing baroque churches), the latter component tending to show that there is enough even for gratuitous, religious pursuits. But only incredibly rich leaders can do this – to remind their political enemies of their omnipotence, almost divine in its heavenly construction, and their staggering wealth, ready to be employed to ensure political self-preservation. Yet still others amass fantastic fortunes, not to lead opulent lives or engage in affluent exhibition, but out of perceived political necessity and self-preservation in the face of enemies who may behave similarly. However, this logic is contradictory, because in the act of accumulating personal fortune the polity is being undermines by corruption and theft, which in itself creates the conditions for new opposition to emerge.

Conclusion

The motives for the gargantuan scales of embezzlement witnessed across the length and breath of Africa do not seem to revolve directly around the leaders’ partiality for extravagant lifestyles of obscene ostentation, although these are nonetheless enjoyed by them. Rather, the reasons seem to be invariably political, in particular, the deep-seated desire of those in power for self-preservation and perpetuity. Leaders in Africa have nurtured the impression that personal survival and political continuity is a function of huge financial abilities, large enough to neutralise threats from detractors or adversaries. Rapid aggrandisement, through means fair and foul, is calculated to serve that purpose. To this end, therefore, leaders of shadow states work unremittingly to ensure comprehensive monopolisation of money-spinning public contracts. In addition, they often have elaborate networks of covert operations designed to emasculate the sources of income generation or enrichment of their political enemies. This twin strategy of amassing incredible amounts of fortune, on the one hand, and the deliberate pauperisation of an incumbent’s politi-
cal enemies, on the other, is what I have termed the political theory of economic embezzlement.

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Endnotes

1. Quasi-democracies refer to regimes that opportunistically display all the symbolic hallmarks, if not trappings, of a genuine democratic system (regularly held elections, parliamentary representation, transparency, accountability, rule of law, free press, etc.) but which are, in fact, underpinned by elaborate yet shadowy mechanisms of informal control exercised by a tyrannical power clique covertly pushing for a developmentally-beret narrow sectional agenda.

2. Consider, for example, the murder of the Mozambican journalist, Carloso Cardoso, in November 2000; the earlier shooting of the editor of the newsletter ‘Impartial Fax’ in Angola in January 1995; and the killing of Mr Paul Tembo, once a senior member of Chiluba’s government just six hours before he was to release a report on corruption within that government.

3. This term refers to the coming together of tribal members who fear that the system, headed by a member of another tribe, is ganging up against them. It is a gesture designed to, metaphorically, circle their tribal wagons in order to form a lager, a defensive position against a possible enemy.

4. The notion of vampirism is used in this article to describe regimes in Africa that appear to be obsessed with sucking dry national budgets to a degree that provokes a wide ranging but destructive collapse of wealth-creating institutions. Such a disposition is non-entropic in its conceptual underpinnings in that it regards rapaciously exploited states to be systems that can survive without ploughing back a certain critical quantum of economic, political and institutional throughput. Unlike a ruminant state which grazes and fertilises at the same time, a vampiristic regime tends to debilitate and paralyse. For this distinction, see R. Wade (1990).

Bibliographic Note

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One of the biggest issues facing global development is that oil exports have contributed so little to the welfare of developing countries. The ‘paradox of plenty’, or the ‘resource curse’ as it is generally known, is that countries rich in natural resources, especially oil, tend to suffer from lower living standards, slower growth rates and higher incidence of conflict than their resource-poor counterparts. Between 1970-1993, for example, resource-poor countries, without petroleum, grew four times more rapidly than resource-rich countries, with petroleum, despite the fact that they had half the savings. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have both confirmed that the greater a country’s dependence on oil and mineral resources, the worse its growth performance.

The World Bank, as a significant source of financing for oil and gas development projects in developing countries, has been at the centre of what has now become a global debate about the relationship between the extractive industries and poverty, and the proper roles and responsibilities of international institutions, oil companies and civil society in addressing this problem. As this debate has intensified over the last few years, neither oil companies nor the World Bank and its associates have made many friends for themselves. Indeed, the evidence has been stacking up so heavily against them for so long now that they are being seen more often than not as part of the problem, not the solution. One only has to look at the behaviour of such ‘resource-blessed’ regimes in the developing world, the characteristics of rentier economies, and the theoretical weaknesses of the development discourses propounded by the World Bank and its associates over the last two generations to realise that we are not dealing with rocket science.

This Briefing is merely the latest illustration of how damaging the World Bank and oil companies can be to the development and welfare of African (and other) peoples. It highlights two highly problematic dimensions of the World Bank-funded Chad Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project (CCPP). The first is by way of a review of the Catholic Relief Services’ and Bank Information Center’s (CRS-BIC) recent report into the way in which the CCPP is developing in Chad. The second is a preliminary investigation into serious allegations regarding the environmental impact and safety of the Pipeline itself.

The main parties in the CCPP are the World Bank (and its partner Donors), a three-company oil consortium comprising Exxon Mobil (40%), Petronas Malaysia (35%) and ChevronTexaco (25%) and the governments of the two countries (Chad and Cameroon). The effective ‘lead-agent’ in the project has been ExxonMobil.
The Chad Experiment

Those, who, at the end of the last millennium still had some faith left in the World Bank/IMF and its associated donor system, as well as the ability of hydrocarbons to lift developing countries out of poverty, were desperately looking for a model of how to make petroleum work for the poor. Their answer was Chad. The CCPP was set up and designed to show that petrodollars really could be used to alleviate poverty. For both the World Bank and the oil companies, going into Chad was like going into the Last Chance Saloon. It was the great experiment: the proof that the ‘resource curse’ really could be broken.

The technical details of the project were relatively straightforward. Significant oil deposits have been found in southern Chad. Reserves of the Miandoum, Bolobo and Kome fields in the Doba basin are put at over 1 billion barrels. ExxonMobil plans to add 5 new ‘satellite’ fields in 2005-6. Along with other companies, notably EnCana, ExxonMobil is also exploring other parts of Chad. As Chad is land-locked, the only way to export the oil is by a 1,070 km pipeline that runs from Kome in southern Chad across Cameroon to the Atlantic coast at Kribi; 890 kms of the pipeline are in Cameroon.

The pipeline was completed in July 2003, fourteen months ahead of schedule. Significant oil deposits have been found in southern Chad. Reserves of the Miandoum, Bolobo and Kome fields in the Doba basin are put at over 1 billion barrels. ExxonMobil plans to add 5 new ‘satellite’ fields in 2005-6. Along with other companies, notably EnCana, ExxonMobil is also exploring other parts of Chad. As Chad is land-locked, the only way to export the oil is by a 1,070 km pipeline that runs from Kome in southern Chad across Cameroon to the Atlantic coast at Kribi; 890 kms of the pipeline are in Cameroon.

The World Bank provided financing that catalysed the ExxonMobil-led project. Originally costed at $3.5 billion, ExxonMobil confirmed in October 2004 that the total project cost had risen to $4.2 billion.

Against widespread public concerns, the World Bank promised that the new oil revenues would not be lost to corruption (in spite of Chad’s ranking as the third most corrupt country in the world) or mismanagement, but that petrodollars would be channelled to Chad’s poor. The Bank’s promise, which it described as ‘a major new opportunity to accelerate development in one of the world’s poorest countries’, was based on the ingenious but seemingly simple and straightforward ‘Revenue Management Plan’ (RMP). The RMP was the key feature of the new legal framework, known as Law 001, established to manage the Project. The principles of the RMP are that:

- **All direct revenues**: royalties and dividends are paid by the ExxonMobil consortium into Chadian government-controlled escrow accounts at Citibank in London.

- **Indirect revenues**: income taxes on the oil companies, customs duties, etc., are paid directly into Chad’s treasury.

After debt repayments to the World Bank and European Investment Bank are withdrawn from the Citibank account, the remaining direct revenues will be allocated as follows:

- **10% to a Future Generations Fund** to save for the post-oil era in Chad.

- **72% to capital investments in 5 priority sectors** to fight poverty: education, health and social services, rural development, infrastructure, and environmental and water resources.
• 4.5% to the oil-producing region in Southern Chad as additional, earmarked funding.

• 13.5% to Chad’s treasury for discretionary spending, until 2007; thereafter, these funds will be divided among the priority sectors.

• A joint government-civil society Petroleum Revenue Oversight and Control Committee – known as the Collège – would be established with the authority to approve or reject specific projects financed by direct oil revenues.

Many, especially the participants, hailed the Chad project as a ‘new model’ for harnessing oil revenues to benefit development. At the groundbreaking ceremony in 2000, Tom Walters of Esso (ExxonMobil) Chad proclaimed:

We know that profound poverty is an unfortunate reality in much of Africa. Its alleviation requires private investment, collaboration and responsible government policies. The Chad-Cameroon Project embodies all these elements. It offers great hope to the people of these two countries and we are proud to be involved now and in the future.

Two years further on, the Central African resident representative of the International Finance Corporation (World Bank Group) claimed that the Chad experiment was going to be the model for every single project of this type worldwide.

And, at the inauguration of the pipeline in 2003, Chad’s President, Idriss Déby, claimed that:
The development of the crude oil will benefit the entire Chadian nation.

The world, especially the development analysts, listened, watched and waited. The CRS-BIC’s 117-page report on ‘Chad’s Oil’, the first comprehensive report on the CCPP, has now been published – more than one year after the project commenced operations. The report, although perhaps sympathetic to the Chad government, is highly critical of the way in which the CCPP has been executed in Chad. Key conclusions drawn from the CRS-BIC report are that:

Many of the details regarding the calculation of revenues and many of the key agreements between the oil companies and the Chad government remain secret.

There are many loopholes in the legal safeguards. For example, all ‘indirect revenues’ – including income taxes on oil companies – fall outside the provisions of the RMP and go direct to the government. These will amount to at least $3 billion over 25 years. Nor does the RMP cover any oil produced outside the three original Doba fields.

These weaknesses mean that it will be very difficult to verify the accuracy of the revenue information disclosed, and that much oil revenue will fall outside the provisions of Law 001 and the oversight of the Collège.

The project’s ‘watchdogs’ are ‘toothless’. The Collège has no legal power of enforcement nor sufficient capacity to track spending through to end use, while the World Bank’s own International Advisory Group (IAG) is largely ignored. The IAG has continuously critiqued the 2-speed nature of the project, whereby construction of the pipeline (finished 14 months ahead of schedule) has far outpaced the urgently required building of the institutional and technical capacity of the Chadian government, which, at present, is quite incapable of managing the project, especially its legal and financial components. The IAG’s repeated calls for urgent measures to accelerate capacity-building efforts have gone unheeded.

Of the other two Monitoring mechanisms, the External Compliance Monitoring Group (ECMG) is staffed by a consulting firm under direct contract with the International Finance Corporation (the private-sector lending arm of the World Bank group) to monitor the Consortium’s compliance with the environmental management plan. As shown below, in the case of Cameron especially, the CCPP is in breach of numerous international environmental safety standards and regulations.

The Comité Technique Nationale de Suivi et de Contrôle (CTNSC) is the government body in Chad charged with oversight of the environmental and social impacts of the petroleum sector. The CTNSC suffers serious capacity restraints, financial and organisational difficulties. This is in part because it is heavily reliant on funding from World Bank capacity building loans that have largely failed to achieve their objectives and are now depleted. The Chad government has failed to budget any resources for the CTNSC in 2004 and 2005, casting doubt on its commitment to the monitoring agency and thus making the CTNSC reliant on ExxonMobil’s facilities and data. Given ExxonMobil’s violation of environmental regulations (detailed below), this is merely another case of getting the fox to guard the chickens.

A general criticism of the project is its rentier nature. Apart from making the country’s economy increasingly dependent on oil prices and thus vulnerable to external shocks, oil sales tend to push up the exchange rate and thus make other exports non-competitive. In Chad’s case, this tendency will impact negatively on the labour-intensive agricultural sector. As the CRS-BIC report noted:
As a form of rent, petrodollars decrease the government’s reliance on non-oil revenues, including taxes, and actually weaken one of the links between people and their government, which is essential if there is to be any popular control over major decisions affecting a country and its resources. In such a context, governments tend to rely increasingly on repression through the use of security forces (rather than consent of the governed) to remain in power. Indeed, countries that depend on oil exports are among the most economically troubled, the most authoritarian, and the most conflict-ridden states in the world today.6

The CRS-BIC’s central conclusion suggests that ‘extractive industries can only be an engine of equitable growth and poverty alleviation if certain basic conditions are in place before oil or mineral wealth is tapped.’7 In Chad’s case, the fundamental ‘enabling conditions’ of ‘respect for human rights; consent of locally affected communities; adequate government capacity to enforce laws, monitor and regulate the extractive sectors, and demonstrated government and corporate commitment to transparency’8 are all noticeably absent.

These failures, which must be laid at the door of the World Bank and ExxonMobil, have gone a long way to establishing the sort of framework within which corruption and mismanagement can flourish. Indeed, cynics might suggest that such an outcome is in the misguided interests of all three parties – the ExxonMobil-led oil consortium, the Chad government and the World Bank. Considering the way in which all three parties have ignored the advice that has been given them, it is difficult to counter such a suggestion, although the potential for increased political risk is now very much higher and is likely to become a cause of increasing anxiety to all oil and gas companies in the region.

In a careful choice of words, the CRS-BIC report concludes that ‘it is too early to declare the Chad experiment a failure or a success’, but that the experiment ‘hangs by a thread’. That may be optimistic. Quite apart from the findings of the CRS-BIC report, there are other pointers suggesting that oil production in Chad is likely to lead to corruption, conflict and the further concentration of power in the hands of a few. If that becomes the case, then the people of Chad risk bearing enormous costs.

Cameroon Threatened by Environmental Disaster9

Cameroon benefits from the CCPP through the receipt of transit fees. Set at $0.41 per barrel, these could amount to $500 million, or higher if new oil fields are developed in Chad, over the 25-year life of the project. Although Cameroon was ranked by Transparency International as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, the World Bank did not use its leverage to ensure that new revenue management laws were enacted, nor have any increased transparency concessions or other special measures been put in place to manage this new revenue source.

During the course of 2003 and 2004, allegations began to appear on the Internet and elsewhere regarding the CCPP’s violation of a number of environmental and other safety measures.10 A preliminary investigation suggests that not only are the people of Cameroon unlikely to see any benefits from these new revenues, but that their welfare and lives have been put at risk by the project’s serious violation of social and environmental safety standards and regulations. These are far too extensive to document here: at least 13 major mandatory standards appear to have been compromised. The main violations are:
Emergency Shut-down Valves (ESDVs): International regulations (and US Standards) require that ESDVs are installed at ‘strategic’ locations, including both sides of major river crossings in order to protect drinking water resources from the threat of oil pollution. The pipeline crosses some 25 rivers, 17 of which ExxonMobil has identified as being ‘major’.

ExxonMobil states that 48 Main Line Valves (MLVs) have been installed along the length of the pipeline, including at both sides of the 17 major rivers. The importance of having MLVs on both sides of the river is to prevent back-siphoning into the river in the event of pipeline rupture or other such accident. However, an examination of ExxonMobil’s table of MLV locations reveals that only 28 of the 48 valve stations are in fact MLVs, as mandatorily required. The remaining 20 are listed as being ‘Check Valves’, which are not a substitute for MLVs. Senior site engineers have stated that ExxonMobil installed valves on only one side of the rivers. This would appear to be born out by an examination of ExxonMobil’s MLV locations in relation to river crossings, which reveals that of the 17 major rivers, only 5 rivers have valves on both sides (or near both sides). However, 5 of these 10 valves are Check Valves. Assuming that MLV location data is correct, this means that only one of the 25 or so rivers crossed by the pipeline, the Nyong River, would appear to be properly protected by ESDVs as required by international regulations.

Further examination of ExxonMobil’s MLV location data suggests that the remaining MLVs have been placed randomly and not strategically, as mandatorily required. For example, there is not a single MLV in the first (Chad-end) 137 kms of the pipeline.

Furthermore, 7 of the MLVs are listed as being manually operated. In the event of a disaster, an entire pipeline should be able to be shut down in 10-15 minutes. With manually operated MLVs this is almost certainly impossible, especially if accessibility to many parts of the pipeline, as site engineers claim, is not easy. Indeed, in the event of a major storm, ground access may be precluded and helicopters be grounded, thus delaying access to manually operated MLVs for some time.

The cost saving of not installing the MLVs would have been considerable. Of the 48 MLVs that ExxonMobil claims to have installed, only 28 are in fact MLVs. The remaining 20 are Check Valves. In addition to this shortfall of 20 MLVs, 12 of the 17 major rivers have only one valve of any sort, making a total shortfall of at least 32 MLVs. The total cost of a valve station, which, in addition to the valve, involves the installation of such things as air conditioning, fibre optic cable connections, electronic systems, satellite communication, etc., is considerable and can run into millions of dollars. Project engineers have estimated that properly equipped MLV stations can cost as much as $10-15 million. This could give a saving of $320-480 million – not far short of Cameroon’s total revenues for the project over the next 25 years!

Proof of the absence of MLVs can be obtained by simple ocular inspection. Although the project’s website and ExxonMobil’s many published documents contain hundreds of ‘happy-snap’ photographs of the project, neither ExxonMobil nor the World Bank’s IAG appear to have produced a concise photographic record of the project through its design, construction and completed works stage. This apparent omission is surprising for a project this size ($4.2 bn), the largest public-private development partnership in Africa.

The Floating Storage & Offloading Vessel (FSO): The ideal form of transfer of crude oil from a land-based pipeline to ocean-going shipment is for the pipeline
to feed into a ‘storage tank farm’ close to deep water, as is the case in Saudi Arabia. The shallow water along the Cameroon coast does not permit such a terminal. Storage and loading is therefore by means of an FSO. In this case, the FSO is a 30 years-old, obsolete, single-hull crude oil tanker converted to stationary duty, moored some 7-12 kms off Kribi. Its stated storage capacity is 318,000 cubic meters (2 million barrels, approx. 85 million gallons), almost eight times the capacity of the ill-fated Exxon Valdez (11 million gallons). In other words, it holds roughly one week’s pipeline output at peak capacity. The oil is pumped from Chad and across Cameroon in a 30-inch pipeline to a ‘pressure reducing station’, some 10 kms inland. The oil is then pumped to the FSO through a slightly narrower pipeline on the seabed.

The FSO is in violation of numerous international standards and regulations, mostly regarding failures to meet oil-spillage safety requirements, such as inadequate booms, oil recovery capacity, etc. (see below). The most serious violation is that the FSO is not compliant with the new International Maritime Organisation (IMO) regulations that came into force on 6 April 2005. These require that the FSO be double-hulled. This new legislation is designed to close the ambiguous loophole that might have allowed for FSOs, as distinct from tankers, to be single-hulled. The new legislation could easily have been foreseen before the pipeline construction was even started and the FSO moored off Kribi. ExxonMobil claims that the FSO is in a ‘benign weather area’, which is not true. ExxonMobil also claims that the worst-case offshore spillage scenario is 7,100 metric tons of crude oil (approx. 450,000 barrels). Since the FSO holds some 2 million barrels, the worst case scenario, should the FSO explode, break its back or be ripped open in a collision, is obviously 2 million barrels – four and a half times greater than ExxonMobil’s claim. 

This would be even higher if a loading tanker were also involved in the disaster. ExxonMobil’s understatement is contrary to US law, which requires the worst-case discharge to be based on the entire contents of the FSO (especially as it is single-hulled!). The alternative to an FSO would have been for the construction of a ‘tank farm’ with an underground pipeline to a loading terminal.

**Area Specific Oil-spill Response Plans (ASOSRPs)**

Statutory regulations require all response plans to be approved and in place before a pipeline is commissioned.

The World Bank Inspection Panel (the policing arm of the World Bank) has so far undertaken two investigations. Their report states the ASOSRPs shall be in place 180 days before the first oil is pumped. The report also states that emergency shutdown valves (see above) shall be placed on both sides of the major rivers.

The pipeline was commissioned and began pumping crude oil in July 2003. The World Bank has repeatedly failed to answer the question of whether ASOSRPs were in place. Finally, after being threatened with the publication of documentation, the World Bank’s African Office confirmed that oil-spill plans were not available or approved as at 23 December 2004. The World Bank thus confirmed that the Cameroon Oil Transportation Company (COTCO), effectively an ExxonMobil subsidiary, had been operating illegally for 17 months. It is unlikely that COTCO’s oil-spill response plan will ever be approved. According to a number of environmental specialists, such as the Centre pour L’Environnement et le Développement (Yaoundé, Cameroon), COTCO’s Plan is riddled with inadequacies and in contravention of a raft of international regulations. Its worst-case scenario (See FSO above) is a gross misrepresentation of the danger facing
Cameroon and surrounding areas, and in gross contravention of US law. A report by a senior site engineer, so far ignored by the World Bank, states that:

*World Bank Operating Policies and procedures for environmental protection have been circumvented. The contract terms and conditions mandate an ‘independent’ consultant/expert to approve the ASOSRP, but project records will show that ExxonMobil’s associated company [Oil Spill UK Ltd] has approved the ASOSRP.*

…Contingency plans for clean-up, personnel and public safety and property are not in place. [There is] risk of serious and grave pollution to the Atlantic Basin, Gulf of Guinea and Eco-systems over the entire 1000 km (pipeline) route … [There is also] risk of contaminations to key waterways and drinking supplies, fishing and farming industries. Lake Chad, which is an internationally shared water resource, is not protected by the mandatory ESVD and ASOSRP. This is a critical safety and environmental issue which has been neglected.

**Damage to Local Environment:** Site engineers also claim that ExxonMobil has undertaken illegal, cost-saving practices in the installation of the pipeline trench erosion protection. Instead of inserting gabion bags (wire baskets) filled with stone/rock into the parallel (contoured) protection trenches as required by regulation, ExxonMobil is reported to have filled the trenches with cement bags mixed with cement and topsoil. This not only forms a dam, preventing the water percolating through the trench, but the washout of the cement means that water resources along the route are being polluted by calcium hydroxide.

**Violation of Indigenous Rights:** The Pipeline route violates the rights of Cameroon’s Bagyeli and Bakola indigenous peoples (Pygmies). It was recognised at the outset of the CCPP that the pipeline might go through the lands of indigenous peoples. This was a ‘red flag’ to the World Bank, which suggested to ExxonMobil at the planning stage that a plan be set up to protect these indigenous communities. According to a leading World Bank environmental specialist, ‘ExxonMobil didn’t take it (the plan) seriously. After much ‘lively debate’ and hassle (from ExxonMobil), ExxonMobil assessed the impacts of the pipeline on the Bakola and an evaluation of their needs. The pipeline didn’t need to go through their area. It could have followed the road on the outside and be laid into the soft shoulder. But, ExxonMobil didn’t relocate the pipeline. They put it directly through Bakola lands, doing much environmental damage in the process’.

The CCPP did in fact set up the Foundation for Environment and Development in Cameroon (FEDEC) fund, as part of a compensation package to communities affected by the pipeline. The fund is mandated to finance an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) in consultation with the indigenous communities. In 2003 the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) reported that there had been no involvement of the Bagyeli or Bakola peoples. In 2004 the World Bank’s Inspection Panel found that there had been serious delays in the development of the much-promised IPP. In its 2004 Annual Report the IWGIA confirmed that after 3 years, the IPP remains ‘virtually non-existent’.

**Conclusions**

This Briefing raises many questions as to why the World Bank and ExxonMobil have acted so brazenly and with such seeming disregard for both the law and the safety and welfare of the peoples of this part of Africa. Those questions, along with an analysis of how this project and its management relate to the wider political economy of Africa, the Bush Administration’s ‘War on Terror’ and America’s energy crisis, will be
covered in a substantive article, which is being prepared for a future issue of ROAPE. In the meantime, the following pointers can be given:

_The Bush administration’s decision to define African oil (in the context of the US’s energy crisis) as a ‘strategic national interest’ and thus a resource that the United States might choose to use military force to control … _18

gives some reason as to why both the World Bank, regarded by many as little more than the financial arm of US Foreign Policy, and ExxonMobil, its largest oil company, feel they can ride roughshod over a host of international laws, regulations, standards and conventions.

ExxonMobil (and perhaps also the World Bank) will, at some point in the future, almost certainly find itself being sued for the violation of these and other safety and environmental laws, regulations and standards. The calculation, which ExxonMobil has almost certainly made, is that the fines and damages payments imposed by courts, whether in Africa, the US or elsewhere, will be less than the cost savings made through such deliberate violations, plus the additional profits gleaned by getting the project running more than one year ahead of schedule (with the consequent damages of such haste to the peoples of both Chad and Cameroon – see above).

At this stage it is impossible to know the precise cost of this project, and especially the breakdown costs of its component parts, other than statements that the gross project cost has risen from $3.5bn to $4.2bn. This is for two reasons. First, neither of the main parties, the World Bank Group and ExxonMobil, have given a clear breakdown of budget allocations and costs. Second, the project has been riddled with ‘change orders’, the funding of which has not been publicly disclosed. In view of the use of taxpayers’ money from so many countries (including the UK), and the damages that are likely to be incurred by the peoples of Chad and Cameroon, it is imperative that the entire cost of the project, including ‘change orders’, is made publicly accountable.

Finally, if there is any doubt that the World Bank Group and ExxonMobil may have been operating without the support of the US government, the case of John M. Fitzgerald makes illuminating reading.

Fitzgerald was an analyst with the US Agency for International Development (USAID). His job was to evaluate proposed international aid projects to ensure that they met environmental requirements. Under a statute called the ‘Pelosi amendment’, US delegations to the World Bank and regional development banks cannot support any aid project without an environmental review, if that project will have significant environmental effects. Fitzgerald drew attention to the CCPP for its lack of detailed plans for dealing with oil spills etc. He is reported to have told colleagues that the CCPP was an ‘environmental time-bomb’. He consequently filed a whistle-blower complaint, charging that US Treasury officials had pressured USAID to approve energy projects in South America, Eastern Europe and Africa (Chad-Cameroon) without the requisite reviews. He was dismissed and made jobless. Two years later, in September 2004, the federal civil service court, the Merit Systems Protection Board, ruled that he had been wrongfully terminated. According to the court ruling,

_USAID removed its sole analyst overseeing environmental compliance in multinational development bank projects to prevent him from reporting violations to Congress and watchdog organizations._

The Executive Director of PEER (Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility), which filed the case, stated: ‘This
case is about the Bush Administration censoring the information available to the Congress and the American people, who are paying for these loans’.

The Bush Administration is in good company with ExxonMobil: a leading official with decades of World Bank experience stated that

Exxon people are the least responsible organisation I ever dealt with. They couldn’t give a damn about the environment, such as prudent routing of the pipeline, vulnerable ethnic minorities and their life-support systems, double-hull-ing, spill response plans, and greenhouse gas emissions. Getting them to consider such prudentary measures is like getting blood from a stone.

As for the World Bank, the CCPP project will almost certainly leave its reputation as an agent of underdevelopment intact.

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Endnotes
3. Ian Gary (Catholic Relief Services) & Nikki Reisch (Bank Information Center), ‘Chad’s Oil: Miracle or Mirage?’ Catholic Relief Services and Bank Information Center, February 2005. The opinions expressed in this Briefing are those of its author and are not necessarily shared by either Ian Gary, Nikki Reisch, Catholic Relief Services or the Bank Information Center.
4. All data in this section of the Briefing which refers to Chad is taken from the CRS-BIC Report (note 3). The IAG is a 5-member independent body of experts created by the World Bank in 2001 at the urging of civil society groups to monitor the implementation of the project and to advise the project sponsors, host governments and the World Bank on any problems as they might arise. The IAG reports directly to the World Bank President. It has so far submitted nine reports, the penultimate on 18 November 2004 and the latest on 9 February 2005.
5. The CRS-BIC report (p. 12) makes clear that it does not focus on the social and environmental impacts of the construction phase of the project in either Chad or Cameroon.
11. Details of Main Line Valve Locations and types of valve are given in Table 5.1, Section 5.2.2 of the ‘Project Description Supporting Documents’ (Chad Export Project), Volume I, May 1999.
12. See Table 7.1 at www.essochad.com/Chad/Library/Documentation/Chad_00_Response.asp
13. According to ExxonMobil’s data (see note 11), there are 3 Check Valves (i.e. not MLVs) at 3, 37 and 98 kms along the pipeline.
14. In its example of clean-up scenarios (Appendix B, General Oil Spill Response Plan) the highest spill-size envisaged by ExxonMobil (from a hull fracture) is 50,000 barrels, i.e. 2.5% of the FSO’s capacity!
15. According to the ‘Bank Management Response to request for inspection panel review of the Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project and Cameroon petroleum environment capacity enhancement project,’ ‘Mainline vales are being installed near each river side of all river crossings’. Page 29 of Electronic version. Access at: http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ccpro/project/ipn_mgt_rsp_insp_1218.pdf. This is stated in several other project documents as, for example, the Project Description, Chap 3.5, which states that: ‘Valves will be installed along the length of the pipeline at approximately 35 km (22 mile) intervals and near each side of major river crossings to … limit potential environmental impacts in case of a leak or a spill.’ electronic version, access at http/
16. According to the latest IAG report, this was finalised in December. However, it does not appear to have been approved by Parliament nor made public.

17. The Indigenous World 2003 and 2004, IWGIA, Copenhagen, pages 392 and 400 respectively.


Famine in Niger is Not All That it Appears

Jeremy H. Keenan

The increasingly serious famine situation in Niger has finally hit the British television news. News bulletin reports that up to 4 million people face starvation as a result of last year’s harvest failure are correct. Explanatory statements, à la Geldof-G8 style, that the seriousness of the current famine situation is the result of tardiness on the part of world agencies and the EU to recognise the inevitability of this year’s famine and send either sufficient food or financial aid are not correct. The reality of the situation, like so many other famine situations in the less developed world, is rather more complex.

A combination of climatic conditions last year, combined with a series of locust plagues, made it blindingly obvious to everyone, including world aid agencies, the EU and local populations, as long ago as last October that famine was inevitable. However, it has been especially difficult for world aid agencies and EU countries to intervene when Niger’s President, Mamadou Tanja, has stubbornly refused to admit that his country faces a famine. Niger’s own President has thus made it extremely difficult for external agencies to provide timely assistance. The consequence, as we are now seeing on out TV screens, is that the long-predicted famine, which has for some time been the cause of widespread ‘anti-government’ demonstrations and social unrest, has now reached a crisis: people, especially infants and children, are now dying in sufficient numbers to have western TV cameras turned upon them.

The answer to the question of why Mamadou Tanja wittingly led his country to this crisis has many strands to it. Key amongst them is his new alliance with the Bush administration in its highly questionable and duplicitous African ‘war on terror’. Niger is one of the four states which accepted US military intervention (training of counter-terrorism, etc) in January 2003 under what was called the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI). With the inclusion of four more countries in the region this June (2005), the PSI has been transformed at some $100 million per year for five years into the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI). The fact that virtually all experts on this part of Africa agree that there was no ‘terrorism’ in this region prior to the US presence is another matter.

The point is that Mamadou Tanja is now a critical ally in America’s militarisation of Africa and the securitisation of its oil resources, now defined as a ‘US strategic national resource’. In addition to the military and financial largesse that he is receiving, the prospect of an invitation to the White House to meet both President Bush and the Chairman of Exxon (who has interests in Niger), which was fulfilled this June, was seen by Tanja and his coterie as an immense personal accolade and an important step-up for his impoverished and little-known country. However, it seems that Tanja, not well-known in Washington circles, did not want to go to Washington as President of what ‘Washington’s philosophers’ refer to as ‘basket cases’. Niger, after all, is an
up-and-coming state and a key player in the new US military alliance.

If that sounds slightly cynical, let me throw a little light on Mamadou Tanja’s domestic performance since the commencement of the PSI. Four weeks after the arrival of US Special Forces in his country, Tanja ordered the arrest of Rhissa ag Boula, leader of the 1990s Tuareg rebellion, their signatory to the subsequent Peace Accord and subsequent Minister of Tourism. Boula was alleged to have been involved in the murder of a young political party worker. Although no charges were brought against him, he was dismissed as Minister and taken into detention, being held in jail for 13 months until his release this March. This action was widely believed to have been designed to provoke the Tuareg into taking up arms so that the government could secure more military aid from the US. The move had its desired effect: anger at Rhissa’s detention led to increased political tension, especially in the northern mountainous regions of Air, and an escalation of banditry, for which Rhissa’s brother, Mohamed ag Boula, reportedly claimed responsibility. This confirmed the prevailing ‘group-think’ of US military intelligence that the Sahara was a nest of putative terrorists.

In September (2004), the Niger government sent some 150 troops into Air in a move which many thought likely to ignite a new Tuareg rebellion. However, the troops, recently trained by the US marines as part of the PSI, were ambushed by the Tuareg, with at least one soldier being killed, four wounded and four being taken hostage. RFI (Radio France Internationale) subsequently carried an interview in which Rhissa’s brother said he was leading a 200-strong group which was fighting to defend the rights of the Tuareg, Tubu and Semori nomadic populations of northern Niger, and that he was personally responsible for the attack.

Following Rhissa’s release, the Tuareg set out to negotiate what they believed would be a quite straightforward request for an amnesty for those who took up arms. Libya’s Guide, Mouamar Qadhafi, who had brokered the safe return of the captured Niger soldiers, used his good offices in May and June to negotiate the amnesty, only to find that it was being blocked by US pressure on the Niger government. The Americans seemingly wanted a further excuse for a ‘shoot up’ in the Sahara to justify their TSCTI. For the first time, and to the Tuareg’s surprise, France failed to assist them in their negotiations. Finally, in the third week of July, Tripoli announced the successful conclusion of an amnesty. According to sources involved in the negotiations, Qadhafi was able to talk with certain senior Niger army officers who were anxious about the direction in which Mamadou Tanja and the Americans were taking their country. The expression of such sentiments, combined with Tanja’s current attempt to follow the example of his neighbour, Chad’s President Deby (another recipient of the PSI), in changing the country’s constitution to seek a third term and become ‘president for life’, suggest that elements in the army may be considering using their position to save their country from the perils into which Tanja is taking it.

Returning to the immediacy of the food crisis, reports suggesting that the outside world has not been generous in its aid are not entirely true. It is certainly difficult for the UN World Food Programme to raise extra funds to purchase additional food for Niger when the country’s own President has for so long denied such a crisis. There is also a difficulty in that the same conditions which devastated Niger’s cereal production also hit harvests in neighbouring Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso and northern Nigeria.

Perhaps more serious, however, is the recurrence of a particularly nasty problem, namely the embezzlement of foreign
aid by members of the country's political and commercial elites. One the triggers of the Tuareg rebellions in both Niger and Mali in the 1990s was the discovery by Tuareg that foreign aid destined for their drought-ridden areas on the desert margins was being embezzlement by senior government officials in both Bamako (Mali) and Niamey (Niger) for personal use. It seems that the same situation may be flourishing once again in Niger. Since 1984 Japan has provided Niger with regular gifts of rice. The condition of this gift is that it is sold by Niger’s National Office of Food Products into domestic distribution channels at normal market prices in order not to destabilise the local markets. The money from this sale is then used to purchase additional cereals such as millet, sorghum and maize.

At the end of June, a shipment of 7,408 tonnes of Japanese rice was transported by road from Cotonou to Niger. At or before the frontier, 47 Niger traders, including a number of Deputies (MPs), bought the entire shipment of 148,160 fifty kilogram sacks for 232,560 Francs (CFA) per tonne, this being 11,625 CFA per sack, and a discount of 22% to the normal market selling price of 14,500-15,500 CFA per sack. However, these sacks were not sold onto the local market, but exported directly into Nigeria where they were sold at an average of 20,000 CFA per sac, thus giving the ‘traders’ a quick turnaround profit of €1.13 million, or an average of just over €24,000 per trader. Not bad for a day’s business in the world’s second poorest country. Japan has asked the Niger government for an explanation.

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The Political & Economic Effects of Nigerian Shari’a on Southern Niger

Matt Kirwin

In an attempt to eliminate reported societal ills, in 1999 some Muslim dominated states in Northern Nigeria adopted Shari’a law and subsequently outlawed activities such as drinking, prostitution and gambling, in addition to less controversial practices as praise singing and integration of the sexes in public places. The neighbouring state of Niger, which has a large Hausa population as well, has, by contrast, been reluctant to base its legal codes on Qur’anic law. When bars, brothels and informal casinos were shut down in Nigeria, the same establishments were opened in Niger. I argue that Niger’s secular political orientation amounts to an economic comparative advantage, which financially benefits traditional elites and political elites in government. I explore these developments through brief field enquiries and the lens of literature on trans-border economies and patron clientelism. Likewise, the study raises a host of questions that deal with the concept of development – especially in light of the fact that the economic comparative advantage is rooted in an economy that is tied to the existence of prostitution. In other words, how sustainable is a form economic development that is anchored to activities that are oftentimes health averse and in the eyes of many, morally questionable?

In 1999 after nearly twenty years of authoritarian rule, Nigeria successfully held democratic elections that witnessed the victory of Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian from the South. Unfortunately, not all political actors interpreted the election as a positive step. The results forced the Hausa ethnic group to relinquish power after nearly twenty years of
power. The Hausa elites resisted this and in an attempt to demonstrate their political power, traditionally Muslim Hausa speakers implemented Shari'a in the northern part of the country in the months following the national election. In the case of Shari'a, religion is an instrument for acquiring prebendalist concessions in the distribution of power and wealth (Abubakar, 2001). The installation of Shari'a in Northern Nigeria had a pronounced effect on Southern Niger.

Niger and Nigeria are linked culturally, economically and politically, particularly in the north of Nigeria and south of Niger. Trade and contraband activities between Niger and Nigeria have historically been a part of both economies (Azam, 1991; Baier, 1980; Collins, 1976; Gregoire, 1992; Lund, 2001; Miles, 1994). Black market trade between Nigeria and Niger in goods such as alcohol and peanuts are legacies of different colonial policies in both states. The implementation of Shari'a in Nigeria changed the cross-border dynamics of relations between the two countries. Because Niger has been and continues to be a secular state, it stands in contrast to the Shari'a based government in Northern Nigeria. The government of Niger has vigorously discouraged attempts by some Islamic leaders to introduce a more radical branch of Islam (Davis & Kossomi, 2001). Nigerians who sought access to alcohol and prostitutes were obliged to travel across the border to Niger and this demand created a supply. Though the indigenous Hausa in Niger and Nigeria share a common religion and strong cultural traditions, Nigerien Hausa and other dominant Muslim ethnic groups as the Songhay were willing to accommodate that which their Nigerian counterparts would not.

In Africa, borders do not inhibit economic activities; in some cases they actually act as ‘corridors of opportunity.’ Differences in policy and protectionist barriers are advantages that can be used for financial profit (Meagher, 2003). Parallel trade has flourished across the Niger-Nigeria border due to the fact that legal exports on one side of the border sometimes become illegal on the other side of the border (Azam, 1991). The secular nature of the Nigerien government created a ‘corridor of opportunity’ thanks to the implementation of Shari'a in Northern Nigeria. The informal exchange of goods and products is an integral component of African economies and the term *état entrepot* describes states that survive on well structured and dynamic parallel economies (Igue, 1976; 1992).

Three towns relatively close to the Nigerian-Nigerien border underwent spectacular changes due to the illegalisation of alcohol and prostitution in Northern Nigeria. Firgi, located within the department of Maradi, was the first town to receive an influx of prostitutes, gamblers and bar owners from Northern Nigeria (*New York Times*, 2001). Mai Mujia and Adare, in the department of Zinder, also experienced drastic changes, but at later dates. Although changes were observable in all three villages, this briefing focuses specifically on the village of Mai Mujia.

**Mai Mujia**

The first state in Nigeria to implement Shari'a law was Zamfara at the end of 1999. People who were affected by the installation of Shari'a were those said by the local government to be taking part in activities contrary to Islamic beliefs. Almost as soon as the aforementioned activities were outlawed, bar owners and prostitutes emigrated to Niger where they assumed the new identity of *baki*, or visitor.

A visit to Mai Mujia reveals the magnitude at which life in border towns in the Hausa region of Niger has changed. Mai Mujia is located on a major axis of transportation that connects Zinder to
Kano. Conversations with villagers revealed the extent to which the village has changed due to the introduction of Shari’a in Northern Nigeria. Interviews with Sarkin Baki, literally translated as the ‘traditional chief of visitors’ revealed how Niger has changed as a result of Shari’a law in Nigeria. He is responsible for all immigrants who have settled in Mai Mujia and has provided great insight into the attitudes of Nigeriens. At the same time, he is grateful for the arrival of the bakis who have brought, as he terms it, blessings and good luck to Mai Mujia.

Traditional chiefs such as Sarkin Baki greatly profited from the arrival of bakis due to the fact that they were able to rent their houses to them. Chiefs are the modern legacy of a pre-colonial feudal system and still own significant plots of land and houses. Due to a lack of multi-storied buildings, villages tend to grow outwards and not upwards. Sarkin Baki owns most of the land that surrounds the village and he is remunerated for the land that it is built on. The bakis buy land on which to build their homes, and Sarkin Baki has sold tracts of land to the bakis in addition to renting them rooms in his houses. He also collects taxes from each of the bakis who has moved to Mai Mujia. Finally, he, for a fee, resolves conflicts that frequently occur among the baki population.

El Hadjia Fatouma Zara is one of the people who has helped enhance Sarkin Baki’s economic status. Fatouma Zara, originally from Maradi in Niger, worked as a prostitute in Kano up until Shari’a was introduced in Kano state, Nigeria. When she perceived the threat of Shari’a to be real, she moved all of her belongings to Mai Mujia in Niger and continued to work as a prostitute. She explained why she moved to Mai Mujia and how the village has changed to me.

El Hadjia Fatouma Zara

Shari’a chased out a lot of people. Tandja [the current President of Niger] refused to do Shari’a in Niger so many of us moved to here, where we would not be bothered. Before Mai Mujia was empty, now it is full. I bought a piece of land from Sarkin Baki for 70,000 cfa [a little more than $100] and I plan to build a restaurant on the land. Both Sarkin Baki and the police have made money from the bakis and the police do well because many of the bakis do not know their rights. If the bakis get in trouble with the police they are forced to give them money or to sell their belongings, such as a mattress or clothes in order to get free (Field Notes, August 2003).

Another prostitute, El Hadjia Doguwa, echoed Fatouma Zara’s sentiments. She too had left Nigeria after Shari’a had been introduced.

In addition to providing housing in Mai Mujia to women, Doguwa gives them advice on how to find their way, financially and socially. Prostitutes make up a significant percentage of the baki population. There are three different classes of prostitutes that set up business in Mai Mujia. The wealthiest occupy rooms that surround a small courtyard; they cater to the wealthiest clients and their standard of living is among the highest of the prostitutes in Mai Mujia. The second class of prostitutes occupies small entrez couchezs (a French term for a room where you enter and lay down) that are grouped together in one courtyard, these apartments ring the walls of the bar courtyard. The lowest socio-economic class of prostitutes live in grass and mud huts that occupy the fields that surround the town of Mai Mujia.

El Hadjia Doguwa

I used to live in the town of Daura. After I found out that Shari’a would be brought to Nigeria, I sold all my belongings and moved to Mai Mujia where I bought a house from Sarkin Baki. I did not want to be locked out and lose all of my belongings. The house that I bought has four rooms and I rent them out to other women who have relocated here (Ibid).
Villagers state that the presence of *bakis* created the need for water merchants, masons, clothes washers and food preparers. Villagers experienced an increase in economic opportunities since the arrival of the *bakis*. A sector of the economy that benefited were the masons who were employed in the construction of new houses. New houses needed to be built to house the *bakis*, therefore brick builders, masons and water carriers experienced a dramatic rise in employment opportunities. Local women as well took advantage of the opportunity and set up informal restaurants that serve the basic needs of people in search of food.

Since Shari’a was implemented in Northern Nigeria, three bars have been constructed in Mai Mujia. Two of the bar owners are Nigerians who relocated their business to Mai Mujia. The third bar owner is a Nigerien who also owns a bar in Matameye. There is also a vibrant live music scene. Under Shari’a, integral components of traditional Hausa culture such as dancing, drumming and praise singing have been seriously proscribed in some parts of Northern Nigeria (Miles, 2003). Each of the bars had live house bands that performed late into the night and one of the bands consisted of Yan Bori. The *Yan Bori* are Hausa but are differentiated because some of them are possessed by traditional spirits. No longer allowed to perform in Nigeria, *Yan Bori* musicians moved to Mai Mujia.

All of the economic opportunities resulted in what most villagers refer to in Hausa as *cin gaba* which can be defined as development. *Cin gaba* translates literally as to move ahead and figuratively as to progress or to develop. In effect, villagers in Mai Mujia and Firgi interpreted the changes as overwhelmingly positive. Although the changes were ostensibly ephemeral and only consisted of menial service jobs, they referred to the changes the same way that someone would refer to an improvement in infrastructure. The prostitution and gambling that has been imported into Niger stands in direct opposition to the religious values of the Hausa who reside there. It is therefore somewhat ironic that the importation of un-Islamic activities was described by the local population in positive terms as *cin gaba*.

Another word that Nigeriens used to describe the changes brought about by Nigerian Shari’a was ‘*bunkassar tattalin arziki*’, which translates as economic development. This term was used most frequently by traditional leaders to describe the improved economic situation. As traditional leaders benefited the most from the changes, it is understandable that they would use a positive term to characterise the changes. They referred to the time before the *bakis* arrival as pre-*bunkassar*, and to the time after the *bakis* arrival as post-*bunkassar*.

Although Nigeriens were overwhelmingly satisfied with the changes, they were still disillusioned with the lack of improvements in infrastructure. The chief of the village of Mai Mujia, Maman Maigari, stated the village had undergone development (*cin gaba*). Maigari intimated his disappointment that there was still no water pump, medical clinic or electricity and only a small school in the village. The sudden growth in population placed an extra burden on the school and exposed the lack of available medical care. Maigari expressed incredulity that the government could not make a commensurate amelioration in basic social services.

A Hausa businessman based in Niger recognised the economic impact of the *bakis*. The businessman stated that ‘*In wane ya zo ya zama kudi*’ (If a *baki* arrives, he or she brings money). They bring money to Mai Mujia and they also spend money in Mai Mujia. This man also noted that since the *bakis* arrived the government has constructed a new police post, but has made no other significant improvements to the infrastructure.
of Mai Mujia. The businessman in a certain sense ‘commodified’ the bakis who have come to live in Mai Mujia.

The dismal economic situation in Niger forces many men to travel to wealthier countries in the sub-region in search of work. This phenomenon is a form of seasonal labour migration and Nigeria is the most popular destination. Historically, work migration to countries south of Niger has been an integral part of the region’s economy and there is even a Hausa term, cin rani, that describes the phenomenon (Lund, 2001). The influx of people to dynamic border towns along the Nigerian border has had an effect on the seasonal labour migration of Nigeriens, and many who typically went to coastal countries in search of jobs, have now decided to remain in Niger. One example of this trend is a local Hausa trader who formerly made his living by working in southern Ghana. The trader found that economic opportunities in Mai Mujia enabled him to remain there year round as a cloth seller.

Not only have prostitutes from Nigeria settled in Mai Mujia, but prostitutes from other parts of Niger have moved to Mai Mujia as well. Interviews with sex workers revealed that a number of them are actually citizens of Niger. Several prostitutes intimated that they moved there after hearing that Mai Mujia possessed an active market in commodified sexual relations. Many sex workers had left larger towns, such as Niamey and Zinder, to relocate in Mai Mujia because of the economic opportunities. Prostitutes presented a unique perspective on the changes that Shari’a had engendered. The prostitutes from Nigeria could attest to the changes that had occurred in Nigeria, while the prostitutes from Niger could discuss how business in Nigerien border villages was attractive from an economic standpoint. Interviews with prostitutes also revealed how politically marginalised actors view the changes that have occurred in Niger.

Prostitution is usually regarded as a profession that is practiced by those who are financially strapped and lacking in formal education. If a prostitute is to work she must have a card that is signed by a government employed medical technician which ensures that she is in good health and not carrying any contagious diseases. Although the medical visit does not include a test for HIV/AIDS, the prostitute may continue to work as long as she shows no external signs of illness. If, however, the prostitute does not have her health card stamped by a health technician, the police can prevent her from working. The hospital where the prostitutes get their exam administered is in Matameye, which is 25 miles away. This situation has given rise to instances where sex workers must pay a bribe to police if they are found to not have the proper paperwork. Due to prostitutes’ marginalised social standing, they are not a segment of society that has much leverage in defending their rights. Informal transactions between authorities and prostitutes works to further entrench the system of patron clientelism.

Rather than harping on the unsavory attributes of the bakis, most villagers look to the advantages that the bakis have brought. Most villagers are content with the addition of several hundred prostitutes to their community in spite of the numerous possible negative consequences. Traditionally, sex workers have high incidence rates of HIV/AIDS. By at least one account HIV/AIDS rates for the village of Firgi (located in the Department of Maradi) has risen dramatically. Although Niger in general has low HIV/AIDS infections rates compared with other sub-Saharan African countries, the regional director of public health responsible for Firgi (located in the Department of Maradi) has risen dramatically. Although Niger in general has low HIV/AIDS infections rates compared with other sub-Saharan African countries, the regional director of public health responsible for Firgi found significant rates of infection among the population. Public health workers tested 200 of the prostitutes in Firgi and found approximately one in three HIV positive (Reuters, 10 January 2002). Despite these alarming numbers, the population of Firgi and
Mai Mujia had little knowledge of the potential epidemic in their village.

The Reaction of the State of Niger

The authorities of Niger have limited options in the way that they can react. Due to the fact that influential people such as traditional chiefs and local authorities are profiting from the changes, it is not evident that the government is compelled to intervene on the behalf of its citizens. A dire economic situation has also limited the ways that the Nigerien government can provide support to the communities that have undergone changes. Only when the President of Niger directed the dispersion of the community of bakis in Firingi, did the state deal directly with changes that have occurred in border villages. Rather, forcible dispersion only served to scatter the baki population through other parts of Niger. Interviews with other political leaders provided some insight into how they perceived the changes in border towns. The Prefet (governor) of Zinder recognised that Shari’a in Nigeria had brought changes to Niger, but no changes of real consequence. The Sous-Prefet (regional governor) of Matameye, who administers Mai Mujia, acknowledged that Mai Mujia had experienced changes and that he had done all he could to accommodate Nigerians who come to Niger.

Conclusions

Now that prostitution, gambling and bars have increased dramatically in Niger’s border towns, it is necessary to examine the broader implications for the state of Niger and its citizens. The changes in Niger raise a host of issues that are worth debating such as the concept of development, the saliency of patron/clientele networks in African states, and the existence of trans-border economies. Within the context of Niger, patron/clienteleism emerged long before the contemporary era. In the period since the introduction of Shari’a to Northern Nigeria, patron/clienteleism has become especially salient with the emergence of increased border traffic. Increased cases of immigration from Nigeria to Niger offers police officials greater opportunity to exact profit seeking. The greatest amount of power abuse occurs in interactions between rent seekers and the newly arrived bakis. The resolution of disputes which involve marginalised actors unaware of their rights are perfect occasions for profit seeking patrons. These changes in Nigerien border towns help to further entrench pre-existing patron clientele networks. Interactions between the powerful and the powerless are the central tenets of patron clientelism (Lemarchand, 1972). In a highly illiterate society like Niger, citizens are acutely unaware of their civil rights and are vulnerable to people in positions of relative power. Prostitutes are some of the most vulnerable.

The movement of prostitution, gambling and bars to Niger is yet another contemporary example of how borders in Africa create artificial differences. The existence of Shari’a banned activities in Niger is an alternative structure for economic accumulation. One strain of literature argues that ‘cross-border trade in some ways constitutes an economic alternative to an increasingly weak state’ (Hashim and Meagher, 2000). Hashim and Meagher also point to the fact that the ideological role of Hausa commercial networks has been historically shaped by the needs and opportunities of the prevailing economic context. Modifications in the characteristics of interregional markets have incited adaptations in the identities of participants and the way that they act (Hashim and Meagher, 2000). In the case of Shari’a law in Nigeria, prostitution, gambling and alcohol have been outlawed in some
states and, as a result, the identities of participants in trans-border markets have changed. Some Nigeriens have altered the way that they participate in the interregional market in order to maximise their profit-making possibilities. The creation of bars, brothels and gambling casinos has created a sub-culture in Niger which is a mix of non-Hausa businessmen, Hausa prostitutes and local Nigeriens who have adapted their businesses to the changes engendered by Nigerian Shari’a.

Informal trans-border business is an important resource for economic development, but it is not capable of being integrated into a regulatory framework that may support the state. As most of the increased economic activity is informal in nature, very little of it benefits other segments of the population. It is also important to identify the negative aspects of the changes that accompany the economic advantages. A rise in patron clientele networks, possible increases in HIV/AIDS cases, and stress on beleaguered infrastructure are drawbacks.

Bakis are a new identity group that have emerged in Niger and it will be interesting to see what position they will occupy in society. The implementation of Shari’a in Nigeria both greatly increased their activities and contributed to the visible expansion into Nigerien border towns. Another key question worth consideration is how the enlarged baki population will be integrated into Nigerien society: will they be integrated and form civil society groups that will ultimately strengthen the state of Niger?

Our review of the changes engendered by the implementation of Shari’a in Nigeria raises several questions about a number of issues. Definitely, the border towns of Nigerien Hausaland have been transformed. Still, it is important to ask if the state of Niger will maintain its current detachment about the changes that have engendered the arrival of the bakis. Moreover, the enthusiastic reception of the bakis by Nigeriens merits a reconsideration of the very term ‘development’. A proliferation of bars and brothels is not a typical orthodox manifestation of development, yet in the words those most affected by these changes, it is considered development, cin gaba. The implementation of Shari’a in Northern Nigeria and its subsequent effects on Niger point to the saliency of patron-clientelism networks and the adaptive nature of trans-border economies in the African context.

James Mittelman’s The Globalization Syndrome provides a theoretical framework that is useful for the issues that this study investigates. Mittelman theorises that the aftermath of the Cold War has fomented an eruption of sub-surface tensions formerly stifled by the state. The tensions, exacerbated by globalisation, affect the political, social and economic stability of developing nations. One of the states that has emerged from the tumultuous period is the ‘courtesan state’. By definition, a courtesan services clients, especially wealthy or upper class ones (Mittelman, 2000:25). Mittelman does not declare that the courtesan state is a distinctive form of state; it is rather dominated by different policy orientation characteristics.

In the ‘courtesan state’ model, the state does not provide social protection but rather tacitly forsakes safeguarding the local citizenry through the provision of social services in favour of regional market forces. Mittelman argues that the ‘courtesan state’ is ‘not solely a national phenomenon, but is rapidly becoming a trans-state structure in its own right’ (Mittelman, 2000:26). An example of a ‘courtesan state’ is the Southeast Asian country of Thailand. The sex trade in Thailand has had a dramatic effect on the local culture, yet it persists because of the hard currency that it brings into the country. Other countries in the region as well as those outside Asia serve as
clients of Thailand’s service.

Through the use of Mittelman’s theoretical framework, Niger can also be regarded as a state that possesses the characteristics of a courtesan state. The demand for bars and brothels created a market in Niger. Social protection consists of, among other things, health care, education and household security. The clients who visit the border towns of Niger not only engage in activities that are outlawed in Northern Nigeria, but they spend significant sums of the money that is ultimately infused into the local and regional economy. Bars, brothels and casinos provide the services that are outlawed in some parts of Northern Nigeria. The establishments, some of which are organised transnationally, fulfill the demand that is in short supply in Northern Nigeria.

Mittelman’s idea of the ‘courtesan state’ also argues that the state does not intervene on its citizens’ behalf in the face of relatively undesirable activities and threats to the local population. Social protection can be regarded as the provision of schools, potable water, security and health care.

Nigerien’s interpretation of the Shari’a induced changes demands a reassessment of the term development within the context of Hausa culture. Is mere economic advancement the only tool by which to measure development? Common indicators of development, such as access to health care, clean water and education have not experienced any amelioration in Mai Mujia. A reassessment of the notion of development within the local Hausa context is necessary. The inhabitants of villages such as Mai Mujia demonstrate remarkable agency in the way that they have accepted the changes and adapted their lives in ways that are financially beneficial. It is important to consider the implications of Shari’a for Niger, especially in light of a population that is 90% Muslim. Will more conservative elements of Islam surface and attempt to combat these changes through a shift to Islamic fundamentalism?

Bibliographic Note


Interviews: During the months of July and August 2003 I interviewed people residing in the Nigerien villages of Mai Mujia, Firgi and Adare. I conducted over 40 interviews and the following informants from Mai Mujia were quoted in the study during August 2003: El Hadjia Fatama Zara, El Hadjia Dogowa, Sarkin Baki and Maman Maigari.


Niger

Climate: The Saharian north is virtually rainless; the south, in the Sahel belt has a very unreliable rainy season and was hit two-fold last year: no rain and locust infestation.

Population: 10.7 million (The Nations of The World, 2002); 12.9 million (UN, 2005).

Life expectancy for both male and female is 46 (www.bbc.news.co.uk).

Adult literacy rate 15.9% HDR, 2001.

Economics: Human Development Index ranking at 161, second poorest.

GNP per capita $190 (The Nations of The World, 2002).

GNI per capita $200 (World Bank, 2003).

Main export is uranium and livestock products, has gold deposits and oil was discovered in the late 1990s which revived hopes for economic viability (The Nations of The World, 2002); 82% of population rely on agriculture and livestock farming; however, only 15% is suitable for arable crops (www.bbc.news.co.uk).

Current crisis: World Food Programme has tripled the amount of aid to feed the 20 to 34% of the population undernourished; the UN has appealed for $50.7 million so far only received a 1/5 (17.6m) a further $10 million has been pledged (www.wfp.org).

Red Star, Black Gold

Chris Alden

China’s growing public presence in Africa, coming as it does against the backdrop of a sustained Western media campaign of ‘shock and awe’ at China’s new-found power, raises important questions about the nature of this emerging relationship. Once an avowedly anti-imperialist force on the continent with aspirations to ‘third world’ leadership, Beijing’s recent foray into Africa has been characterised by a singular focus on resource acquisition and commercial opportunism that seemingly belies the rhetoric of partnership. While increasingly necessary to the health of the Chinese economy, Africa occupies an important place in its global ambitions as well.

Feeding the ever-increasing demands of its robust economy is a major pre-occupation of Chinese authorities. Having outstripped its own domestic capacity in petroleum in 1993, and with the shrinking of other energy sources coupled to the absence of many strategic minerals in the country, China has looked to the resource-rich developing (and, in the case of Canada and Australia, developed) world to fulfil its economy’s insatiable needs.

Africa’s relatively unexploited energy sources, timber and fisheries offer the Chinese a unique opportunity to lock in through formal or informal means a steady supply of key resources. This is reflected in trade value between the two regions, with total trade US$10bn in 2000, rising to US$18bn in 2003 and expected to exceed US$30bn by 2006. Even when compared to other parts of the developing world, Chinese investment in Africa stands as significant: for example, while trade with Africa was only 2.1% of China’s total trade in 2003, as an investment destination it com-
manded 16.39% of the country's total overseas investment. (This compares with, for example, its traditional trading partners in Asia, which occupies 53.4% of China's trade and 28.3% of its investment respectively.) Big projects, such as the investment in Sudan's oil industry from 1996 onwards, where the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has transformed the moribund energy sector into the country's leading export (with China as its top destination), are clearly at the forefront of China's interests in Africa. Equivalent investments, if not as significant to the domestic production (CNPC owns a 40% share of the Sudanese government's Greater Nile Petroleum Corporation), have been made by Chinese multinationals in Nigeria, Angola and Gabon, as well as purchases of shares in Algeria's natural gas fields.

Linked to these investments are projects aimed at improving the physical infrastructure of these countries, especially roads and port facilities which aim enhance the attractiveness of Chinese ventures to African governments as well as improving the export efficiency of these enterprises. Here Chinese companies have often successfully outbid their Western (as well as that of other developing countries such as India, Brazil and South Africa) through the traditional strategies of linking investment to tie-in projects and providing lower labour costs in the form of introducing their own contract workers. This latter measure has sometimes proved controversial with local workers and their representatives but, generally, African government officials have been willing to overlook these concerns.

High profile investments in the energy sector may have grabbed the international headlines, but other forms of commercial engagement with Africa play an important part in shaping trade and investment ties. Commercial logging in Equatorial Guinea, plantation agriculture in Tanzania and Zambia, the rehabilitation of railroads in Botswana, and manufacturing in Zimbabwe and the installation of sophisticated telecommunications systems in Djibouti and Namibia. Many of these ventures are promoted and managed not by Chinese multinationals but small and medium enterprises, some even part of the troubled State Owned Enterprise sector. For example, China's third largest trading partner in Africa, Nigeria, non-oil exports topped US$500m in 2004 based on the sale of agricultural products such as cotton and timber products, both of which involve Chinese companies or joint ventures.

The government has established eleven Trade Promotion Centres around the continent and Chinese businesses are actively encouraged to see Africa as a trade and investment destination. The now ubiquitous Chinese-owned retail trading shops across the continent which sell low cost and low value products made in China directly to Africa's rural population are also the products of individual entrepreneurship. This dimension of Chinese investment in the continent is not well understood or documented as it is having an impact on the social landscape as well as the economic patterns for ordinary Africans. And, finally, in common with other countries, there are Chinese nationals involved in criminal activities who use front companies to illegal export everything from timber in Liberia and Mozambique to rhino horn and abalone from Southern and Central Africa.

Though the world’s attention has focused on China’s acquisition of oil concessions and expansion of commercial activities in Africa, the thrust of Chinese interests in Africa go beyond this resource drive. With 53 states, Africa represents an important regional presence in most if not all international institutions and one which can tip the balance on contentious debates be they in the area of trade or human rights. This point was
driven home to China’s leadership in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre, when Western condemnation and sanctions contrasted with the expressions of sympathy and even support from African governments. China’s commitment to playing a greater role on the global stage impels it to develop closer relations with Africa and this is a position it has assumed for a considerable time now. The issue of Taiwan, which has official ties with seven African states at this moment, is particularly important in this regard. Chinese diplomacy is aimed at cementing ties with local African governments and, concurrently, ousting official Taiwanese diplomatic missions from those states. A renewed effort to isolate Taipei is part of the government’s strategy to narrow the options for Taiwanese president Chen Shui-bian in his apparent bid to win international sympathy (if not support) for a possible declaration of independence.

A crucial tool in wresting official recognition away from Taiwan (and one used by Taipei to ward off this possibility as well) is development assistance. Again, though competition with the ‘renegade’ province was once a key rationale for Chinese engagement in African affairs, it is fair to say that this forms only a part of its wider interests in the region at this point. Between 1957 and 1996, China has provided over US$4.912bn to the African continent, much of it in the form of technical assistance and training programmes (Brautigam, 1998). Though significantly smaller than major OECD donors disbursements, the impact of its agricultural assistance programmes in rural Africa have been recognised by African producers and governments alike. More recently, Beijing has embarked on direct support to cover core administrative costs of governments like the Central African Republic and Liberia. In the case of the latter, nearly 600 Chinese peacekeepers drawn from engineering and medical battalions have been brought in as part of the international community’s efforts to restore stability to the war-torn country. Prestige projects such as the construction of new ministerial buildings in Uganda, Mozambique and Djibouti as well as stadiums and trade centres in a number of other countries have been supported by China. Military co-operation is a growing feature of relations as is arms sales, though it is nowhere on the scale of traditional providers in the West and Russia. Perhaps the most publicised expression of this is the Chinese sale of armaments and heavier equipment, including helicopters and Shenyang fighter jets to Sudan and more recently to Zimbabwe. Chinese weaponry, including light arms and ammunition, have been shipped through Dar es Salaam and onto the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo during the late 1990s while Chinese arms played an important role in Sierra Leone’s civil war and in the Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict.

Crowning the new relationship with Africa is the China-Africa Co-operation Forum process, a summit meeting between Chinese and African leaders convened every three years. The first of these was held in Beijing in 2000 and the follow up came in Addis Ababa in 2003. While international summitry is generally characterised as more theatre than substance, there were some notable aspects to the process so far. In particular, at the Addis Ababa summit China announced that it was cancelling its outstanding debt of US$1.27bn to 31 African countries as well as committing all parties to increase overall trade to US$28bn by 2006 (something that is already on the cusp of being achieved).

Ultimately, the question asked from Lagos to Maputo is whether China’s renewed focus on Africa is in the continent’s interests. In one sense, any new entrant to the foreign investment arena is seen by African governments as a positive sum game. Beyond the machi-
nations of diplomacy between Beijing and Taipei, the fact that China joins the bidding for projects enables African governments to broaden the range of potential players and raises the financial stakes in Africa’s favour. Against that position some have argued that, as the world’s largest recipient of FDI, China itself represents competition for foreign investment with Africa, but this seems to miss the point. Despite the focus on growing international competition to secure access to energy resources, it is China’s investment, especially in the small and medium enterprise area, aimed at rehabilitating agricultural production or in a few instances industries, which is filling a gap that might otherwise not forthcoming from traditional Western sources. The shadow boxing over the Darfur issue between Beijing and Washington, while rooted in local dynamics of the Sudan crisis and the ongoing ethnic cleansing, nonetheless carries with it dimensions of global rivalry over influence and especially access to oil in that strife torn region. How responsible African governments manage and exploit to their best advantage the various forms of international competition, including China, is another matter.

Of more concern, in terms of the prospects for democracy, is the explicit posture of Beijing that it invests without ‘strings attached’: this is clearly appealing to African governments subject to various forms of conditionalities or sanctions. Chinese policy makers are forthright in admitting that their ‘competitive advantage’ is this willingness to engage with regimes deemed to be beyond the pale by many in the international community. Providing a further international prop to dictators, in keeping with the policies too often pursued by Western governments, obviously does not further the interests of African society nor better the conditions for democracy to take hold. Given that China itself remains under single party rule, there is little to expect in this area from Beijing. At the same time, China’s current emphasis on personal ties with regimes or elites within Africa carries with it some of the same factors that have both sustained and undermined relations with other foreign actors. This is reflected in, for example, the proximity of successful Chinese investment bids for large infrastructure projects in Zimbabwe with its cultivation of Zanu-PF elites. The costs of this approach are increasingly recognised by Chinese working in various official and unofficial capacities across the continent, though this is only beginning to be appreciated by authorities in Beijing.

In the end, underlying much of the interest in China within Africa is its appeal (or ‘soft power’ attraction) as a model for development with African elites. Sharing a common history of exploitation by imperialists, victimised through externally-funded civil wars and subjected to calamitous socialist projects in the name of idealism, the two regions have complementaries that go beyond the standard primary product-manufacturing relationship that has characterised the continent’s external ties since independence. Chinese success in extracting itself from this legacy is much admired by visiting African delegations to that country and an understandable source of pride for China. Whether the Chinese development experience offers significant and transferable lessons to the African environment, or China falls into the now familiar mould of an external power pursuing narrow self-interest, remains to be seen. But, if the situation in Sudan is anything to go by, then it is the latter aspect that is coming to preside over this latest putative African partnership.

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Re-enter the Dragon: China’s New Mission in Africa

Lindsey Hilsum

The day after the United Nations released a report condemning Robert Mugabe’s government for demolishing 700,000 homes and businesses ‘with indifference to human suffering’,1 the Zimbabwean President flew to Beijing. He visited a car factory, signed a loan agreement and received an honorary professorship from the Foreign Affairs University for his ‘remarkable contribution in the work of diplomacy and international relations.’2

The friendship between Mugabe and the Chinese dates back to the bush war in the 1970s, when China provided Mugabe’s ZANLA guerillas with weapons and funding to fight white minority rule in Rhodesia. Now, however, China’s interest has less to do with political solidarity and more with commercial opportunity, and its growing need for natural resources.

Zimbabwe is only one example of China’s aggressive new policy in Africa, which poses a challenge to G8 leaders’ plans to make ‘good governance’ and human rights determining criteria in decisions on trade, aid, debt relief, loans and investment. As the EU and US target sanctions on Zimbabwe and other African countries, including oil-rich Sudan, which abuse their citizens’ human rights, China is moving to fill the gap. Yet, at their meeting in Gleneagles in July 2005, when Africa was at the top of the agenda and President Hu Jintao of China was present, G8 leaders did not make the connection. Foreign affairs ministries in G8 countries show no sign of adequately analysing the new role China is playing in Africa, let alone coming up with a strategy to address it.
Thirty years ago, China was trying to spread communism in Africa through prestige projects like the TanZam railway. During the early stages of capitalist transformation, China turned inwards, but the first China-Africa Forum, held in Beijing in 2000, marked the beginning of a push to revive links. Trade between China and Africa tripled from US$10bn in 2000 to US$30bn in 2004 and is set to rise further. The Chinese government has set up a special fund to help state-owned enterprises invest in Africa, and provides preferential loans to private Chinese companies doing likewise. By mid-2004, 674 Chinese companies had established themselves in 49 African countries, in sectors including mines, fishing, construction and telecommunications.\(^4\)

The reason is China’s own phenomenal growth. Industrial development has been so fast, China’s oil consumption is now second only to the USA. Africa is already providing a quarter of China’s oil needs, and this may increase as Chinese companies position themselves to benefit from new oil discoveries in the Gulf of Guinea. China is also becoming a major player in the timber trade and in mining.

Dubbing the first two decades of this century a ‘period of important strategic opportunities’\(^5\) in which Africa will play a crucial role, the Chinese government has told its companies to ‘go global’. With costs high and competition fierce in the USA and Europe, they have chosen Africa as the proving ground for Chinese companies aiming to be multinationals. All over the continent, Chinese companies are building hotels, parliaments and government buildings, and refurbishing stadiums they originally constructed in the 1970s. China has become a very visible presence in Africa, frequently importing labourers as well as project managers.

China is also a major supplier of arms to African regimes, notoriously providing an estimated US$1bn worth of weaponry to both sides during the Ethiopia/Eritrea war in the late 1990s.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China does not want to be left out of international efforts in Africa, so has provided a small number of peace-keepers, notably in Liberia and southern Sudan. However, its bilateral political aims are limited, insisting only that recipients of aid and investment back the ‘one China’ policy, forgoing links with Taiwan. The key policy principle is to stand aloof from political developments in African countries unless they adversely affect investment. ‘China doesn’t interfere in another country’s internal policies,’ is the standard line from the Foreign Ministry when asked about human rights abuse, corruption or dictatorial policies in countries such as Zimbabwe, Angola or Sudan. As Chinese economic influence grows, this stance may pose a serious threat to emerging democracy and civil society movements in the continent.

**Zimbabwe**

At celebrations to mark 25 years of Independence in May 2005, President Mugabe told the crowd,

> We have turned east, where the sun rises, and given our back to the west, where the sun sets.

China, India and Pakistan have replaced the UK, the US and the EU as Zimbabwe’s biggest source of investment, with China leading the pack. Western companies have deserted Zimbabwe because they cannot survive capricious government policies and shortages of fuel, food and foreign exchange. But China is thinking strategically. It can take advantage of Zimbabwe’s decline to secure mining concessions and trading opportunities at knock-down prices and get loans repaid in kind with badly needed commodities.
China’s 300 million smokers are benefitting from Zimbabwe’s land reform programme. While Chinese businessmen bought tobacco at auction when commercial farms were owned by white Zimbabweans, the Beijing Review reports that ‘the new situation in Zimbabwe has provided Chinese companies with an opportunity to invest in plantations and processing of crops.’ In return for a share of the tobacco harvest, China provides loans to struggling new black farmers who have taken over commercial farms. China has the largest foreign exchange reserves in the world, but is short of commodities, while Zimbabwe has almost no foreign currency at all, so needs cash loans to buy fertiliser and spare parts for agricultural machinery (which can be sourced from China). Zimbabwean tobacco and cotton are also being used as repayment for a loan worth US$110 million from the China National Aero Technology Import and Export Corporation (CATIC) to the national power utility, the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA).

Chinese investment may not save Zimbabwe from economic ruin, but it offers a temporary lifeline to President Mugabe, as Zimbabwe faces expulsion from the IMF by the end of 2005 over unpaid debts. While the EU maintains an arms ban, the Chinese have provided the Zimbabwe airforce with six K8 jet fighters. In the long term, China has its eye on Zimbabwe’s platinum deposits, the second largest in the world, currently controlled by the South African company Impala Platinum holdings. Several delegations of Chinese businessmen have already held talks with Zimbabwe Platinum about potential investment.

China also needs markets for its manufactured goods. Many Zimbabweans believe that the government destroyed market stalls in Harare, Bulawayo and other cities between May and July 2005 in Operation Murambatsvina (‘Operation Clean the Dirt’) to make way for Chinese businesses.

‘The country has been mortgaged to the Chinese,’ said Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. ‘How can we violently remove Zimbabweans from our flea markets to make way for the Chinese?’

The one thing the Chinese cannot provide is oil. (The three Chinese-made MA60 aircraft supplied to the national carrier may not fly very far as Air Zimbabwe cancelled several flights in July 2005 because it had no jet fuel.) Elsewhere in Africa, China is using the same policies of ‘non interference’ to secure oil concessions in countries such as Angola, Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea where western companies and governments may be hesitant to proffer loans or expand their investment because of corruption and mismanagement.

Sudan

Officials at Sudan’s Energy Ministry say their country now provides 12% of China’s oil. The state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) owns a 40% share in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, the Sudanese state company which operates most of the country’s oilfields. In the 1980s, the prolonged civil war between north and south drove out American oil companies, notably Chevron, while in the 1990s the US imposed financial sanctions against Sudan because of the government’s links with militant Islamist groups. Now American oil companies are watching in dismay as China takes over where they left off.

The People’s Republic first became involved in 1996, when drilling started in the Heglig oilfield in Unity State, which lies on the border between north and south Sudan. According to Human Rights Watch, government attacks forced
80,000 civilians out of the oil-rich Ruweng County and another 50,000 from Unity State in 2001 and 2002. The US-funded Civilian Protection Monitoring Team said that government troops had ‘sought to clear the way for oil exploration and to create a cordon sanitaire around the oil fields.’ When a Canadian company, Talisman, withdrew in 2003 under pressure from shareholders over human rights abuse, China and India increased their involvement, providing further capital, technology and expertise. Many of the Nuer and Dinka people displaced by oil exploration now live in poverty in Khartoum.

‘Investment is good. It will develop our land, but the most important thing is how we are treated,’ said James Lei, a refugee forced out of Unity State, in an interview with Channel 4 News. ‘In the end, the Chinese must go home. This is not their country. Then this will all be ours.’ 12

Sixty per cent of Sudan’s oil exports go to the People’s Republic. Much of it flows down the Chinese-built pipeline from Kordofan to Port Sudan on the Red Sea. The refinery at Al Jaily, north of Khartoum, is the first China has built outside its own borders. A second has now been opened. Oil company billboards in Khartoum show happy, smiling Chinese and Sudanese men in hard hats, clapping hands under the legend ‘CNPC – your close friend and faithful partner’ in Arabic, English and Chinese. Chinese restaurants are springing up in Khartoum, although in mid-2005 the government curtailed karaoke evenings, protesting that alcohol was being consumed.

China has a stake in the ABCO consortium now drilling for oil in Darfur, where government-sponsored ‘janjaweed’ militia have murdered and raped local people, driving two million from their homes, in a campaign the US has described as genocide.

In mid-2004, Britain and the US proposed a UN Security Council resolution which would impose oil sanctions and other measures against Sudan if the government did not stop the murderous campaign in Darfur. China threatened to veto the resolution, unless it was watered down. After much debate behind the scenes, China abstained but the resolution was so weak it scarcely affected Khartoum’s activities in Darfur.

Both the EU and US maintain arms sanctions against Sudan. This has had little effect as most of the weaponry used by the Khartoum government, including helicopter gunships, fighter planes and tanks, are Chinese made. China has built three factories on the outskirts of the capital assembling small arms and producing ammunition. Defectors from the government side to the Sudan People’s Liberation Army showed a researcher from Britain’s Rift Valley Institute AK47s and rocket launchers inscribed in both Chinese and Arabic. Similarly marked shell-casings have been found in Darfur.

Now a peace deal has been signed in the long running war between the government and the SPLA/M, people allowed to remain in the oil-producing area hope to benefit from Chinese investment. Chinese-built roads and electricity extended to village homes from facilities around Higieig oilfield should be a basis for development. However, the relationship with China enables the government in Khartoum to resist pressure from western countries to improve human rights, and end the campaign against the peo-
ple of Darfur. New oil discoveries have strengthened Khartoum’s hand, as the government consolidates its relationship with China and rejects initiatives from G8 governments and non-governmental organisations working in human rights and humanitarian relief.

Sierra Leone

In West Africa, Chinese construction workers never seem to rest. Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, is dominated by new Chinese buildings – the parliament, the main government office block, the military headquarters and the newly refurbished stadium have all been completed in the last year. ‘The Chinese work 24 hours a day,’ said the Information Minister, Septimus Kaikai, in a recent interview. ‘We could learn from them.’

According to the World Bank, Sierra Leone is the poorest country in Africa. Seventy per cent of Sierra Leoneans live in poverty. Electricity is intermittent, many households have no running water and 60% of young men are unemployed. Ravaged by civil war, Sierra Leone’s stability is guaranteed only by British and UN troops. Western governments see the country primarily as a recipient of aid, an emblem of the Africa British Prime Minister Tony Blair described as a ‘scar on the conscience of the world’.

While western investors see little potential for profit in a country like Sierra Leone, where poor infrastructure hinders all endeavours and government corruption is growing, Chinese companies can keep their costs so low, their investments rapidly pay off.

The starting point is the 270-bed Bintumani Hotel, renovated by the state owned Beijing Urban Construction Group. Capital outlay is minimal because everything is imported from China – the red lanterns swinging in the porch, the television and kettles in the rooms, even the bed sheets and towels. The signs on the toilets are in Chinese and a form of English – the one in reception reads ‘Ladie’s’. ‘Africa is a good environment for Chinese investment because it’s not too competitive – unlike Europe and the USA,’ explained Yang Zhou, the Bintumani manager.

The private company Henan Gouji has invested US$4m in a small industrial centre in what used to be a transit camp for people displaced to the capital by war. It will serve as a showcase for imported and locally assembled Chinese goods.

‘Our company has just started to enter the international market’ explained Xu Ming Zheng, the Henan Gouji representative in Freetown. ‘We need to gather some experience from our operation here, so that we will be able to build a good foundation for our future global operation. We would like to invest in more African countries using this model.’

These are the pioneers of the new global China, setting out to conquer the Dark Continent commercially, much as the British did more than a century ago. The Chinese management live in barracks-style accommodation, unaccompanied by families, so personnel costs are kept down. Henan Gouji and other companies are looking into more projects in Sierra Leone including hydro-electric power, tourism and agriculture. Chinese businessmen are challenging the Lebanese community, which has traditionally monopolised commodity trading in West Africa.

Many Sierra Leoneans speculate that ultimately the Chinese are interested in the country’s diamonds, and the potential for off-shore oil exploration. Certainly, China is positioning itself well in the eyes of the government in Freetown.

‘If a G8 country had wanted to rebuild the stadium, for example, we’d still be holding
meetings!’ said Sahr Johnny, Sierra Leone Ambassador to Beijing. ‘The Chinese just come and do it. They don’t start to hold meetings about environmental impact assessment, human rights, bad governance and good governance. I’m not saying that’s right, I’m just saying Chinese investment is succeeding because they don’t set high benchmarks.’

This gung-ho approach worries anti-corruption campaigners. ‘The way the Chinese work is very secretive,’ complained Zainab Bangura, of the National Accountability Group, an NGO. ‘They only talk to government. In the last few years, civil society, government and the international community have found a way of working together, setting up systems and rules, but the Chinese don’t understand that.’

Bangura fears a new cold war between China and G8 countries, in which corrupt African leaders will be able to play one off against the other, as they did with the Soviet Union twenty years ago.

‘If our leaders know that China can sustain and support them, and China effectively becomes a donor country, then the United States and Britain will start accommodating them,’ she said. ‘So if a leader starts trying to change the constitution, or imprisoning journalists, or breaching procurement rules and regulations, they’ll pretend not to understand, for fear they’ll go over to China.’

Frustrated by the bureaucracy and high overheads incurred by G8 governments and multilateral donor-funded projects employing expatriate personnel, some African governments are already beginning to see Chinese investment as an alternative.

‘Chinese are investing in Africa and getting results, while the G8 are putting in huge amounts of money, and they don’t see very much,’ said Sahr Johnny, Sierra Leone Ambassador to Beijing.

Conclusion

Not all African governments are so sanguine. In Lesotho, Chinese investors started textile factories to take advantage of the US Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, which gave preference to African countries producing certain manufactured goods. However, when the World Trade Organisation lifted quotas for textiles made in China at the beginning of 2005, they immediately transferred production to China, shutting down the factories and causing nearly 10,000 redundancies. South Africa, where China is the biggest new investor, fears both the dumping of cheap products and downward pressure on wages. South African economist Moeletsi Mbeki has described China as ‘both a tantalising opportunity and a terrifying threat to South Africa.’

In Tanzania, where Chinese companies are involved in major construction projects, a recent ILO study notes that, ‘three of the four project sites with the lowest labour standards are operated by Chinese contractors.’ Long hours and low pay have led to labour unrest.

Africa is part of China’s strategy to become a fully developed, globalised market economy; G8 countries, by contrast, see Africa primarily as a problem to be solved with aid. Many African governments admire the Chinese model, which has combined rapid economic development with authoritarian rule. According to the World Bank, China has lifted 400 million of its own people out of poverty in 20 years – a considerably better record than that of G8 countries in Africa. Unless G8 countries engage China on Africa, their hopes of buying influence in the continent through aid and debt relief may have little impact. African governments will see no incentive to move towards democracy or reduce corruption, if they see Chinese investment as an easier or more effective option than western aid.
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Endnotes


2. Xinhua, 26 July 2005

3. MOFCOM Network Center (Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China).


11. Interview with C4N researcher, Khartoum, June 2005.


13. Ibid.


15. Lindsey Hilsum, Ibid.


17. Lindsey Hilsum, Ibid.


19. Lindsey Hilsum, Ibid.


The Politics of Private Security in Kenya

Rita Abrahamsen & Michael C. Williams

The privatisation of security has attracted considerable attention in recent years and months, but amidst all the discussion of mercenaries and private military companies one aspect of private security privatisation has gone almost unnoticed: the phenomenal growth of private security companies.

While a lot less spectacular than the mercenary activities of someone like Simon Mann or the Iraq involvement of private military companies like Erinys and Blackwater, the size, scope and rate of expansion of private security companies dwarf that of private military companies. Similarly, while their concentration on the more mundane aspects of security such as guarding, electronic alarm systems, patrolling, risk analysis and management may lack the eye-catching cachet of the new ‘corporate dogs of war’ they have a profound impact on the day-to-day provision and politics of security. In fact, the growth of private security companies has significantly altered the landscape of security both locally and globally, leading to and reflecting an increasing commodification and politicisation of security.

Africa is no exception. While in the popular imagination, private security on the continent is predominantly associated with post-apartheid South Africa, the influence and expansion of private security provision is far more widespread that this impression allows. To be
sure, South Africa has experienced an explosion in the number of private security companies, and as a percentage of GDP the country has the largest security market in the world. But as crime and insecurity has become endemic in large parts of Africa, private security companies have increasingly taken over the role of protection for individuals, households, neighbourhoods and businesses alike. As a result, the uniformed guards of the literally thousands of security companies have become a familiar feature of urban life. In Nigeria, for example, there are now an estimated 1,200 security companies, employing at least 100,000 people. In Kenya, there may be as many as 2,000 security companies, while in Uganda the number of private security officers equals that of the public police, and in post-war Sierra Leone private security is just about the only economic sector to show any sign of growth.

Increasingly, Africa is also becoming part of a global security market. By the year 2000, the global security services market was estimated to be worth US$83 billion, with a predicted continued growth rate of 6-8% per year. While the largest security markets are in North America and Europe, growth is higher in the so-called ‘emerging markets’ and the major international security companies are looking to Africa and other developing countries for profitable expansion opportunities. Recently merged Group4-Securicor, for example, now operates in 40 African countries, and employs 60,000 people on the continent. Two international companies, ADT and Chubb, also dominate South Africa’s lucrative armed response market, while numerous international risk analysis and risk management companies operate throughout the continent.

This briefing focuses on private security in Kenya, and especially Nairobi, where private security has become both increasingly indispensable and controversial. As in so many countries where the state is either unable or unwilling to protect its citizens, private security is at the heart of both the maintenance of law and order and the politics of protection. While Kenyans rely extensively on private providers for their day-to-day security needs, the commodification of security simultaneously raises difficult questions about the equality of protection. Presently, the private security sector in Kenya is entirely unregulated, and there is considerable controversy regarding the relationship to the police. The government is currently considering legislation to regulate the sector, but judged by its actions to date, the enforcement of any new regulation may leave much to be desired.


Both the rise in crime and the growth of the private security sector in Kenya are intimately connected to the erosion of state capacities and services that began in the late 1980s and continued throughout the 1990s. For Kenya, as for so many other African countries, this was a period of declining economic prosperity. State expenditure and investment were drastically reduced, often in line with international donor requirements for economic liberalisation and structural adjustment. The result was a continuing deterioration of the capacity of government and municipal institutions to deliver services, including the provision of law and order. At the same time, the state elite showed little inclination to curtail its own appetite, and corruption and mismanagement of state assets continued unabated. As the capacity of the state declined, so too did its previous ability to provide employment, contributing to a rapidly expanding problem of urban unemployment, swelling the shanty towns and informal settlements around Nairobi. This setting has provided the conditions for an increasingly criminalised environment. Crime in
Kenya, and particularly in the capital, has risen sharply in the last decade, to the extent that crime levels in Nairobi are now far higher than in comparable cities. A victimisation survey of Nairobi found that 66% of respondents had been victims of crime, while 86% had witnessed crime within the city. The survey also found that the levels of insecurity are increasing, and there is a clear sense among the population that crime has become more violent, more ruthless and also more organised (Ngugi et al, 2004).

According to the same study, there is also a strong perception among Kenyans that criminals are collaborating more and more with law enforcement agents. The police are under-funded and poorly paid, even after recent pay rises, and often resort to extortion and corruption in order to subsidise their wages. In addition, the police force has frequently been implicated in political intimidation and violence, especially during the Presidency of Daniel arap Moi (see Human Rights Watch, 1993; Kenya Human Rights Commission, 1998). As a result, the public has little confidence and trust in the police, and in one survey 36% of people attributed all crime in Nairobi directly or indirectly to the police force (Stavrou, 2002). Whatever the reliability of such figures, they reflect a deep and widespread distrust in the police, and the extent to which the police are frequently regarded as part of the problem rather than the solution to crime and disorder. Even the most positive appraisals, which acknowledge recent improvements following reforms and increased resources, recognise that the reliability of the police force remains woefully below satisfactory standards. The Government itself blames this on ‘low moral ..., low professionalism, inadequate allocation of required resources, and endemic corruption in the force’ (Government of Kenya, 2003:10).

As the state has failed to provide protection for its citizens, people have organised in various ways to maximise their own safety. The growth of private security companies is one element of this politics of protection; the formation of various forms of neighbourhood watches or vigilante groups another. While the more affluent sections of the population can afford to hire private security firms, the majority of people rely on more informal forms of protection. Vigilante groups are now common in most poor estates and informal settlements around Nairobi, providing some level of protection in the face of rising levels of crime and police inefficiency but also occasionally involving extortion and resulting in violence between rival groups.

High crime rates, combined with the inability of the public security services to provide adequate protection, are thus the main factors driving the expansion of private security in Kenya today. In addition, fear of international terrorism following the attack on the US embassy in 1998, and the hotel bombing and failed missile attack on an Israeli airliner in Mombasa in 2002 have increased demand for security services, especially among international clients. The US State Department still gives Nairobi its highest (‘critical’) ranking for both crime and international terrorism risks, while the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office similarly warns of a high risk of terrorism.

The Minimum Wage & Security for All?

Although no exact data exists, there may currently be as many as 2000 private security companies (PSCs) in Kenya (Wairagu, Kamenju and Singo, 2004). The private security sector is also a major source of employment, and the same study estimates that the sector employs over 48,000 people. Given the country’s high dependency ratio, the sector may indirectly support a total of over 195,000 people (Ibid.). Private security is thus an important part of the economy, provid-
ing much needed employment. On the other hand, guarding is a notoriously low paid occupation, and this is also the case in Kenya, where guards often work very long hours for very little remuneration.

In an attempt to deal with the level of exploitation, the Government in May 2003 introduced a new minimum wage for the sector. Including monthly housing and other allowances, the new wage legislation brought the minimum wage for a guard to Ksh 9,469. It is, however, clear that salaries continue to vary considerably between companies, and the majority still pay their guards well below the minimum wage. In fact, the wage legislation has led to considerable controversy in the private security sector. The main industry association, the Kenya Security Industry Association (KSIA), quickly endorsed the bill and made payment of the minimum wage a condition of membership of the association. A number of security companies, however, refused to accept the government’s regulation, and in protest formed a new security association, the Protective Services Industry Association (PSIA).

The May 2003 legislation increased the minimum wage by 12.5%, thereby significantly adding to the cost of salaries for private security companies. The PSIA, which has a membership of approximately 30 companies, argues that the new minimum wage would make security available only to the wealthy, and also that it would force a number of smaller security companies out of business. In fact, the PSIA regard the wage legislation as a product of lobbying by the larger security companies represented by KSIA, and hence as an effort to squeeze smaller companies out of the market. Rather than a uniform minimum wage, the Chairman of PSIA argues for a differentiated salary structure, where the top-tier companies providing highly trained security guards and integrated security solutions pay a substantially higher wage than the lower-tier companies, who offer less intensive security consisting predominantly of static guarding. PSIA rejects notions of exploiting the labour force by paying below the minimum wage, arguing that there are ‘plenty of people on the street’ willing to work for the wages on offer.

PSIA members have openly stated that they will not comply with the minimum wage requirement, and to date there are no signs that the government will attempt to enforce the regulation. On the contrary, the Minister for Planning and National Development, Professor Peter Anyang’Nyong’o, was present at the launch of PSIA, endorsing its contributions to Kenyan security. Moreover, despite openly breaking the law, PSIA companies continue to sign new contracts with government agencies, thus gaining a competitive advantage on companies that comply with the minimum wage regulation. In this way, the Government is not only demonstrating a striking lack of commitment to enforcing the minimum wage, but it is also helping maintain a vicious circle of low pay, low service and the accompanying temptation towards crime that can make private security a source of insecurity. While it is possible that the minimum wage, if enforced, would make security less available to the poor, it is equally clear that the current low wages contribute to the cycle of poverty and crime. To date, the government’s contradictory policies and practices have done little to remedy or resolve the situation.

Private Security & Public Policing

Another area of controversy concerns the co-operation between PSCs and the public police in Nairobi, and again, this has profound implications in terms of equality of protection and access to security. The relationship between the police and private security companies is best described as one of mutual suspicion, and
even at times hostility. Private security providers are quick to point to police collusion with criminals, while the police are similarly inclined to dismiss security guards as compulsive lawbreakers. At the same time, a degree of interaction and cooperation between the two is required, especially as the private sector is unarmed, and hence relies on police backup in dangerous situations and of course also when arrests need to be made.

By necessity, therefore, co-operation between the police and private security companies take place on a daily basis, most frequently when companies are responding to incidents and alarms from clients. Most PSCs report that the number of armed incidents in Nairobi have increased significantly in recent months, with many companies referring to more than five incidents a week involving firearms. This poses a serious challenge: simply responding with non-armed guards provides limited security for clients, while simultaneously placing guards in significant danger. Guards are instructed to withdraw and wait for police assistance in the case of any serious incident, and PSCs will frequently send a vehicle to pick up police in order to ensure a more rapid response. In the case of alarmed response services, current practice is to send one vehicle to the incident and another to the nearest police station to transport the required number of police officers to the scene. This not only potentially delays effective response time, but also carries the risk that there may be no available police officers at the station.

It should be noted that guarding is an extremely dangerous occupation in Kenya. Guards are issued only with a whistle and a baton, whereas criminals often carry firearms, machetes or other weapons. Attacks and violence towards security guards are common, and sources within the industry estimate that within greater Nairobi and Mombasa combined, between five and ten security guards are killed every month. One leading company interviewed had lost 15 guards in the first 10 months of 2004, whereas other PSCs reported frequent violent incidents towards guards. In this context, many companies express concerns that police regulations make it difficult to issue guards with body armour, as this requires a firearms certificate. Despite this high incidence of violence, no nation- or industry-wide statistics of guards hurt and killed on duty appears to exist, and the issue has received surprisingly little public attention.

There is a clear sense among the private security sector that the current arrangement for co-operation with the police is unsatisfactory. As they point out, PSCs and the police have a common interest in preventing crime, and whereas the police are short on transport and resources, the PSCs have approximately 200 alarm response vehicles stationed at strategic locations around Nairobi at any one time. KSIA is currently lobbying for the reinstatement of a previous pilot arrangement, whereby individual PSCs took main responsibility for various residential areas and the police provided two officers per PSC vehicle. Critics argue that this arrangement predominately increased security to residential customers that could afford to pay for private services, and importantly, the scheme was only in operation in a few wealthy areas of the capital. The private security vehicles nevertheless also responded to incidents involving non-paying clients, or members of the public, but it is unclear precisely how the division of public and private responsibilities and priorities was determined under this arrangement.

The arrangement was terminated by the new Provincial Police Officer in 2004, and currently the relationship between private security providers and the police appears to be largely informal, depending to a large extent on the personal...
relationships between company directors, high level police officials, and individual station commanders. Whereas some companies have succeeded in hiring police officers back on their patrol vehicles through ad-hoc arrangements, the majority patrol without police or any armed support. There are also reports that the police are objecting to being assigned to private security duties, regarding this as a misuse of their skills and resources (The Nation, 2005).

The Politics of Private Security

The significance of private security in Kenya has recently been more clearly recognised, and the government has begun consultations over draft legislation to regulate the sector. Given the prominence of private security in Kenya, this is an important development, as currently the sector is entirely unregulated and little or no attention has been paid to its role and functions. There is no specific legislation or regulation pertaining to private security companies, and no oversight or monitoring of their practices, services or training of personnel. Accordingly, the quality of companies and their services vary considerably, and there are concerns that as a result private security companies (like the police) may, or have already, become a source of criminality and insecurity.

But while the move towards regulation is to be welcomed, it is clear that the private security should not be approached simply in terms of regulation, quality control and wages. Instead, private security needs to be regarded as part of a wider network of security provision, which has profound social and political consequences. Insecurity is a feature of life for almost all citizens in Kenya, but it affects people differently. Kenya is one of the ten most unequal countries in the world, and according to the Government’s own figures, 56% of the population (or 17 million people) live in poverty, while a small elite of 10% control 42% of all wealth (Government of Kenya, 2003:1; Daily Nation, 2004). To a significant extent, crime and insecurity follow the lines of wealth and surveys show that the feeling of insecurity varies greatly according to income. In short, the poorer Kenyans are, the more they suffer from both the fear and the real experience of crime (Ngugi et al. 2004). Money buys security in contemporary Kenya, and as the wealthy barricade themselves behind higher security walls and advanced alarm systems, crime moves to the poorer neighbourhoods where the ‘pickings’ may be less enriching, but more accessible.

This development is by no means limited to Kenya, but holds for numerous African countries experiencing high levels of crime and low levels of public law enforcement. The provision of security is thus placed at the heart of the social and political order. Private security and the use of public police as an integrated part of private security, particularly vehicles and communication, clearly raise difficult questions. It is easy to see this as providing yet more protection to paying clients, while taking away public resources from those unable to afford private security. At the same time it is important to acknowledge that public policing is desperately inadequate for the poorer sections of the population at the moment. Kenya has one police officer per 850 people, well below the recommended UN minimum of one per 450. At this stage, the plan to reach the UN target by 2006 seems highly unrealistic, but at least until then, police resources are likely to remain severely over-stretched (Government of Kenya, 2003:11). As a result, individuals, businesses and organisations will have few options but to continue to rely to a large extent on private providers. Importantly, this is cannot be approached as an ideological or normative question of whether or not security should be a public duty – it is quite simply a reflection of the material resources of the present Kenyan state.
Private security provision in Kenya will thus require careful consideration, in particular as regards the co-ordination co-operation between PSCs and the police force. It is essential that the overall provision of security, both public and private, is such that it increases security for all, not just for some. Given adequate level of co-operation between public policing and private security companies, private security can act as a ‘force multiplier’ increasing security for all sections of society. On the other hand, a lack of co-ordination and co-operation can result in a gradual ‘privatisation’ of public policing, and hence an intensification and deepening of existing inequalities. In this way, private security, its regulation and incorporation into wider networks of security provision is a key future consideration for Kenya, and for many other African countries.

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**Endnotes**

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2. Such violence is frequently reported to have political overtones, including the Kariobangi massacre in March 2002, when clashes between the Mungiki and the Taliban groups killed 20 people and injured a further 30.


**Bibliographic Note**


**Can Mozambique’s New President Lead the Fight Against Corruption?**

*Marcelo Mosse*

Although the Mozambican discourse on corruption continues, it is mainly aimed at petty corruption. State funds continue to be drained off to benefit small numbers of the political elite; conflict of interest rules are ineffective. Indeed, there are no conflict of interest rules at all to regulate the actions of the new businessman-president Armando Guebuza. And he has an enormous range of business interests which depend on government generosity, including fishing licences and soft loans. He also has a wide range of business associates in the Frelimo elite. Can he afford to push for a higher level of transparency and accountability?

Any transition from a socialist one-party system to a capitalist multi-party system means changes in the organisation of the...
state the character of the government. New institutions are required to prevent corruption, typically separation of powers to provide checks and balances, plus oversight and audit mechanisms. Transparency and accountability are central, as well as conflict of interest rules.

In the old authoritarian regime in Mozambique, corruption was not tolerated, and the political leadership severely punished those who abused their positions. The leadership also promoted a high moral standard which was maintained, despite the low civil service salaries and shortages of basic consumer goods. But democratisation and liberalisation have not been accompanied by an effective institutional redesign to safeguard against the development of corruption; there is no transparency or accountability.

When Mozambique made its brisk turn from socialism to capitalism, it was urgent, the argument went, to create a national bourgeoisie, and this was done with public funds. Political elites became businesspeople through privatisations, which were calamitous, and the squandering of bank resources that the state had to repay. In their desperation to be rich, some politicians created companies in many different areas, but they lacked the resources and know-how to operate them successfully. The Mozambican bourgeoisie took from the state but gave nothing back.

Armando Guebuza, elected president of Mozambique in December 2004, was among the first to be convinced that the way forward was through primitive accumulation. Guebuza is an example of someone with a vast range of business interests, and he has had some success. As president, he will take important decisions on economic areas in which he has interests.

A Businessman-president

The spread of Armando Guebuza’s interests is shown just by checking the company registrations published, by law, in the official Boletim da República III. Guebuza was Minister of Transport and Communications from 1987 through 1994, and it remains one of his greatest areas of influence. Many of his companies are linked to transport, including:

Vehicle inspection: Inspetec, Sociedade de Inspeção de Engenhos Motorizados, created to carry out technical inspections and certify examinations of vehicles and boats. His partner is José Solomone Cossa, chairman of the board of Aeroportos de Moçambique, a public company supervised by the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

Vehicles: Tata Moçambique, with a subsidiary of the Indian automotive company. Another shareholder is Mbantine Investimentos is a company belonging to the family of Tourism Minister António Sumbane. Tata Moçambique is a partner with Navique and Emose, both public companies, in a company called Equimar.

Vehicle assembly and sale: MOVA, Montagem de Veículos Automóveis. This company appears to be inactive, but is important because it shows the range of linkages. Other shareholders include former Interior Minister Mariano de Araújo Matsinha and Scanmo de Moçambique, a company in which the Ministry of Transport and Communications had a major shareholding. It was created to import and provide post-sales assistance to Scania products.

Other transport: Cornelder, which manages Beira and Quelimane ports (the latter concession was granted in 2004 when Guebuza was already a presidential candidate) and in TRAC (Trans-African Concessions) which operates the toll road from Maputo to Witbank in South Africa.
Fish & Water Are Other Important Areas

Fishing: Mavimbe and Maluandle. In both companies his partner is Moisés Massinga who was previously Secretary for State for Fisheries and is the most visible face of Guebuza’s interests in this sector. José Luís Frederico da Costa Virott was also a partner in Mavimbe until he abandoned Mozambique in the mid-1990s under suspicion of drug trafficking.

Fishing and water: Água, Empreendimentos e Participações, established in 1999 to invest in ‘industrial, commercial, agricultural and tourism enterprises, manage shareholdings and provide services in the industrial, commercial, agricultural and tourism sectors’. Other shareholders include Tourism Minister António Sumbane, Fisheries Minister Cadmiel Muthemba and Moisés Massinga.

Water: Águas de Moçambique, the company that manages the public water supply in Mozambique’s five main cities. One of his partners there is Raul Domingos. At the 1990-92 Rome peace talks, Guebuza was chief negotiator for Frelimo and Domingos was chief negotiator for Renamo; Domingos stood as a presidential candidate against Guebuza in 2004.

Other Interests Include:

Consultancy: Focus 21, Management and Development. The other shareholders are his son Mussumbuluko and his wife Maria da Luz Guebuza.

Electronic engineering and electricity: Electrotec and Intelec, Indústria de Material Eléctrico. Intelec depends on partnerships with foreign companies. Intelec also has a publicity arm, Intelec Lites.

Other: New Express Ltd, to ‘provide services in the area of correspondence throughout the country, carrying out the home delivery of parcels, documents, financial transactions and newspapers through a personalised service’ and Venturin, which has property, tourism and beauty interests. A partner in Venturin is Augusto Lucas who is in turn linked to Moçambique Comercio Internacional and in Health and Beauty Center Moçambique.

Through his businesses, Guebuza has very wide links with the Mozambique establishment, and checking company listings shows that his family and business partners in turn have invested in a wide range of companies. It seems as if everyone in the establishment is eventually linked to everyone else. This vast array of business, social and family connections provide fertile ground for clientalism and influence. President Guebuza will surely come under pressure for preference and favours for business associates; ministers and officials will surely be under pressure from those who claim to be acting in the president’s business interests.

A Decade-long Delay

Two laws have been passed with a view of guarding against the use of state assets and official posts for personal benefit. A 1990 law (law 4/90 of 26 September) introduced new norms of conduct, rights and duties for top public leaders. A 1998 law (law 7/98 of 15 June) with similar objectives covered the holders of government posts. The two laws contained some basic rules for transparency and for the declaration of personal assets.

But neither law came into effect until 2000. In Mozambique, laws are quite general and do not take effect until the government issues detailed regulations. The 1998 law was put into force by regulations in Decree 48/2000 of 5 December and the 1990 law by Decree 55/2000 of 27 December. Thus a law to...
prevent conflict of interest was passed but not put into effect for an entire decade, during which time ministers and others could establish their businesses unrestricted.

These laws prohibit the involvement of senior civil servants in remunerated activities within their spheres of responsibility, and also establish the declaration of assets and sources of income. Senior public leaders ‘must not use the influence or power conferred by their posts to obtain personal advantages, or provide or receive inappropriate favours and benefits from third parties’ (4/90 article 2d). It is obligatory for leaders ‘to declare their patrimonial assets, liabilities, current or past functions in private and public companies, indication of gross complementary income for taxation purposes, declaration of the patrimony of their spouses, and annual updates of assets’ and ‘the deliberate non presentation of the necessary declarations or their culpable inaccuracy gives rise to the application of sanctions, including dismissal’ (4/90 article 3). This law also regulates some incompatibilities, namely the exercise of remunerated activity without authorisation; being member of the board or manager of any company unless by decision or in representation of the state; and carrying out activities of a professional nature related to his or her sphere of decision for third parties, even when unremunerated. In the case of the office holder being a shareholder, board member or owner of any company, the management of the asset and its bodies must be entrusted to others.

Declaration of assets was actually only required after the regulations were published at the end of 2000 saying how this was to be done. Ministers declare their assets to the Prime Minister, who in turn declares her assets to the President. Declarations of assets are deposited with the Constitutional Council, which also deals with violations.

The law specifies that the declarations of assets are secret, and can only be seen by ‘the President of the Republic, the Assembly of the Republic, the Prime Minister, and the Attorney-General of the Republic, through a written request to the Constitutional Court’. It adds: ‘The declarations are protected by the norms of legal secrecy, and their inappropriate dissemination is punishable in the terms of the law’. It does not say how monitoring will be done. But as the law stands, civil society and press – and public opinion at large – have no way to check on widespread rumours of corruption because the have no access to the declarations.

Furthermore, the laws are vague, listing various duties but does not defining their content – for instance, it speaks of the duties of loyalty and impartiality, but does not explain what they are. The conclusion is that the law is ineffective for tracking and documenting corrupt activities. This also makes the search for accountability and proof of corruption more difficult. The preliminary conclusion to be drawn is that the legislator never intended to make this law more effective by giving it more transparency.

The general framework of these democratic control mechanisms is thus precarious. For example, there are no rules on conflicts of interest that guard against opportunism on the part of members of parliament. A study carried out by Ética Moçambique in 2001 found that MPs can simultaneously have shareholdings in companies and vote for laws that benefit them. In other words, the law does not regulate conflicts of interest for MPs in relation to the private sector: they can serve other interests with no restrictions; there are no impediments or limitations on their holding positions of trust in private companies or even sitting on the boards.
Monitoring the President

Remarkably, the President of the Republic is exempt from the two conflict of interest laws; for a President, there are no rules on conflict of interest or declaration of assets. This was raised with Guebuza just before the election campaign, in a television interview on STV (12 October 2004). The journalist asked him what would guarantee that he would not use the powers of the President to benefit his companies. Guebuza’s reply was peremptory: ‘The Constitution of the Republic’. He added that ‘the Constitution is what will guarantee that I do not manage my companies’.

But Mozambique’s Constitution does not establish any incompatibilities between the functions of President of the Republic and businessman. Not a single line of it says that the President, having companies in almost every sector of activity, should not take decisions on matters that affect economic interests in those areas. And nothing prohibits Guebuza from having companies. In fact, the Constitution defends the right to property.

Thus there is no law to manage conflicts of interest in a case where the president is also a major businessperson. The problem can be seen with Guebuza’s fishing company, Mavimbe. First, his fisheries companies are dependent on licences issued by the government. Sources in fisheries says that Mavimbe has been one of the most privileged companies in the acquisition of quotas. In the late 1990s it began to press for fishing quotas to be ‘nationalised’; big foreign-linked fishing companies such as Efripel and Pescamar had their quotas cut significantly, while Mavimbe gained additional quotas. But fishing catches in Mozambique are declining. A 2004 study by the National Fisheries Research Institute recommended that catches by industrial and semi-industrial fishing boats be cut by one-third. Will Guebuza have the courage to impose a rational and careful management of the sector which would have a direct cost to one of his businesses?

Second, Mavimbe has a large concessional loan from the government. Treasury credits for entrepreneurs linked to the Frelimo party began some years ago with the turn to the market economy. They are granted at concessional rates and through a very obscure mechanism on the basis of grants and loans to the Mozambican state for balance of payments support. Donations from Japan, USAID and Germany, and credits from the African Development Bank and the IDA (World Bank) have already been passed on to Mozambican businesses with no public tenders and no guarantees of return. Large loans have gone particularly to senior veterans of the liberation war, and many are not being repaid. In 2002 Armando Guebuza had access to a credit of US$2.5 million for the purchase of a fishing boat (which is seen as quite expensive, since normal boats with the latest equipment cost around US$500,000). Now that Guebuza has become president, will Mavimbe continue to have access to these credits?

No Corruption Crackdown Without the Boss

Mozambique is a hybrid state, formally modern but in fact mired in nepotism. Officials and ministers are not held responsible for their actions so long as they are protected by a powerful patron. This leads to a mentality in which reciprocal relations with a patron takes precedence over the task a person is supposed to carry out and over the public good.

Transparency, integrity and concern over conflict of interest are all lacking in Mozambique. Clientalism, nepotism, influence trafficking and neopatrimonialism are deeply rooted. The
public and press lack information. So corruption has vast space in which to develop. The problem is not lack of laws, but that the laws are not applied. The lack of political will to call high officials to account for conflicts of interest, combined with the decline in moral values and the get-rich-quick attitudes of the new capitalist society, means that a small political elite continues to expropriate public goods for their own benefit.

During the period before and during the election, there was much talk of petty corruption, and this has continued since Guebuza took office. But an anti-corruption strategy starts at the top. Thus the absence of rules to regulate the behaviour of a businessman-president raises major questions, and strips away any means from the anti-corruption discourse peddled by the politicians. Will Guebuza show how he manages his interests, especially in fishing, and will he give practical content to rules on integrity and conflict of interest? What will he do about concessional Treasury credits.

Will the businessman-president be able and willing to break with neopatrimonialism and move toward the modern state? Or has integrity been left behind with authoritarianism?

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Nigeria: Conservation, ‘Traditional’ Knowledge & the Commons

Caroline Ifeka & Sylvanus Abua

As analysed in former issues of ROAPE, rural Africa’s resource struggles pivot on the capitalist economy’s growing transformation of common property tenure into private property regimes that support the development of class relations and socio-economic inequality. Privatisation by elites in control of emerging land markets means the direct producer loses his customary entitlements and, landless, is forced to seek employment for a wage within capitalist relations of production: privatisation shrinks the commons and undermines both ‘traditional’ environmental knowledge and community forest management. However, our data show that compared to settlements close to roads and markets, villages furthest from the roads retain greater commitment to common tenure, have stronger traditional knowledge and greater resistance to privatisation of the forests. We ask whether in the latter settlements ‘traditional’ knowledge helps empower subalterns and some (sensitised) elites to resist the commodification of forest resources and to uphold community forest management for biodiversity conservation.

In this briefing we recall Gareth Hardin’s (1968) classic argument that though society is composed of rational individuals attempting to maximise their own economic interests, this rationality is individualistic and exercised at the expense of other individuals – and the commons which they exploit. Previous ROAPE contributors have argued that an historic struggle for ownership and control for profit and power of resources in subcontinental Africa continues (c.f. Cliffe, 1988; Bush & Szeftel, 1991; Johnson, 2003). Currently, members of an interna-
tional and African bourgeoisie comprising multinational corporation managers, officials of the nation-state, and national companies are pushing privatisation for profit of African lands, forests, inland rivers and coastal waters. Their predatory actions are resisted from time to time by an increasingly differentiated subaltern class of direct producers (miners, farmers, fisherfolk, hunter-gatherers, pastoralists) whose livelihoods – nay survival – depend on continuing access under customary tenure to a commons that in villages relatively close to access roads logging companies, farmers and traffickers in non-timber forest products are ‘mining’ to death.

Alarmed at rapid species and habitat loss, international NGOs such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) UK collaborated in the late 1980s with the Federal Military Government of Nigeria to enclose large tracts of forest commons for perpetual protection – i.e. zero exploitation. These lands were gazetted as National Parks, which prohibited local people from exercising their customary tenurial rights to hunt, farm and harvest products in the forest as their ancestors had done for generations. In effect, the Federal Government’s Parks were a state-administered ‘commons’ superimposed over customary lands, but one that cancelled villagers’ ‘traditional’ rights of access, exploitation and management; perhaps conservationists hoped that these state ‘commons’ would provide a bulwark against market forces pushing for the privatisation of customary land rights?

Yet tropical forest degradation by illegal loggers in cahoots with community, state and federal elites extends to forests officially protected as National Parks. State elites feel free to send in their tractors and chain saw operators to fell and transport out valuable tropical hardwood for sale to eager buyers in Calabar (the capital of Cross River State) and Lagos. In addition, farmers and pastoralists effect annual burning of forests well inside Park boundaries for farming and grazing. Continuing destruction of high forest, river courses and endemic species habitats caused many conservationists and the DFID-supported Cross River State Community Forestry Project in the 1990s to question the effectiveness of Parks as the primary tool for biodiversity maintenance; they argued that effective conservation begins (and ends) with full community participation. However, development practitioners and national elites keen to promote tenure privatisation have criticised Nigeria’s Land Use Decree (1978) which placed all land under the ‘trusteeship’ of state governors; in their view, the Decree is ‘holding back’ urban and rural ‘development’, by which they mean clearance of community and family held land for urban projects and agro-industrial plantations producing cash crops as rubber, palm oil and sugar cane which they claim (surprisingly) can ‘feed the nation’. Now bourgeois advocates of privatisation are pressing for the 1978 decree to be abolished, so an open market in land will be established everywhere; they believe all the country’s lands presently exploited by rural communities as a commons under customary tenure should be ‘freed up’ (commodified) so they can be purchased for a ‘market’ price by those with the wherewithal to invest in ‘development’ which will ‘grow the economy’. Note that early in 2005, notwithstanding local concerns and some opposition, the Kwara state governor in central Nigeria ‘leased’ 16,000 hectares for 25 years of allegedly ‘empty’ common land to four Zimbabwean (white) farmers supported by 50 black Zimbabwean farm hands and 2,000 head of cattle, with which to establish large-scale dairy farming integrated with soybean, maize and rice cultivation (UNIRI, 22 March 2005).

Although Gareth Hardin argues that in situations of population growth every ‘man’s’ (‘natural’) maximisation of self-interest ensured that land held in com-
mon is degraded, we examine some instances to the contrary of successful forest commons management in the best ‘bottom up’ tradition of sustainable exploitation that benefits collectivity. These communities are furthest from roads and markets, have very small village elites without strong ties to state politicians as well as rich forest resources that are reflected in a vibrant environmental knowledge; some villages have partnerships with local NGOs such as the African Research Association and Rainforest Resource and Documentation Centre which work across Cross River State for preserving ‘traditional’ knowledge and more sustainable exploitation of the forest commons. Do these village communities epitomise Andre Gunder Frank’s (‘dependency’) theory (1969) that the looser the economic ties between ‘periphery’ (settlement) and ‘metropole’ (market town, state capital), the greater the satellite’s prospects – assuming a redistributive oriented government – for more sustainable forest commons management that relies on ‘traditional’ environmental knowledge, reduces income inequality and resource conflict?

In what follows we explore the role of ‘traditional’ knowledge in empowering successful community management of the forest commons. (By ‘traditional’ knowledge we mean that body of local wisdom, learning and understanding that interprets communities’ collective relations with, and impact on, their forests in terms of customary law regulating spiritual relations between people and vitalising divinities.)

Cultural Modification

Our enquiries suggest that traditional knowledge in remote forest villages of forest plants and habitats continues to adapt to new challenges, notably a shrinking natural resource base that is increasingly penetrated by the cash economy. For instance, local entrepreneurs – perhaps working for city based elites – hire village labour, largely women, on piece rates so workers in each gang compete to harvest more ‘salad’ (Gnetum africana) per day than others; villagers fear that ever more intensive harvesting is wiping out the plant. Commodification of labour and the commons is impinging on knowledge and conservation practices. Consider the following examples of cultural modification:

Ten years ago a men’s secret society (Ekpe) masquerades in villages and towns in Cross River State (Nigeria) danced to the sound of drum beating played by youth. Today’s secret society players rely on pop and jazz music blaring from radios. The radio is a foreign, modern technology that youth value because it puts them in touch with the outside world of innovation and modernity that they believe makes their village lifestyles seem backward and old-fashioned. Though radio sends ‘hip’ messages, currently it is modifying rather than destroying institutions that uphold the secret society as a respected, if not feared apparatus of law and order which is backed by sacred sanctions and supports sustainable exploitation, e.g. restricting access, opening and closing seasons, imposing taxes on outside users.

In tropical high forest villages on the Nigeria-Cameroon border, remote from access roads and markets but dependent for cash income on exploitation of non-timber forest products as bush mango (Irvingia gabonensis), men’s secret society members (Lakumbo) are still initiated into the secret knowledge of plants, forests and gods that constitute the ‘traditional’ sacred power of the ancestors over the living. Here, old men and some youth expressed concern that conversion of some community members (generally women) to Pentecostal churches and economic ‘development’ are trivialising a secret society, whose
inner circle is feared for its spiritual powers of life and death, and still largely responsible for ‘law and order’ across the thickly forested villages of this cross-border region.

Some herbalists known to us in a small north Cross River town (Obudu) are ‘modernising’ their practices. They refer to books compiled by overseas plant scientists as they collaborate with local laboratory analysts, who now carry out diagnoses for patients before administering herbal (plant) medicines in measured doses. We note that this is an example of quantification according to rational principles that are commodifying traditional knowledge. This is also an example of how researchers and scientists take out the less measurable, more qualitative elements of traditional knowledge and replace them with quantifiable procedures that enable the practitioner to sell his knowledge in discrete blocks to patients who believe that ‘scientific’ herbal medicine is more likely to lead to a cure. So traditional knowledge of forest plants used in healing many afflictions is commodified, sold freely on the market for a price, while the original (customary) owners of the knowledge receive little or no benefit.

Scientific ‘Rationalism’ vs. Spiritual Knowledge

The political process of ‘scientisation’, which involves assessment, selection, substantiation and approval according to western scientific benchmarks, raises western science to the dominant level of reference as the measure of what counts as ‘real’ (e.g. scientific) knowledge. Once accepted by scientists, what was once ‘traditional’ tends to be subsumed in the western knowledge base and is perceived by indigenes as transferring ownership to those with scientific knowledge.

Multinational companies interested in prospecting for new plant resources and genetic material, sometimes commission ethno-botanical research into plant medicine. In cases known to us, on both sides of the Nigeria-Cameroon border, conservation agency scientists and pharmaceutical companies seek to exploit for corporate gain knowledge that indigenes, mostly herbalists, have built up over many generations.

In general, multinational companies have little or no interest in the geographical areas from which their laboratory specimens have come, or in the owners of the knowledge who saved them (companies) several years of expensive hit-and-miss research. The unprivileged position that ‘traditional’ knowledge occupies is one reason why the intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples are often treated so lightly (c.f. Posey, 1990).

A technical materially oriented approach to conservation is in line with quantifiable (scientific) measurement of ‘the social good’ in terms of increasing production of commodities (e.g. goods sold in exchange for money). Thus, ‘scientific’ (rational, logical) techniques measure community progress towards conservation goals in quantifiable, measurable indicators of bio-diversity enhancement, by for example, counting annually the number of big mammals in a designated forest block or by weighing the tonnage of ‘salad’ (Gnetum africana) and bush mango (Irvingia gabonensis) harvested annually in community forests (c.f. WWF, 1990; Omoluabi, 1994; BothENDS, 2004).

Perceived Corrosion of ‘Traditional’ Knowledge

Based on our analyses, though the indigenous perception that nature and human beings are inseparable is weakening in remote forest villages, the belief that plants and human fortunes are integrated through the pervasive activities of various spiritual powers is still potent. For example:
Anyang classify plants into ‘male’ and ‘female’, ‘black’ and ‘white’ (said by informants to be similar to black and white races) by the following criteria: plant structure, leaf colour – pale green is classified as white while dark green is classified as black – and pilosity (leaf hairiness). Anyang classification further confirms that some indigenous peoples perceive humans and nature as similar in some respects and as being linked through the making of analogies as the above which inform plant categorisation. Plants with hairy leaves or high (traditional) medicinal potency are seen as males, while those with non-hairy leaves of less medicinal potency are seen as females. Flowering plants (cryptogams) and non-flowering plants (phenogams) are seen as males and females respectively, though flower-bearing plants are classified as male-female while sterile plants are male.

Some herbalists in the Anyang community of Okwa (enclaved in the Cross River National Park) told us that verbal communication with plants is possible. This is said to explain why some people believe in a secret agreement with forest trees that they will not harm any member of the community, as told to us by herbalists in another Anyang village in the Takamanda Forest Reserve (Cameroon).

Unfortunately, conservation agencies all too often evince a limited appreciation of ‘traditional’ environmental knowledge and conservation practices, so this local understanding is not incorporated into programme design. This is one reason why ‘top down’ programmes often fail to strengthen community capacity to manage the forest commons more sustainably. For example:

On several occasions when the Cross River National Park attempted to implement its village resettlement scheme as part of government’s conservation programme (1991-99), the enclaved villagers of Okwa resisted strongly, arguing that they could not abandon their spiritual birthplaces protected by sacred animals (crocodiles, pythons, hippopotami), forest sites where ancestors resurrect in animal forms and may haunt ancestral graves. Okwa people asked representatives of the World Wide Fund for Nature, then managing that section of the Park, the following (paraphrased) questions:

What will happen to our spirits that are in forest elephants, hippos, crocodiles, etc?
How about our ancestors who we have to interact with and respect through libations, and whose graves lie in sacred ground in the forest?

The WWF manager (an expatriate) answered that he would arrange for Okwa’s ‘totems’ (e.g. elephants etc) to be winched up into a helicopter and flown out to their new location. Youth remained skeptical as to WWF’s ‘real’ intentions.

Knowledge, Tenure & Managing the Commons

Thus, communities in our study area evinced a fragile political and cultural balance between ‘modern’ (materialist), privatising and ‘traditional’ collectivist (spiritual) orientations towards the forest commons, reflecting historical interaction between on the one hand, pre-market subsistence-based economies in which community survival is emphasised as the basis of individual life, and on the other hand, market forces which highlight individual choice, labour for cash not subsistence, and personal consumption. These conflicting value systems highlight the development of cultural heterogeneity and economic differentiation in remote forest villages, precursors perhaps of the preponderance of privatised tenure regimes and a shrinking forest commons in villages close to access roads and markets.
Tacit acceptance of private property regimes among some households in remote villages is evident in a popular preoccupation with economic development; for example, successful hunters, struggling small holder farmers and some non-timber forest product harvesters seek to strengthen market access for bush meat, ‘salad’, ‘wild honey’ and the like. Petty capitalism and materialistic perceptions of the forest as an obstacle to economic development (on account of lack of roads, electricity and health centres) are growing among a minority of (elite) households whose members engage significantly more in farming and off-farm activities as trading between village and city than in non-timber forest product exploitation (Ifeka, 1998; Abua, 2002; Development in Nigeria (DIN), 2003). These elites also claimed that land cleared for cocoa farms was their individual property (they therefore saw themselves as converting commons into private property), and they were markedly less interested than the poor majority in community customary rights to forest and sustainable use of medicinal plants (c.f. Okoth-Owiro, 1996; Francis, 1996).

However, the poorest 60% of households (20% were female headed in some villages) valued most conservation of non-timber forest products on which they depended for their annual income (DIN, 2003). Traditional knowledge of forest plants, their multi-dimensional meanings and uses, is strongest among the poor majority including female headed households; transmission of such knowledge from one generation to the next, its use in day to day survival by exploiting non-timber forest products for subsistence and sale, reflects poor households’ very real dependence on the forest for survival (c.f. Ambrose, 1994). The poor majority, especially women, are among the strongest ‘natural allies’ of conservationists (Redford, 1993), and should be targeted by NGO networks and donors as primary beneficiaries of pro-poor conservation, development and advocacy programmes so as to achieve more rapid scaling up of positive impacts that could reduce biodiversity destruction across large forest and forest-edge blocks.

Evidence from our field studies and elsewhere in Cross River state as Ekuri in the south-west, demonstrates remote communities’ capacity for long term community forest management (Draper, 2004; Caldecott, 1996). Recently, the Ekuri people resisted a timber company offering them a road as bait for large-scale timber exploitation. Again, in 2004, a local advocacy NGO (Rainforest Resource and Documentation Centre, Calabar) mobilised community youth and launched a successful campaign that ‘persuaded’ the state government to call in the hammers thus stopping all logging. This was to allow the Forestry Commission to establish sustainable logging benchmarks.

Conclusion

Our data show a marked contrast in community capacity for, and commitment to, sustainable forest commons management in two types of villages. First, in villages closest to roads and markets, where socio-economic inequality and reliance on remittances like logging and conversion of the forest into farms is most marked, traditional environmental knowledge is fragmented, and community capacity for effective commons management is weakest. Second, in villages furthest from access roads where inequality and remittance dependence is less, reliance on forest resources is greater, traditional knowledge is more pervasive and village authorities managing the commons may resist capitalist interests as multina- tional logging, pharmaceutical companies and agro-industrial corporations clearing forest for large scale monoculture plantations (e.g. oil palm). However, the general trend is rising levels of intra- and inter-village conflict, small
‘resource wars’ and tropical forest degradation. Differences between villages in degree of dependence on forest resources as well as adherence to traditional knowledge and perceptions of conservation conform to patterns noted in early 1990s field research reports by the Department for International Development’s (DFID, UK) Community Forestry Project, Cross River State (Alexander, 1994).

Though some pro-conservations believe in the state enclosing the forest commons for the latter’s ‘protection’, others argue that Hardin-style degradation ‘proves’ that there can be no successful management of lands held in common. However, we gave some examples of sustainable exploitation of forests by villages remote from roads. Like Shepherd (1988) we conclude that the real tragedy of the commons comes when the penetration of market forces and growing individual greed privatises customary tenure regimes, and undermines community management capacity so unrestricted exploitation holds sway.

Caroline Ifeka (University College London) and Sylvanus Abua (African Research Association, Nigeria). Acknowledgements: We are grateful to the Leverhulme Trust (UK) for a research fellowship which enabled Sylvanus Abua to take leave from his job as Director of the African Research Association’s Research, Documentation and Policy Unit in Calabar, Nigeria, and travel to the UK so he and Caroline Ifeka could carry out joint ethno-botanical research. Abua presented an earlier version of this paper under the title ‘The Impact of Research and Conservation Programmes on Traditional Knowledge of Forest Plants: A Comparative Approach’ to the 9th International Congress of Ethno-Biology, University of Kent, 13-17 June 2004.

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Tajudeen's Thursday Postcard

Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem

The British Prime Minister's Commission for Africa Report was published amidst fanfare, even bluster and brave talks about 'new beginnings' and 'great windows of opportunity.' It never ceases to amaze me why we are supposed to settle for windows when we have a whole continent full of gates, fields and mountains of opportunities! The reaction has generally been mixed whether in Africa or globally including Britain itself. This is largely because Africa and her momentous challenges has never lacked focus but has always been short-changed, if not surcharged when it comes to concrete action to realise the often declared good intentions – either declared by ourselves or by others to us.

As someone who has been critical of the Commission as an unnecessary project – a waste of time / energy / money that could have been put to better use and a diversion from what Africans are doing and want to do for themselves, there is not much in the report to make me lose my scepticism. It has actually triggered more questions.

In its Description and Analysis of the Problems it has nothing new to say and modestly makes no pretence at doing so. It is a good summary of what we already know. Perhaps it is in some of its recommendations that nuanced tactical, if not strategic, shifts can be discerned. I say tactical because both the analysis and the suggested solutions are essentially still within the same neo-liberal market-only ideological hegemony of these times. It is still seeking to adjust Africa to global forces despite timid recognition in sections of the report that trade liberalisation, privatisation and donor-driven market mantra have hugely contributed to the collapse of infrastructure, societies and great deprivation in Africa. Just like we had dubious notions of ‘adjustment with a human face’ to offer palliatives for the atrocities inflicted on victims of IMF/World Bank SAP policies in the 1980s, the Blair Commission may turn out to be offering us ‘globalisation with some human faces’.

But even here there are doubts as to the concrete action that will follow the 100 or so recommendations. I don’t think anybody believes that all the recommendations will be acted upon but a number of key ones will remain the focus of action. They include an increase in Aid, Debt Cancellation, Trade Distortions that pre-
vent Fair Trade, Corruption, Good Governance, Peace and Security and others. Out of these even fewer may emerge dominant. Aid will remain very high because it will satisfy the instant gratification of ‘wanting to do something’ and doing it now. Yet doubling or quadrupling Aid is not the issue for as long as Africa and other poor countries are trapped in the structural iniquities of trade, commerce and financial strangulation by the richer countries. The truth also must be told that some countries in Africa – especially mineral or resource rich ones like Nigeria, DRC or Angola – do not need Aid; they need a functioning government. Indeed all of the countries will be better off with fairer trade than any volume of Aid. Aid will only strengthen the hands of the new missionaries of Western NGOs and humanitarian interventionism in Africa and their retinue of experts, consultants and fellow parasites in the professionalisation of our misery. By no means are they going to be foreigners alone.

A number of donor-friendly African NGOs and NGIs (i.e. Non Governmental Individuals) both in Africa and in the African diaspora in Britain, will get their share of the crumbs from the Master’s table too. We should be seeing the grotesque jockeying for the ear of the Master that characterised the so-called consultations (really PR exercises) on the Commission’s work reach a sad crescendo now that the report is out.

There will be a lot of talk about reforming the unfair international trade and financial system but when the crunch comes self interest of the richer countries may not allow any serious movement. Debt cancellation for all may become more fashionable in the discourse but Debt relief with conditionalities may turn out to be what will be achieved since the US government (which is not alone but its convenient to hide their own culpability behind Bush universally taking the flak) is not likely to support the necessary reforms that may mean it is not able to punish its enemies and reward its friends. Yet universal debt cancellation will give every country equal chance of a fresh start.

The other issue that may get more money thrown at it will be support for regional and sub-regional institutions including the African Union especially on Peace and Security Issues. This may not necessarily be due to any new commitment for lasting peace in Africa but because they are cheaper and politically less volatile for Western countries whose governments are not willing to risk the lives of their own citizens in ‘far away’ places like Africa. It is a return to praetorian functions of the African state at a multilateral level. Otherwise why is the new love and admiration for Africa’s role in Peace and Security Issues not extended to include our right to self-determination in Economic Issues and how we govern ourselves?

‘The taste of pudding’ the English say, ‘is in the eating.’ Therefore it is in the national and international action that the Commission’s report is able to provoke that will make critics like myself to either, (happily) eat humble pies or claim pyrrhic victory in saying ‘we told you so’.

Even on the day of the report itself the omens were, contrary to the ‘feel good about Africa’ spin of the sponsors, not all good. For a report that took the bold step of acknowledging that there was nothing African about corruption and admits that it is systemic and has both African and non-African actors and perpetrators, it was ironic that its activities were held at the British Museum – a place that has been a major beneficiary of looted historical and aesthetic assets from all over the world – especially Africa. Tony Blair could have shown some genuine remorse and willingness to really change things for the better by handing over...
some of these stolen treasures as a symbolic gesture that business will not continue as before.

And this for me is the core of the matter. The Commission’s Report will get more buy-in if Britain leads by example instead of sermonising and lecturing the rest of the world on being good or fair towards Africa. It can race to meeting its own Millennium Development Goal target of 0.7% of GDP as a contribution to global Aid. At present it is hovering around 0.4 and hopes to reach 0.7 by 2015! So why set new targets if you cannot reach existing ones?

Should charity not begin at home by a fundamental shift in the way Africans who are already here are being treated? It should certainly take more than a photo opportunity call at Downing Street by a select elite of the Diaspora and few Seminar / Workshop grants to turn this around. Our people say if you want to give me a gift of a dress I should first look at the one you are wearing. The conditions of Africans here should be an index in measuring British commitment to Africa.

The Museum of London may be a depository of looted historical treasures but the city of London itself is a major player in the systematic looting of Africa: direct theft by companies and corrupt African leaders, money laundering, fictitious transactions, etc. Britain can show real leadership by being the first country to implement the recommendation of the report that calls for repatriation of such looted funds to the countries they were stolen from and also punishing businesses, banks and finance houses that aid and abet bribery and corruption in Africa. If Britain can do this, a course of action that it does not need the support of anybody to embark on, it can then challenge other countries to follow its good example. This leads us to the challenge of all challenges that the Report faces. It is based on the assumed influence of Britain this year as the country heading both the EU and the G8 countries. But that influence will itself depend on how credible Britain is. Thus the personal standing of Mr Tony Blair cannot be divorced from the matter. It is no secret that he suffers an enormous international credibility deficit as a result of his uncritical support for Bush who has so far given him nothing back in return. His credibility may improve if Bush could help him out on this but we cannot hold our breath. So who will listen to Prophet Blair in his new missionary activity in Africa? Even a significant proportion of the British people who had twice elected him and his party and may well do so again (there being no reasonable alternative) no longer trust him. His credibility among the Africans he now wants to save, is even less. For sometime, President Thabo Mbeki, The Renaissance Man of South Africa, was a close ideological soulmate but the relationship fell apart both over unrealistic pressures to be a poodle to Blair in Zimbabwe and disappointments over NEPAD. Nigeria’s Mr Know-All, General Obasanjo, who also liked to see him as a chum, is more circumspect these days, again due to hurting knees from KNEEPAD and Western reluctance and British lack of co-operation in getting Abacha’s stolen billions. To many African leaders Blair is viewed either with suspicion or incredulity or both. Many are wont to question his interest in Africa, the Messianic tone and his perceived arrogance (which is not difficult for many of them to see since they are ‘infallible’ in their countries too)! For Blair, therefore, it is not just that the prophet has no honour in his village; even outside his village not many trust him.

There are a number of spins around the Report, which I find most disingenuous and risk the backlash that overkill salesmen or women get from wary customers. One, it is constantly dropped on you that a majority of the 17 commissioners are Africans. This is supposed to confer
African ownership on the Report. Do they not know that majority of the colonial officials and the Slave captors and buyers before them were Africans? Two, attention is also drawn to the fact that two serving African leaders participated in the Commission. Someone should tell Blair that signing up to good intentions has never been an issue with our leaders; action is where the challenge is. Many of them will jump at any opportunity to show a grateful nation that their Dear Leader is respected internationally and has friends in Washington, Paris or London! The same leaders signed up to AU, NEPAD and somehow manage to forget to mention that when the call came through from 10 Downing Street that Blair wants to have a word!

What is the point in agreeing on the Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan of the AU and accepting NEPAD and yet rushing to sign up to another report? It is like being invited to your own funeral. Many of these leaders will still say 'yes' whenever another call comes through from some other do-gooders especially from outside Africa. It is a cynical circus of mutual gratification between leaders.

Finally, this year is presented as a 'Make or Break Year'. Does that mean that any African who wakes up on 1 January 2006 would have made it? In spite of all the apocalyptic scenarios a majority of our people will still be alive that day and going about their survival in the best way they can and I bet it will not be because of Blair's Commission.

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Higher Education in Africa: the Commission for Africa
Graham Furniss

In the Commission for Africa report, *Our Common Interest*, the headline recommendations are about trade, aid and debt. But it also puts the spotlight on Africa's crumbling universities. Whatever specific policies and development plans for Africa emerge from the report, implementation will be left to Africa's university graduates. It is they who have the task of making Africa grow and develop. It is the universities and polytechnics of Africa which will produce the pharmacists to run the pharmacies, the engineers to staff the industries and the teachers to run the schools. The last decade has seen DFID and other donors target development effort on primary education leaving to fend for itself the sector that must produce trained men and women. A better balance is now returning and attention will refocus on the tertiary sector. It is time for the UK to reassess its role in supporting higher education in Africa.

The Commission report recommends a commitment of US$500 million per year for investment in tertiary education in Africa over 10 years, but it is not simply a question of money. Engagement must be far deeper than that. The continent is littered with 3/4/5 year aid projects that ran out after the money dried up, workers gone, and the local community unable or unwilling to carry the costs. Many universities in Africa are in a dire state of disrepair. Libraries are bare, laboratories are obsolete or broken, the best teachers and researchers have looked at their salaries and their working conditions and have long since left for the private sector or abroad, class numbers are in the hundreds, younger academics cannot get beyond a Masters degree, and university administrations are in despair over their deficits and their inability to invest. On a recent visit to a number
of northern Nigerian universities I was assailed by the enormity of the problem of run-down facilities and astonished at the fortitude of the staff who manage to keep things working (colleagues at Ahmadu Bello University estimated that 60-70% of the best brains had left the universities in the last decade). This rather bleak characterisation does not run for all universities by any means: Makerere in Uganda has been on the mend over the last 20 years; Ghana’s Legon survives and flourishes; the impoverishment of Nigerian universities has affected Ibadan and Lagos less than others; the University of Botswana has excellent resources; and a number of francophone African universities continue to function well. Reform in South African universities has produced amalgamations on which the jury is perhaps still out. Nevertheless, flagship universities such as Cape Town and Wits are attracting more and more students and staff from across Africa. But all of these institutions need more support if they are to realise their full potential as engines of development.

So what is needed? Most African universities know perfectly well the reforms that are necessary and the investment that is required. Part of the answer is political will and part is substantial investment in infrastructure and staff. No doubt donor and national governments will tie funding to reform and they may be right to do so. Some look to the return of the brains that drained away, and incentives to bring back lost expertise into African universities will no doubt have a place. But many people have now made their lives and careers outside Africa and would not wish to return. Ironically, the loss of their professional skills would also damage the health care systems or education systems of their adopted countries. Nevertheless, organisations of expatriate Africans support their universities back home.

Ghanaian academics, for example, and Nigerian doctors working outside Africa help their countries’ universities and health systems in several ways by sending money and materials and making links between institutions in Africa and their adopted countries. A number of international, mostly US, foundations – Macarthur, Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie – have examined in detail the needs of a number of African universities and supported the establishment of IT systems, research infrastructure, staff training, among other things.

The Association of African Universities representing African Vice-Chancellors, and its sister organisation, the Association of Commonwealth Universities articulate the needs of African universities and the Commission Report endorses their nine-point programme entitled ‘Renewing the African University’. In great part it is likely that African universities will want to reinforce their intra-African links to strengthen cooperative relationships within, for example, the southern African region, or within the ECOWAS community (which currently has no chapter on educational cooperation). But there will be a role for the reconstruction and strengthening of North-South links, links with universities in the UK and in the EU more broadly. The close links involving the movement of staff and students between, for example, the University of London, and its constituent colleges of Ibadan and Makerere of forty years ago, have long since been dismantled. The prospect of large numbers of junior staff doing Masters and Doctoral training in UK universities was dealt a hammer blow by the hike in overseas fees combined with the devaluation of African currencies through the 1970s and 1980s. Nine thousand pounds a year in fees for a Nigerian student is two and a quarter million Naira at today’s exchange rate – an impossible dream in a country where the average per capita income is less than one tenth of that sum. While the internet and e-learning mean
that resources can be available to a Ghanaian academic at home as never before, nevertheless, any move to participate in the global networks of scholarship and up-to-date research will require visits to libraries and colleagues in the North, as also scholars in the North will benefit from collaboration with colleagues in African universities. In recent visits to universities in Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana and the Gambia it was made abundantly clear to me that there are urgent training needs for the new generation of staff in African universities, that must involve access to libraries, supervision, advice, participation in conferences, and incorporation into ongoing cooperative networks of like-minded scholars.

So what can we in the UK do when it comes to working out in practice what the broad policy statements mean for this university or that, this country or that, this subject or that – chemistry, medicine, engineering, linguistics, political science or any other? Clearly we must have a mechanism first for hearing what African universities are saying is needed. We also need a mechanism for coordinating a response. While universities in the UK are in intense competition with each other for overseas students there is a disincentive to collaborate. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the network of 600 Africanist academics represented in the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) and its sister organisation, the Royal African Society (RAS), it is apparent that collaboration is essential. We know that DFID funds research in the UK and in African universities linked to development projects; the British Council finances exchanges and links between UK and African universities, as does, separately, the FCO through Chevening Scholarships. We know that the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission responds to African Vice-Chancellors and their requests to support staff they have selected. We are aware that a number of Centres of African Studies – Edinburgh, Birmingham, Oxford, Cambridge, London – have small amounts of money that they make go a long way in supporting visits by African academics to UK universities, and we know that they are linked into their European equivalents through the AEGIS network of European Centres of African Studies.

A number of UK universities are looking to make more flexible their degree formats to reduce the cost of training in the UK for younger African academics. But the UK-Africa element of any programme to support the rehabilitation of African universities will need to move away from these somewhat piecemeal efforts into a more coordinated and sustained effort. The important response to the Commission for Africa consultation document from the Royal African Society drew attention to the schemes run by the Norwegian and Swedish governments as models for assistance to African universities. Members of the African Studies Association of the UK work closely with individuals and groups in their equivalent departments in African universities, they are aware of the particularities of those departments, those universities, those countries, and it is those particularities that any new effort has to take into account.

It is time for a discussion, before implementation plans get set in stone, between the institutional stake-holders, the British Council, Universities UK, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, among others, and the academics who work closely with colleagues in African universities, in the Centres of African Studies, the ASAUK/RAS, the AEGIS network, the Africa-related programmes of the Research Councils, to work out how best to respond to expressed wishes of African universities, coming from their departments, faculties and vice-chancellors, and how best to match those individual needs to provision that can be organised here in the UK and in Europe more widely.
If the outcome of our combined efforts over a ten or twenty year period were to be a real reinforcement of ‘human capital’ in Africa then their success as people will also be dependent upon all the other dimensions of successful development. The production of people with skills has to move in parallel with the provision of the tools they need to do the job. As a spanking new hospital without the right quantity and quality of staff can be a white elephant of massive proportions, so also the trained pharmacist in the town clinic needs to have the tools to do the job – an income that is sufficient to live, uninterrupted electricity to keep the vaccines safe in the fridge, clean water in the taps, and drugs to dispense that are not counterfeit chalk tablets. And pharmacy has to be a viable business in a thriving economy, and one which is not subject to the devastation of war or the debilitation of corruption. The Report of the Commission strikes a note of optimism and hope in its attitude to Africa and its prospects. The task will be to work together to make a reality out of that prospect.

Graham Furniss, President, African Studies Association, UK; SOAS/ London.

**Challenges of Decentralisation in Ethiopia’s Somali Region**

**Tobias Hagmann**

Ethiopia’s Somali Regional State or region 5 represents a vivid testimony to the fruitless attempts to establish a functional administration in a border region drawn into constant political turmoil. Ever since the Somali region was granted its own ‘autonomous’ administration in 1993, state presence has remained embryonic in urban centres and has nearly been fictional in the rural areas. By the mid-1990s the need to establish effective local government, and the impediments militating against that drive, had been recognised. Yet the past decade passed without any noteworthy devolution of resources and power to the 51 *wereda* (districts) of the Somali region. As a result, the performance of the Somali region’s public institutions has, up to this day, been far from impressive. Major towns such as Jijiga and Gode boast schools, medical facilities, a police force, and telecommunication services, the efficiency of which is questionable at best. Outside these urban centres, service delivery for the region’s estimated 3.5 million inhabitants is limited to occasional food aid distribution and random interventions by security forces.

Under the impulsion of international and national pressure, region 5 embarked on a troubled process of decentralisation in 2004 – a move that was preceded by the region’s first ever district council elections. A number of precisely defined and related institutional and financial reforms are contained in the decentralisation of Ethiopia’s regional states. Since 2002, all over the country, the zonal level administration has been abolished or curtailed; block grants allocated directly to the *wereda* councils have been introduced; and civil servants have
been transferred from federal and regional offices to the districts. The ultimate goal of this exercise, whose implementation is ongoing, is to enable the districts to control, allocate and manage block grants on their own (Vaughan & Tronvoll, 2003). However, implementing these tasks in the context of the Somali region proves an arduous challenge. More than simply reorganising an existing bureaucracy, decentralisation in region 5 has become synonymous with an effort to expand administration into the rural areas. Hitherto, political conditions in the region have not encouraged internal state building especially in the so-called ‘insecure’ parts of the region – where the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) controls the bush and the Ethiopian national army the towns – and where the civilian administration is overshadowed and effectively run by the army (Khalif & Doornbos, 2002).

The Somali region’s parliament, the State Council, functions primarily as an organ that elects and impeaches regional presidents. Since its inception it developed little ambition to actually legislate. So far the assembly neither harmonized state law with the widely practiced Somali customary law nor did it formulate a sensible framework for pastoral resource management. In 2002, the council adopted a revised version of the regional constitution that had been produced in a short time span. Apart from some minor changes, the document represents almost an identical replica of the federal constitution (SRS, 2002). Courts have been set up in all the districts of the region over the past ten years, yet legal personnel is very few despite the establishment of a government management institute in Jijiga. Qualified civil servants prefer to stay in the region’s capital, Jijiga, where living conditions are more convenient and comfortable. As an official report openly admits, ‘in nearly all cases, the educated class prefers not to get its hands dirty by being assigned to and work in rural areas’ (IPS, 2002). Ever since the transfer of the regional capital from Gode to Jijiga (Markakis, 1996), the latter had become home to a majority of the 5,000 civil servants employed by the Somali region.

The planned shift of the control over budgetary resources from Jijiga to the districts also encounters a number of financial management problems. A recent World Bank (2003a) financial accountability assessment outlines some of the factors that limited the financial independence of local governments so far. First, the regional state is highly dependent on federal subsidies including external loans and grants. The 2002/2003 budget of Birr 495 million for example consisted of 7% regional revenue and 93% federal contribution. Second, budget allocation and management has always been heavily centralised and implemented through a top-down process. Each of the region’s 41 sector bureaus based in the regional capital manages and executes its own budget and expenditure directly and through their respective zonal counterparts. These in turn undertake the same tasks in their respective zones and the districts that are part of it. Third, Somali region so far lacks the necessary banking services required for decentralised public finance; Jijiga, Degehabur, Qabridahar, and Gode are the only towns where the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia has a presence.

**Development Curtailed**

The failure to decentralise became both a cause and an effect of the lack of tangible progress in infrastructure development during the past decade. This not only holds true when comparing the Somali region’s record to progress achieved, during the same period, in the highlands, but region 5 also lags behind its ecologically and economically more similar neighbours: Somaliland, Puntland and southern Somalia. For instance, while the remnants of the Somali Demo-
cratic Republic enjoyed a dramatic expansion of telecommunications and internet technology since the mid-1990s, Ethiopia’s Somali hinterland remains digitally disconnected with only five out of 70 towns possessing automatic telephone communication. The extension of the mobile phone network to Jijiga in mid-2004 hardly measures up to the gigantic task of providing basic communication to region 5. According to data provided by the region’s Investment Office, the region’s road network currently exists of 1,629 km of all weather roads and 2,844 km of dry weather roads (IPS, 2002). As a result of the expanding distribution network of the booming khat trade the off-road network is constantly growing. A number of new health clinics have been constructed and rehabilitated in recent years, some with support from international donors. However, few of them are operational, as qualified medical personnel are in short supply and most districts lack the necessary budget for recurrent costs. While the construction of health facilities involves awarding contracts, there seems to be no incentive to operate these facilities once they are built. Statistically, there is one health centre for 359,840 people and one health station for 45,549 people in region 5 (IPS, 2002). Other urgently required services such as education, animal health service delivery, access to clean water, or provision of electricity all enjoy trifling existence within the region’s 300,000 square km territory.

In the past decade ambitious large-scale development projects either dissolved gradually or did not go beyond the planning phase. An example of the first is the former South-Eastern Rangeland Project (SERP) that was jointly funded by the African Development Bank and the Government of Ethiopia. Between 1989 and 1996 it implemented numerous activities and construction works improving animal health, rangeland resources, and the general infrastructure within the region. Due to its bottom-up approach and emphasis on technical solutions, SERP quickly became ‘the most prevalent government organisation in the remote areas with the most recognition by the pastoral community’ (Shank, 1996). After phasing out SERP’s workforce and assets including vehicles, heavy machinery and buildings were transferred to the region’s Bureau of Agriculture. Today, the project’s infrastructure is in shambles and former staff and government bureaucrats have appropriated most property. The gradual dissolution of SERP is a dramatic but rather typical example of the trajectory development projects embark on in region 5. The Gode state farm and associated irrigation schemes are another case in point. Initially, all development schemes vow to improve pastoral livelihoods and agro-pastoral production. Ultimately, however, they almost always fuel competition among contending clan groups and often disappear in the urban-based networks of politicians and government appointed clan representatives.

The Calub and Hilala gas fields located in Shilabo district of Korahe zone represent another development opportunity with a high potential for revenue generation. An estimated four trillion cubic feet of gas and 13.6 million barrels of associated liquids had been discovered in the Calub area in 1972. After the Derg’s downfall, the government and 460 private investors established the Calub Gas S.C., with a 95% and 5% stake respectively, to develop the Somali region’s gas fields. Despite numerous agreements and announcements of the impending construction of refineries and pipelines, little advancement occurred on the ground. In 1999 Calub Gas S.C. signed a memorandum of understanding for prospective exploitation with the American oil company Sicor. The joint venture, Gasoil Ethiopia Project (GEP), optimistically foresaw the start of production in September 2002 (Reuters, 1999). After this announcement fears were raised of looming deals being cut at national level
to the disadvantage of the region’s inhabitants’ legitimate claims over its mineral resources (Khalif, 2000). However, in August 2001 the World Bank suspended its 66 million dollar loan to Calub Gas S.C. in an effort to accelerate the latter’s privatisation (Addis Fortune 2001). The following year, the Calub Gas S.C. shareholders committed themselves to a new joint venture for the construction of four refinery and petroleum extraction plants, this time with the Russian oil company Methanol (Addis Fortune, 2002). In December 2003, Ambassador Mohamoud Dirir, chairman of the Somali People’s Democratic Party (SPDP) and head of the federal Ministry of Mines, announced yet another deal with the Jordanian company Si Tech International (SIL). The agreement involved a 25-year concession for SIL who promised to invest $1.5bn. Only half a year later doubts were cast over SIL’s technical know-how and financial potential after it failed to pay Dirir’s ministry a bonus of one million dollars for ‘training programs’ (The Reporter, 2004). As an epilogue in the unsuccessful saga of the Calub Gas S.C., the Council of Ministers decided to liquidate the shareholder company in September 2004 and established United Petroleum S.C. as its successor. Consequently, numerous private shareholders refused to join this new company as they had lost confidence in the partnership with the government (Addis Fortune, 2004).

### 2004 District Council Elections

As a prerequisite for decentralisation, district council elections had initially been scheduled to take place in Somali Region in 2001. Due to drought and political turmoil within the region’s government they were repeatedly postponed. On January 25, 2004 voters in the Somali region elected, for the first time, a council for their respective districts. Prior to that the districts’ institutional set-up consisted solely of an executive organ, the district administration that was led by a chairman and a vice-chairman. Members of the zonal and the regional administrations habitually appointed, on grounds of party loyalty and/or genealogical affiliation, these *woreda* administrators. District elections in region 5 thus finally introduced representative institutions and limited electoral competition at district and *kebele* levels. On election day, the electorate of 46 districts cast their votes in 1,330 polling stations all over the Somali region. According to statistics provided by the National Election Board, a total of 978,611 voters participated in the polls (NEB, 2004). Elections were postponed after political tensions appeared in Erer, Dambel, and Jijiga districts all of which are situated in the region’s northern Jijiga and Shinille zones. The official reason for suspension was ‘the imbalance in tribal set-up and obstacles in representation of clan members’ (WIC, 2004a). Unconfirmed sources reported that elections in Jijiga district had been postponed after it was discovered that supporters of the ruling SPDP had illegally received ballot papers. Problems in Dambel *woreda* were linked to disagreements between different lineages of the Ise (Dir) clan. The Ise clan enjoys representation in the region’s highest political office since their Abdi Jibril Abubaker took over as acting head of the regional government in July 2003.

The Somali region’s first elections to the regional assembly in 1992 have been perceived as a remarkable example of political pluralism (Markakis, 1994). A dozen years later, the 2004 *woreda* elections evoked the impression of a de facto one party state under the flagship of the SPDP. Out of a total of 3309 district councillors elected across the Somali region, 3182 belong to the SPDP (96.2%), 21 to the Western Somali Democratic Party (WSDP) (0.6%), and 106 are independent (3.2%). A tenth of all candidates elected are women. Not only did the SPDP successfully mobilise voters through its government-aided machinery, there was almost no opposition
party to speak of. The WSDP’s political weight proved marginal. Established in 1994, the party is chaired by Hirsi Dool and represents a platform for politicians that either disfavour the SPDP or had left their original political party. Similarly, the Somali Democratic Forces (SoDAF) that had won three parliamentary seats in the 2000 elections for the regional State Council decided to withdraw from the 2004 elections. Meanwhile the historic political organisation of region 5 and former ruling party (1991-1994), the ONLF, celebrated its 20th anniversary in the bush where it had withdrawn to after its gradual alienation from the EPRDF.

Independent monitoring of the January 2004 polls was almost insignificant and limited to Shinille zone, the most easily accessible part of the Somali region. At the invitation of the National Election Board a six-member observation team representing Western Embassies in Addis Ababa observed the board’s preparations and election proceedings at five polling stations within Shinille district. The mission’s verdict on the fairness of the elections was ambiguous. The observers criticized a number of unlawful practices that gave the SPDP a considerable advantage over its contenders (Flens, 2004). The Ethiopian Human Rights Council who had assigned 21 observers across Shinille zone issued a more critical report. The EHRCO concluded that candidates were nominated on the basis of their position within their respective clans and their economic status. The human rights watchdog detected disciplinary problems on the part of the voters. It also reported arrests, harassment, and intimidation of opposition candidates before – and a number of other malpractices during – election day on the part of the government (EHRCO, 2004).

The 2004 district council elections represent the latest phase in the changing relation between collective interests expressed on clan basis and the political architecture within region 5. At the beginning, Somali regional political parties were visibly clan-based and institutional politics was accordingly fragmented. Nine different political parties had participated in the June 1992 elections of the regional parliament. National and regional elections of 1995 and 2000 were both contested by three political parties and illustrated the exclusion of the ONLF from the formal political arena. However, it would be wrong to assume that inter-clan competition diminished over the past decade. Rather competition for access to public office and material resources relocated into, and is played out within, the dominant ruling party – initially the ESDL (1994-1998) and later on the SPDP (1998-2004) – which is the sole political organisation sanctioned by the EPRDF (Samatar, 2004).

Far from being a united force, the ruling SPDP degenerated into an amalgam of centrifugal political interests in recent years and has been ridden by factional infighting. In addition, the March 2004 death of its former chairman, the highly respected Abdulmejid Hussein (Cliffe et al. 2004), deprived the party of an integrative personality respected by the federal government. In anticipation of the 2005 national elections, a new political party was established in July 2004 representing the communities settled along the Shebelle and Genale (Juba) rivers. ‘Dilwabi’, the new party, draws its main support from the minority Rer Barre (Somalised Bantu) as well as some of its neighbouring clans who share its agricultural mode of production.

An Elusive Goal

Upon completion of the elections, the members of the district council elected a spokesperson, a vice-spokesperson, a chairman and a vice-chairman for their wereda. The formal political conditions had thus been achieved to transfer manpower and budget from Jijiga to the district level. At this point of conjuncture, the federal government had become
increasingly annoyed with what it considered as a nepotistic and irresponsible regional elite. To that end, the head of the Ministry of Federal Affairs Abay Tsehay pressed the SPDP to quickly decentralise. This build-up of pressure on the region was also driven by international donors who identified mismanagement as the major hindrance to their interventions in the region. In particular, the World Bank, which currently implements a vast pastoral development programme in south-eastern Ethiopia, had lobbied for decentralisation in order to implement its community-based projects (World Bank, 2003b). Consequently, in July 2004 the federal government confronted Jijiga with an abrupt ultimatum; if the region were not to decide on an effective transfer of its civil servants to the districts and agree on a formula for budget allocation within one month, the federal government would suspend the regional state (WIC, 2004b).

The danger of an imminent loss of autonomy under the direction of the federal government was well understood by the region’s politicians. Through June and July a flurry of activities ensued; the ruling SPDP conducted an auto-evaluation (gim gema), a series of consultations was organised by the Ministry of Federal Affairs in the region’s capital and bureau heads were sent to their home areas to secure, among feuding groups, a cessation of hostilities where clan conflicts had occurred. Finally, the State Council in August 2004 decided that slightly more than half of the region’s budget will, in future, be allocated directly to the newly constituted district authorities. Furthermore it assigned close to 700 civil servants who used to work in the regional offices to different positions at wereda level. There they will be in charge of elaborating and proposing interventions on behalf of the district councils who will approve and fund their proposals autonomously. In parallel, there were plans to establish at least one sub-branch of the Ethiopian Commercial Bank in all of the region’s nine zones.

While these developments are indicators of the willingness by the Somali region to, after all, decentralise, considerable doubt arises as to its chances for success. This is notably the case when bearing in mind the past difficulties to expand local administration in Ethiopia’s Somali periphery. Additionally, the unwillingness of civil servants to dislocate to inhospitable locations, the fact that a large portion of region 5 is controlled by the anti-government ONLF, and the lack of an apolitical bureaucracy all render decentralised institution-building an elusive goal. While the 2004 district council elections represent an important step towards more representative government at local level, accountability of elected officials vis-à-vis the population rather than the party system will be necessary to render district administrations legitimate and relevant in the eyes of the region’s inhabitants.

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Bibliographic Note
The 2004 Elections in
Northern Ghana
Bob Kelly

The December 2004 elections in Ghana were held under the terms of the 1992 Fourth Republic Constitution, with parliamentary and presidential polls being conducted on the same day – Tuesday 7 December. For Ghana as a whole the election was a triumph for the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP), with President Kuffuor receiving 52.45% of the vote as against only 44.64% for his nearest rival Professor Atta Mills. However, for the three northern regions their continued support for the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the much smaller People’s National Convention (PNC) confirmed their continuing divergence from political trends in most of the south. So, despite this victory for the incumbent party our focus is why the NPP failed to make significant gains in the north of the country. I argue that the explanation for this lies partly in historical disputes within the area combined with more recent socio-economic developments and ongoing tensions in relations between Accra and the north.

Recent Democratic History

As Ayee (1998:35) observed ‘Ghana is one of the few countries in Africa that has had significant experiences with democratic political life’. Between 1951 and 1960 it had a functioning multi-party democratic system spanning the pre-independence period of self-rule and the early independence years. From October 1969 to January 1972 and September 1979 to December 1981 democracy was re-established between periods of military rule. In November 1992 the military dominated Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) held multi-party presidential elections to return the country to civil rule, but perceived electoral abuses led four opposition parties...
to challenge the outcome and boycott the parliamentary elections of December that year. As a result, it was not until 1996 when opposition parties contested both the presidential and parliamentary elections that democracy with the aura of legitimacy returned to Ghana.

Despite more robust electoral registration and monitoring procedures the 1996 elections were not entirely fair, with allegations of bribes being paid to voters in many constituencies, the use of threats and intimidation, claims of fake identification cards and so on. However, most of these claims referred to only a small number of constituencies. Of greater significance is the argument that incumbents have an advantage due to unequal access to financial resources. In the 1996 election President Rawlings used a Ghana Air Force helicopter to reach inaccessible areas and his NDC had a fleet of new campaign vehicles (Ayee, 1998:71). This led opposition figures to claim that while the 1992 experience was ‘the stolen verdict’ the 1996 one was ‘the bought election’.

In 2000, however, the same electoral regulations and essentially the same conditions existed but Kufuor and the opposition NPP were able to win both the presidential and parliamentary elections. Although the NPP was allegedly obtaining finance from senior figures in the Nigerian government, had a well-organised network of fund-raisers amongst the Ghanaian diaspora in Europe and North America, and was generally supported by the richer areas of the country, it was still essentially the poor relation of the NDC. The result vindicated the impartiality of the Electoral Commission and suggests that financial resources alone are insufficient to ensure electoral success in contemporary Ghana.

The 2004 Election

In 2004 the electoral regulations and political conditions were essentially the same as they had been in 1996 and 2000 with the exception of NPP rather than NDC incumbency. Now it was the NPP with access to greater sources of finance and privileges of government. Despite the on-going economic hardships, the scene seemed set for an overwhelming NPP success, consolidating its support in the Akan heartlands and moving in to the NDC strongholds of the Volta Region in the east, and the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions of the north.

The NPP were able to make significant gains in the Fante areas of Central Region, despite this being the home of the NDC presidential candidate Atta-Mills. However, the pockets of NDC resistance in other areas of the south remained largely intact. In the Volta Region they captured just one seat (as against a previous zero), in the Upper West one (again compared with zero), in the Upper East two (compared with one plus a by-election gain and an Independent who crossed the floor) and in the Northern Region eight (as against three in 2000, plus two by-election gains and an Independent who crossed the floor). Even these marginal improvements in the three northern regions were not as pronounced as they might seem, because the number of seats available had increased by six since 2000. The seats won by the NPP were Wa East (Upper West Region), Navrongo and Buiisa North (Upper East Region), and Yendi, Gushiegu, Saboba, Wulensi, Nalerigu, Salaga, Damongo, and Chereponi (Northern Region – see figure 2, the Constituency Map of Northern Ghana for the 2004 Elections). Moreover, in several of these seats the NPP majority was less than a thousand votes (Damongo, Wulensi, Chereponi and Buiisa North).

In the North the election day passed peacefully for the most part, although there were actual and attempted physical attacks on electoral officials in three constituencies by supporters of the NPP who were frustrated at their inability to
persuade the officials to falsify the votes (Zabzugu/Tatale, Tolon and Kpandai). Prior to the election day there was sporadic violence in Bawku where the long-standing chieftaincy dispute between the numerically-dominant Kusasi and the previously dominant Mamprusi was exacerbated by local resentment against the erstwhile NPP MP Hawa Yakubu, primarily for being unwilling to step aside for a younger candidate. Her house was attacked and robbed in her absence, her security guard shot and wounded, and there were a number of disturbances at polling booths. In Tamale and neighbouring areas of Dagbon there were allegedly four or five deaths, the poisoning of one party’s supporters by contaminated water at the party rally, and a number of shooting incidents. Perhaps the most significant event was the death of Alhaji Mobila, a leading supporter of the Convention Peoples Party, in military custody. Initial reports suggest that he was beaten to death, having been handed over to the military by the police earlier in the day.

Explaining the Result

So why did the NPP fail to capitalise in the North on the relatively massive resources at it controlled? Any observer could see the greater number of vehicles at the party’s disposal and the massive campaigning effort being mounted.

The Vice President, Aliu Mahama, himself a northerner from the Yendi area, toured the regions and held many rallies. Promises were made for road improvements and the development of other social amenities. Strong candidates with significant power bases were chosen – several District Chief Executives, who had enjoyed the opportunity to develop local patronage over the previous four years, stood, as did people appointed by the President to be junior ministers in the out-going government. Yet the result essentially showed no significant advancement for the NPP in the north as a whole. Northern Ghanaian politics cannot be explained in terms of a single factor, with traditional disputes, inter-ethnic rivalries, ideological traditions, electoral self-interest, the growth of new interest groups, and the personal appeal of particular candidates or their close supporters all playing a role. In the past the few ‘local notables’, whether traditional chiefs or educated/rich individuals, could mobilise the support of particular villages or sections, but now in every locality there are competing ‘notables’ as education and elements of a more ‘modern’ economy and society have spread. This is supported by an examination of the lists of candidates and their educational qualifications. In the Northern region, for example, most constituencies were contested by at least one graduate, with Tamale Central having as its candidates two with PhDs, one M.Phil, one B.A. and one 4-year Certificate A teacher. In the three regions combined there were ten candidates with PhDs, and numerous others with post-graduate qualifications, first degrees and diplomas. So the North now provides a highly competitive arena, with well-educated candidates using modern campaign resources in a context where traditional rivalries vie with ‘modern’ demands and aspirations for political significance. To understand the overall failure of the NPP in the area, we need to break the North down into more meaningful units and look at the interaction of different processes. These are traditional conflicts, developmental demands, personal attributes, and ideology.

Traditional Conflicts

In some, the key factor remains the continuation of traditional conflicts. This was most clearly the case in the kingdom of Dagbon in the Northern Region. Here the dispute over the paramountcy between the Andani and Abudulai families has been on-going since the middle of the nineteenth century and the death of Ya Na Yakubu (Staniland, 1975). In
March 2002, the paramount chief from the Andani family (Ya Na Yakubu Andani II), together with thirty supporters, was murdered in the Dagbon capital of Yendi and his body dismembered. The NPP regime has contained several leading Dagomba, all from the Abudulai family or with close links to it (Vice President, Minister of the Interior, Northern Regional Minister, Yendi District Chief Executive, National Security Adviser, Member of National Security Council). The failure of the regime to bring any of the culprits to justice angered not only the Andani family, but other less partisan individuals who saw the government as failing to act on the deep problems of Dagomba society. The scale of turn-out for NDC rallies in Tamale in November and December was indicative of the intensity of feelings, and the result throughout the mainly Dagomba constituencies was that the NDC won nine of the eleven, with only the Abudulai-dominated Yendi and Gushiegu constituencies returning NPP candidates. It must be realised, however, that the paramountcy is only the pinnacle of Dagbon society and that chieftaincy disputes occur at other levels and it is the competition for chieftaincy in general that is the key motivating factor.

Bawku in the Upper East region is another area where traditional disputes remain strong. Under British rule, the Chief of Bawku was drawn from the minority Mamprusi tribe, but since independence successive regimes have been drawn into supporting and enskinning rival candidates from the Kusasi and Mamprusi. In the 2000 election most of the Mamprusi vote went to the NPP candidate in Bawku Central in the hope that a new NPP regime would overturn the ruling that had led to a Kusasi – Azoka II – being enskinned as Bawku Naba. In the event the settlement preserved the place of the Bawku Naba, leading to Mamprusi disaffection and one of them standing as an Independent candidate. This reflected the grievance of many Mamprusi that under the Kusasi chief they were losing previous privileges such as their claims to land usage. The vote the Mamprusi candidate achieved was almost exactly equal to the margin by which the sitting NPP candidate was defeated (8,574 as against 8,349). As indicated above, however, it is not a question of this traditional ethnic dispute being fought out in isolation, but rather it is a significant issue vying for importance with other issues.

Wa in the Upper West Region had the potential for a traditional dispute to impact on the election, but in practice this did not turn out to be the case. In Wa Central there has been a political vacuum in the traditional arena with the inability of competing factions to agree on a new Paramount Chief – the Wa Na, and through lack of occupancy the chief’s palace is showing signs of disintegration. The NDC has been associated with the candidature of Seidu Yakubu from the Nakpasa Gate, which has been excluded from the paramountcy for a considerable time (Wilks, 1989, Dougah 1966). This presented the opportunity for the NPP Government to capitalise on the situation by opposing Seidu Yakubu and thereby gaining support from the other three gates to the paramountcy. The NPP government, however, has not done this, preferring to stand aloof from the dispute, which so far remains unresolved. The general point still stands, though, that a significant factor in the failure of the NPP in the North in the 2004 elections was its inability or unwillingness to settle or deal with traditional disputes in ways which would have enhanced its support.

Devolution & Developmental Demands

In Upper West Region very different factors explained the poor performance of the NPP. This was the part of the North that had gained most from the years of PNDC and then NDC rule.
Firstly, the Upper West Region was created in 1983 by the PNDC with its capital at Wa. This led to the creation of more administrative jobs in Wa and was followed by significant improvements to the economic infrastructure. Roads, in particular, were vastly improved, with the major link to the South via Bamboi being tarred. In 2000 the region solidly maintained its support for the NDC, with only Sissala constituency supporting the PNC which has its roots in the PNP regime of 1979 (which had Dr Hila Limann a Sissala from the Tumu area as its presidential candidate). Popular opinion was that the new NPP regime from 2000 had done little to continue with the region's development; indeed the road-building programme had been paused. Only one area had seen significant benefit – the establishment of a new district in Funsi – and it was no great surprise when it was that area (Wa East constituency) which was the only one to return an NPP candidate in 2004 (even here the majority was less than 2000 votes). In an area without deep traditional disputes, though Wa town itself is an exception to this, modern aspirations for development become more significant, and gratitude to the NDC and resentment against the NPP won out in 2004.

These two patterns of traditional disputes in Dagbon and the Kusasi/Mamprusi areas and the demand for modern developments in the Upper West are evident in combination elsewhere in the North. Traditional tribal disputes between the formerly dominant tribes – such as the Dagomba, Mamprusi and Gonja – and the 'subservient' tribes such as the Kusasi, Konkomba, and Lobi – still remain of potential significance as was shown by the wars of 1994 when the Konkomba and Nawuri clashed with the Dagomba, Nanumba and Gonja and in which there were officially 2000 deaths, 178,000 displaced persons, and over 300 villages destroyed (Lentz and Nugent, 2000). However, their electoral significance has been diminished by the creation of new constituency boundaries that virtually ensure the subservient groups representation in parliament – Sawla (Lobi), Chereponi (Chakosi), Bunkpurugu (B’moba), Saboba, Zabzugu/Tatali, and Kpandai (Konkomba). In the Kassena-Nankani area around Navrongo and Paga, village rivalries remain significant, as they did in the 1950s (Austin 1961). Although the Kassena and Nankani belong to different language groups, there is no evidence of pre-colonial tribal unity of either group, and there is much inter-marriage and cross-identity between them. While there can be the mobilisation of some support for say a Nankani candidate in the largely Kassena Chiana-Paga constituency, rivalry is more commonly felt between villages and sections of villages rather than ‘tribes’, with each feeling it is their time to have an MP or that their ‘favourite son’ should be the candidate. In 2004 Nayagnia section in Navrongo, for example, overwhelmingly voted for a local man who was the PNC candidate against those of the two major parties.

Personal Appeal

The 2004 election certainly showed that government patronage was insufficient to make major gains. District Chief Executives, who are party nominees, alongside Regional and Junior Ministerships provided alternative sources of influence for the NPP to make electoral inroads, but the success of this strategy was limited. The Government managed to hold onto its recruited formerly Independent MP and appointed junior minister in Salaga, but lost in the same circumstances in Garu-Tempane, and its junior ministerial candidates in Bolgatanga and Lawra only managed third place and a distant second respectively. The creation of a new district in Wa East helped the NPP to win there, but it failed to make any impact by the same policy in Talensi in the Upper East. Individual personalities showed that they, rather than government resources, could have
an impact in some places, with the Independent J.Y.Labik winning in Bunkpurugu, and David Apasera and John Ndebugre winning for the small PNC in Bolgatanga and Zebilla respectively.

Ideology

The effect of ideology is difficult to assess given that the manifestos and policies of the two main parties are not very different. Every party now also claims to carry the mantle of Kwame Nkrumah, even though the NPP is clearly seen by most Ghanaians as the direct descendant of Danquah’s United Gold Coast Convention and Busia’s Progress Party. However, its recruitment of Convention Peoples Party and PNC politicians into the government after 2000 in an attempt to isolate the NDC from other opposition groups has given some limited credibility to their ‘Nkrumahist’ claim. In the North the PNC most directly claimed the Nkrumah legacy, with the CPP having very little influence outside some pockets in Dagbon and neighbouring areas. In 2004 the CPP parliamentary candidate in Mion managed to attract over 4,500 votes but this meant only a distant third place, and there was not even a CPP candidate in Saboba. Some individuals and families do keep the ideological traditions alive. For example, the Tedam family in Paga and the Karbo family in Lawra have maintained strong support for the Danquah/Busia tradition whatever the regime of the day.

In general, ideological differences remain limited in their overt expression in the North. Socially, however, the ideological divide remains of some significance even if actual policies are fairly generic. The NPP is seen as the party of the intellectual and business elite and the chiefs in the South, while the NDC has inherited much of the support of marginal elites, lower professionals and urban workers. As the inheritor of the radical years of the PNDC, the NDC carries the support of the new groups brought into active politics in the 1980s when the previous political elite was temporarily eclipsed. There is also a long-standing in-built reluctance of many Northerners from some of the poorest and most deprived areas of the country to support the NPP with its perceived base in the wealthy Ashanti Region, with some former migrants to the South having memories of discrimination and prejudice against them. The NPP’s apparent policy of selecting highly educated candidates did not always promote an easy relationship with ‘ordinary’ people. In Bolgatanga, for example, Dr Agambila, a highly articulate appointed junior minister in the out-going government could only come a distant third to the more populist NDC and PNC candidates.

It is interesting though that the conscious attempt by the NPP to recruit support from the Konkomba along the Togo border, who are amongst the poorest and least educated people of the North, has led to electoral success, with victories in Wulensi and Saboba. This is balanced by the success of the NDC in obtaining and retaining considerable support from the formerly dominant Nanumba chiefs in the area. The message here is that local groups have successfully manipulated political parties to represent their interests, even when these appear to go against the parties’ own ideology, social affiliations and traditions.

Some new patterns of cleavage are emerging in the North. The rural/urban division is not new, with the NDC rural vote remaining particularly strong in 2000 while in Navrongo town the NPP seems to have done particularly well. The towns in the North, however, seem to be becoming ‘anti-government’, voting against the NDC in 2000 and against the NPP in 2004 – Bolgatanga, Bawku, and to some extent Tamale being the obvious examples. There is also some evidence of the
youth and women’s votes becoming significant. The latter could partly account for the success of the NDC candidate in Lambussie and the NPP candidate in Buiisa North who had both nurtured contacts with women’s groups. Lentz has suggested that in relation to the Upper West, youth and development groups now have a significant voice in political leadership, with chiefs having ‘...to come to terms with (these) new actors should they wish protect their influence’ (Lentz, 2002:270). Similar comments have been voiced with reference to the Kassena-Nankani and Kusasi areas. Certainly several candidates told me of their greater concern over obtaining support from the youth and women than with getting the chiefs on board.

Finally, there is the issue of ‘northern-ness’. Under British rule the Northern Territories were kept administratively distinct from the Gold Coast and Ashanti. There was a refusal to invest in economic infrastructure, with Governor Clifford going so far as to recommend the virtual abandonment of the north to concentrate development on the ‘... high potential areas of the Colony and Ashanti’ (Wraith, 1967). The educational system was consciously limited to provide education for the sons of chiefs and sufficient educated manpower to run the local administration (Bening, 1990). The result was that at the time of party politics the few educated northerners feared domination by new ‘black’ colonisers. Educated Northerners still retain some legacy of these fears, but was not a significant factor in the 2004 election. The failure of Dr Mahama and the PNC in the north and the NDC in the south would suggest that the best hope for the North to produce a successful a presidential candidate in 2008 would be for a northerner to succeed President Kuffuor as the NPP candidate. It would then be a real test of the significance of feelings of common ‘northern-ness’ to see if such a candidate could over-ride the traditional, social and political grievances that have led the north to reject the NPP in the last three elections.

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Bibliographic Note


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Uncle Sam is Watching YOU
Paul Marks

Whenever you surf the web, send emails or download music, an unseen force is at work in the background, making sure you connect to the sites, inboxes and databases you want. The name of this brooding presence? The US government.

Some 35 years after the US military invented the internet, the US Department of Commerce retains overall control of the master computers that direct traffic to and from every web and email address on the planet.

But a group convened by the UN on 18 July 2005 to thrash out the future of the net is calling for an end to US domination of the net, proposing that instead a multinational forum of governments, companies and civilian organisations is created to run it.

The UN’s Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) says US control hinders many developments that might improve it. These range from efforts to give the developing world more affordable net access to coming up with globally agreed and enforceable measures to boost net privacy and fight cybercrime.

US control also means that any changes to the way the net works, including the addition of new domain names such as .mobi for cellphone-accessed sites, have to be agreed by the US, whatever experts in the rest of the world think. The flipside is that the US could make changes without the agreement of the rest of the world.

In a report issued in Geneva in Switzerland on 14 July, the WGIG seeks to overcome US hegemony. The internet should be run multilaterally, transparently and democratically. And it must involve all stakeholders,’ says Markus Kummer, a Swiss diplomat who is executive coordinator of the WGIG.

So Why is the Internet’s Overarching Technology Run by the US?

The reason is that the net was developed there in the late 1960s by the Pentagon’s Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) in a bid to create a communications medium that would still work if a Soviet nuclear strike took out whole chunks of the network. This medium would send data from node to node in self-addressed ‘packets’ that could take any route they liked around the network, avoiding any damaged parts.

Today the internet has 13 vast computers dotted around the world that translate text-based email and web addresses into numerical internet protocol (IP) node addresses that computers understand. In effect a massive look-up table, the 13 computers are collectively known as the Domain Name System (DNS). But the DNS master computer, called the master root server, is based in the US and is ultimately controlled by the Department of Commerce. Because the data it contains is propagated to all the other DNS servers around the world, access to the master root server file is a political hot potato.

Currently, only the US can make changes to that master file. And that has some WGIG members very worried indeed. ‘It’s about who has ultimate authority,’ says Kummer.

In theory, the US could decide to delete a country from the master root server. Some people expect this to happen one day, even though the US has never abused its position in that way.

Unilateral US action is unlikely, however. The DNS system is managed on behalf of the Department of Commerce by
the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a not-for-profit company. ‘Our job is to make sure internet addressing happens stably and securely,’ says Theresa Swinehart, ICANN’s general manager for global partnerships. And it does so, she says, in conjunction with its government advisory committee (GAC), which includes members from 100 countries to ensure diversity of opinion.

Even Kummer admits that ICANN does a good job on achieving international consensus, at least regarding changes to the DNS. ‘ICANN scores quite highly on involving all stakeholders. Anyone can go to a meeting, take the microphone and give a view,’ he says. The problem? It’s an ad hoc process. And with the internet now a critical global resource, some governments, particularly in developing countries such as China, India and Brazil, want a forum where vast swathes of internet policy – from cybercrime to spam to privacy protection – can be both discussed and acted on.

Only then, they say, can vital non-DNS issues such as the high cost of net connections to many developing countries be made fairer. Right now, the WIGIG report notes, internet service providers based in countries that are remote from the internet backbone links – the large ‘fat pipes’ connecting continents – must pay the full cost of connecting to these networks. This can be prohibitively
expensive for developing nations and there is no 'appropriate and effective global internet governance mechanism to resolve it'.

The WGIG put forward a number of options for change, all of which include enhancing the roles of ICANN and the GAC or the formation of a new all-embracing internet policy body that would be in charge of ICANN instead of the US. The WGIG’s proposals will now go to the vote at the International Telecommunication Union’s World Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia this November. Whatever the WGIG decides, it will have a tough time changing the US government’s opinion. Only last month, US assistant secretary of commerce Michael Gallagher reasserted America’s claim to the heart of the net.

The US is committed to taking no action that would have the potential to adversely impact the effective and efficient operation of the DNS and will therefore maintain its historic role in authorising changes or modifications to the authoritative root zone file.

Battle, it seems, is about to begin.


China & Iran to Censor the Net

The report issued by the UN’s Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) on 14 July recommends that any future governing body does not restrict the freedom of expression of web users, as enshrined in its universal declaration of human rights.

Yet China and Iran, both of which took part in the working group, are currently building the most heavily censored online infrastructures anywhere in the world, according to recent research from the OpenNet Initiative, which monitors internet filtering and surveillance by governments.

‘The main message is that measures taken to fight cybercrime should not lead to human rights violations,’ says WGIG group coordinator Markus Kummer. ‘China and Iran were with the group consensus on this matter. They did not object to the wording.’ He thinks China sees the UN declaration as ‘open to interpretation’.

Researchers at OpenNet, a joint venture of the University of Toronto in Canada, Harvard Law School and the University of Cambridge, have found that China’s Communist Party-run internet service providers (ISPs) routinely filter out content they deem politically unacceptable. They also appear to hire fake commentators who post pro-government statements on blogs and message boards.

By remotely accessing computers within Iran via a number of routes, OpenNet also found that 34 per cent of the 1465 web links they tried were blocked. Some 15 per cent of blogs and 30 per cent of news sites were inaccessible – as were 100 per cent of porn sites.

But what alarms some is that ISPs might be harnessing western technology to aid and abet this sophisticated censorship. For instance, OpenNet found that Iran’s ISPs seem to depend heavily on a package called SmartFilter, made by Secure Computing of Seattle, Washington, to stamp out access to what the government deems unacceptable. But the company says its software is being used illegally.

Meanwhile, networking and routing company Cisco Systems of San Jose, California, has come under fire for supplying routers with site blocking, filtering and logging functions to China.

But Cisco’s Asia-Pacific spokesman Terry Alberstein, says the technology it sells is the same as that used the world over. ‘The router technology that lets some countries restrict access to certain information is the same as that which lets our public libraries limit access to unsuitable content. And the blocking technology has other uses, in combating viruses, worms and denial of service attacks.’

In any case, blocking access to websites is not rocket science, and nor is logging who is viewing what. China now produces thousands of computer science graduates every year, and Iran has a new religious hard-line president in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. If there is the will to censor and watch people’s internet activity, it will happen with or without outside help.
US Hostility to the International Criminal Court Knows No Bounds

Robin Cook

A commitment to an international criminal court was one of the changes for the better in foreign policy as a result of Labour’s victory. Under the Conservatives, Britain had been a backmarker in negotiations to set up such a court. After the change of regime, Britain was propelled into the front rank of countries supporting an international system to bring to justice those guilty of crimes against humanity.

We mobilised support from other nations, and provided financial help for smaller, poorer states to send a delegation to the Rome conference at which the final package was put to the vote. It was approved with the support of 120 nations and the opposition of only half a dozen. That is as close as you get to consensus in the international community, even if the US was on the losing side.

The international criminal court ends the impunity of dictators who could kill thousands but not be held to account because they controlled their domestic courts. At the time I welcomed its creation as putting the Pol Pots of the future on notice that they would be brought to justice for crimes against their own citizens.

The gravest, most grotesque crimes against humanity since the international criminal court was set up are to be found in Darfur. The UN commission of inquiry has provided a compelling account of the harrowing brutality with which Sudanese forces are pursuing a strategy of ethnic cleansing, and concluded that the victims are “living a nightmare of violence and abuse”. That nightmare has included men being dragged over the ground behind camels by a noose around their necks, women being kept naked in rape camps and girls as young as eight being violated.

The recommendations of the UN commission, though, have caused greater consternation in Washington than in Sudan. This is because its sensible conclusion is that the breaches of humanitarian law in Darfur should be referred to the institution specifically set up for such cases – the international criminal court.

For the past four years, the Bush administration has pursued a relentless pogrom against the court. Hostility to it has come to occupy a totemic role in its belief that US freedom of action must never be constrained by international jurisdiction. As a state department official expressed to a visiting European: ‘No US citizen is going to be tried by a Belgian’, which raises doubts as to whether the Bush administration actually knows in which European country The Hague is located.

Now Condoleezza Rice has been using her contacts in Europe to lobby privately for the Darfur atrocities to be referred anywhere but the international criminal court. Apparently she has suggested that Darfur could be brought under the remit of the existing UN tribunal for the genocide in Rwanda. This is desperation. The only common feature between Darfur and Rwanda is that they are both in Africa. It is also irresponsible. The Rwanda tribunal is still struggling under an impossible workload and is in no position to provide an expeditious remedy to Darfur’s continuing violence.

Alternatively, she has mooted that the UN could set up an entirely new tribunal, especially for Darfur. But it would take at least a year before any tribunal starting from scratch would have the staff, premises and procedures to get
down to work. In the meantime, while the UN tried to accommodate the ideological antipathy of the Bush administration to the international criminal court, another 100,000 people would have been killed in Darfur. One of the six reasons cited by the UN commission for recommending the international criminal court was precisely that it could be activated immediately, without any delay.

Now ministers tell us they are looking for a way forward, but that will only be possible through agreement in the security council – in other words, with the US. But do they really believe that the Bush administration would have the gall to cast a US veto to block Darfur being committed to the international criminal court? Where would that leave all the warm mood music on freedom and justice with which George Bush punctuated his inaugural speech only last month [January 2005]? Come to that, where would it leave the impassioned pleas of Tony Blair for the world to address the plight of Africa as a scar on our conscience?

A US veto would be as embarrassing to Blair as it would be shaming to Bush. But just as embarrassing would be for Britain once again to be seen doing the rounds and trying to persuade the rest of the world to accept the Bush position and not to push the issue to a vote. The only way out with dignity is for Blair to call in the impassioned pleas of Tony Blair for the world to address the plight of Africa as a scar on our conscience?

Ethiopia’s parliamentary election in May 2005 was a spectacular event in the country’s political annals as the opposition2 captured nearly 50% of parliamentary seats.2 Two competing interpretations aimed at assessing the significance of the results have emerged. One scenario posits that international pressure has finally forced the regime to relax some of its controls on the political process and permit democratic expression of views. An amalgam of ethnicist opposition forces, many international institutions that supported and monitored the election, and others have endorsed this proposition. A second submission asserts that the political strategy TPLF-dominated regime pursued, which allowed different ethnic communities to govern themselves within the context of the federal constitution, is slowly but steadily maturing. This, most recent election, they allege, has vindicated the government’s efforts during the past decade. Hence, the Ethiopian Prime Minister’s declaration that he ‘is proud to have introduced democracy to Ethiopia.’

Both theses contain important elements of truth, however, they fail to grasp the event’s significance for the future in the context of the country’s oppressive and sectarian political history.

We, therefore, propose an alternative explication that recognizes the outcome as an important milestone towards a democratic political order, but which underscores how the confluence of disagreeable but opportunistic opposition forces could possibly lead to a political cul de sac. These contradictory forces derive from the legacy of the assimilationist ethnic politics of the Amhara-dominated regimes and those
induced by the Tigray-led government since 1992. How the conflicting agendas of the various political-ethnic groups are recast in the new electoral context shall determine whether 2005 marks: (a) Ethiopia’s emergence as a democratic and civic polity; (b) as another attempt by the regime to hold on to power through illegitimate gimmicks; (c) as a way for chauvinist opposition to re-impose the dead order; (d) other sectarian elites to further fragment the social fabric. All three latter courses will invariably prolong current violence and instigate a new civil war that might lead to the break up of the country into ‘ethnic’ fiefdoms.

We tender that this electoral opening is an opportunity to embark on the difficult task of re-building the political fabric of the country and caution that chauvinist elements of the opposition intend to reverse the course of history by erasing ‘ethnic politics’ in Ethiopia through the re-imposition of an Amhara/Christian identity. Such an attempt will trigger a new wave of violence as communities will resist their re-colonisation. Further, other elements in the opposition dream of creating their ethnic Bantustans in which the ‘natives’ are free from Abysinian dominance and will return to their original state. This illusion, even if it transpires, will merely relocate the conflicts within groups as we have already witnessed in Ethiopia since 1992. The vital question which this briefing will explore is how might the election results be turned into an opportunity to initiate a civic and democratic beginning for Ethiopia? The rest of the essay is divided into three parts. Part one briefly identifies two contrasting political reconstruction strategies in Africa that have similar objectives (democracy/justice), at least in appearance, but different means of achieving them. A key factor that distinguishes the two strategies is the way in which they treat cultural and political identity. Part two is a short summary of how the promise of 1991 in Ethiopia turned into a dead end. Finally, the conclusion assesses the prospect of transforming the 2005 election into an opportunity to embark on a civic journey.

Contrasting Political Strategies: Ethnic vs. Civic

In the 1990s in Africa two sharply contrasting models of state-society relations and the role of ethnicity in national affairs have emerged: namely ethnic and civic. The first is what we call the ethnic road to political reconstruction. This approach deems ethnicity as the overriding form of identity among the population that can not be ignored in public affairs. Proponents argue that ethnicity has been a central factor in public life, usually since a particular ethnic group colonised the state and subjugated other communities. In such circumstance, the dominant group denied the importance of the ethnic factor and castigated dissident communities for being sectarian. Prime Minister Zenawi articulated this position and noted that Africa’s ethnic reality could be ignored at our peril.

… [P]eople in Africa feel that they can wish away ethnic difference. Experience in Rwanda has taught us this is not the case. Experience in Liberia has taught us that this is not the case. What we are trying to do in Ethiopia is to recognize that ethnic differences are part of life in Africa, and try to deal with them in a rational manner. Rather than hide the fact that we have ethnic difference, we are saying people should express it freely. That, I think, pre-empts the type of implosion we’ve had in Rwanda.⁴

Zenawi’s statement essentialises and homogenises ethnicity and the specificity of his articulation creates a quandary: acknowledge its existence or deny it. It is argued that denying or suppressing ethnic identity has had calamitous social, political, and economic repercussions. Consequently, advocates of the strategy imagine that one of Africa’s major politi-
cal riddles could be solved by anchoring citizenship in the soil of ethnic belonging. Ethiopia chose the ethnic road to political reconstruction as a means of depoliticising ethnicity in the long run.

The civic road to reconstruction differentiates between two types of ethnic identities. First, there exists a non-state centric tradition based on shared values that are not legally defined. An alternative to such identity is one sanctioned by the state and which is therefore enforceable. Recognising these two identity forms create the opportunity to overcome the dilemma posed by the Ethiopian Prime Minister. Thus, to acknowledge the first form of ethnicity does not necessarily mean to endorse the second. Distinquishing these identity variants is necessary but insufficient to understand how old cultural traditions became political instruments of the state. To grasp the origins and nature of cultural identity’s metamorphosis one needs to re-examine colonial state formation in Africa.

... colonial powers were the first fundamentalists of the modern period. They were the first to advance and put into practice two propositions: one, that every colonized group has an original and pure tradition, whether religious or ethnic; and two, that every colonized group must be made to return to that original condition, and that return must be enforced by law. Put together, these two propositions constitute the basic platform of every religious or ethnic fundamentalism in the postcolonial world.

The creation and development of the colonial state distorted older cultural traditions and turned them into instruments that served the dominant forces. It is this colonial reinvention of tradition that is at the heart of contemporary ethnic/political problems in the continent, including Ethiopia. State imposed Amhara language and culture-defining Ethiopianess and the denial of other communities’ political and economic rights characterised Ethiopia’s colonial form. The civic approach to reconstruction recognises the existence of cultural differences among the African population and acknowledges the damage done by ethnic forms of cultural politics. However, it insists that accepting political ethnicity as an old African tradition reinforces the legacy of colonialism rather than inspiring a common citizenship. South Africa is the most recent example of an African country that accepts cultural difference without confounding such identity with state politics.

Divergent historical experiences shaped recent developments in South Africa and Ethiopia. Two qualities of the liberation and resistance movements in the two nations brought about different political outcomes. First, the political leadership in South Africa that made the termination of the old regime possible did not come from a single ethnic group or region and had wide public support across the country. In contrast, the core members of the Ethiopian leadership lacked legitimate representatives from non-Tigray regions and therefore could not claim popular support in most parts of the nation. Second, the military wing dominated the Ethiopian movement and determined the political outcome of post-war transformation. TPLF military became the national defence force and consequently enforced the party’s political agenda rather than provide the basis for political consensus.

On the contrary, South Africa’s defence force which failed to defeat the liberation movement remained intact. The compromise between the leaders of the apartheid regime and the liberation movement confirmed the military’s neutrality in the political process. Consequently, the ANC led national unity government embarked on a gradual process of military reform and reintegration in order to insure the integrity of the force. Further, the split between the new political leadership and the old military made it improbable
for the post-apartheid regime to use the defence force to intimidate other parties to accept its political agenda. A critical analysis of the genesis of political ethnicity and the reform agencies involved is essential in order to figure out effective ways of terminating the legacy of ‘divide and rule.’

**Ethiopia & the Ethnic Road**

In the early 1990s Ethiopia embarked on a seemingly novel political project that divided the country into nine ‘ethnic provinces’. The presumed rational for this political strategy was to overcome the imposition of Amhara culture and language on Oromos, Somalis, Afars, the people of the southern region, etc., and the denial of their cultural heritage through state control. The challenge of post-1991 was how to undo past subjugations without reifying cultural differences through politics.9

Before exploring what became of the challenge, it is imperative to know why TPLF choose the ethnic road? Three crucial objective conditions which TPLF faced necessitated its strategic choice. First, TPLF needed to gain some degree of legitimacy for the new regime with non-Tigray populations. Establishing ethnic provinces seemed the most visible route to accomplish this goal since it dovetailed with the party’s ethnic orientation. Second, the party’s leadership appreciated the depth of injustice visited on non-Amhara populations. Consequently, it was predisposed to experiment with a political system that could have immediate resonance with various ethnic groups, but which could also focus attention away from the centre during those crucial early days of the transition. Finally and most significantly, TPLF came to power through the barrel of the gun and like all such organisations desired to maintain itself in power at whatever cost. Senior party strategists considered the establishment of ethnic regions as a vehicle to engage ethnic leaders in ways that would reduce their challenge to TPLF dominance at the national level.

The interplay between these three factors circumscribed the dynamics of the ethnic political order and its resourcefulness to respond to local and national imperatives. It is worth remembering that ethnic federalism was meant to restore cultural dignity to local communities and grant them greater autonomy to mind their affairs, such as electing their regional and federal representatives. If steady progress has been made on these two vital arenas one could legitimately argue that the ethnic instrument might lead to a civic outcome. Enough evidence has accumulated over the past fourteen years to gauge how much progress has been made and the prospects for future development.

Re-drawing the administrative regions of Ethiopia along ethnic lines had some immediate and apparent benefits for communities who were previously marginalised, demonised, or whose existence was denied. The declaration of Oromo, Somali and others regions finally put an end to decades of suppression and denial of these communities’ rights. For instance, former Amhara regimes deprived Oromos, who are the largest language group in the country, of the right to express themselves in their mother tongue. These regimes went the extra mile to systematically destroy cultural traditions of the Oromos and many other communities in order to naturalise their vision of Amharanised Ethiopia. Ethiopia’s development since 1991 was a dagger at the heart of this chauvinist ethnic project.10 One of the major benefits of the new order was the establishment of script for many languages and their use as medium of instruction in regional primary schools. This single act has liberated various communities from Amhara cultural tyranny and has enabled children from non-Amhara regions to gain confidence and relish their heritage for the first time in recent history. It
also demystified cultural basis of political domination. Recognising this type of cultural diversity was a vital step in disconnecting political ethnicity from cultural identity and was therefore an essential step towards the creation of civic order. However the success of the cultural element of the new dispensation has been blemished by federal authorities who dictate the type of official history taught in schools and sectarian regionalists who distort history to legitimate their ethnic political project. In spite of these shortcomings, most reforms in the cultural/educational field have been relatively successful despite the limitations noted above.

The political reform programme has been the Achilles heel of the new order. Vital elements of federal dispensation were presumably established to allow regional communities manage their local affairs, and have the freedom to elect their leaders and hold them accountable. Local autonomy and democracy was intended to erase the legacy of ethnic-based political privileges to the extent that the constitution sanctions a region’s right to secede from the federation. Given these new constitutionally endorsed rights, two issues deeply worried TPLF leadership. First, they were concerned about some regions opting for independence given their deep sense of alienation from the centre. Second, they assumed that if regional elections were free and fair, particularly in Oromia, an opposition party might come to power which could easily challenge TPLF dominance. The combination of TPLF’s need to support the restoration of human rights of grieved communities and maintain itself in power dictated its policies in the regions. Driven by this compulsion, it created a liberation organisation for other groups, the so-called PDOs, even before it captured Addis Ababa. The first ominous sign of TPLF’s modus operandi was the expulsion of Oromo Liberation Front from the transition.

TPLF’s instrumentalist political agenda and practice contradicted the rhetoric of liberation and regional development. The PDOs which the Tigray party spawned won provincial elections in 1992 and dominated federal parliament ever since. Two subsequent elections reconfirmed a new pattern of supremacy in which TPLF held all organs of political and military power. Such manufacture of puppet parties beholden to federal authorities and pseudo-elections doubly undermined regional autonomy from the centre and accountability of leaders to their communities. TPLF’s practice to unseat and appoint any regional authority at will has completely alienated the public from the system of governance, and has turned local authorities into sycophants who serve their masters and themselves. The dominant federal party’s obsession with retaining power in spite of its narrow popular base has deprived the country of an opportunity to gain a civic footing, and has unnecessarily heightened ethnic political identity.

Ethiopia’s pretentious ethnic democracy could not be sustained for long without the heavy hand of the security forces. The international community’s pressure on the regime to open up the political process finally had the desired effect of relaxing political controls, mainly in urban areas. A significant proportion of the estranged public took advantage of the opportunity to vent its displeasure by voting against TPLF and the most recent ethnic hierarchy, and for an opposition led by chauvinists who are wedded to the old oppressive order.

A Last Chance for a Civic Coalition

High voter turnout and the results of the election clearly demonstrate that a significant proportion of the population is dissatisfied with the policies and practices of the regime. Some elements of the opposition who have campaigned on
hideously sectarian platforms have misconstrued the outcome as an endorsement for their agenda which is to undo the federation and reinvent the former empire. Progressive groups’ interpretation of the election results is at variances with the above and point out that most of the public voted not to undo the progress of the past decade, but to punish TPLF, and underscore the need to shift course and return to the spirit of the early 1990s.

Although the TPLF dominated coalition seem to have ‘won’ a majority of seats in parliament, many of the MPs are PDO members who lack legitimacy and therefore do not have the strength to serve the people they contend to represent. Therefore, continued alliance of TPLF and PDOs can only reinforce the cynicism that has sapped the confidence of the positive spirit which the regionalization of the administration motivated.

Since neither the prolongation of the present condition nor a return to Amhara dominated Ethiopia is desirable or feasible, what options might exist to turn the regime’s crisis into a national opportunity, and how could that be realised? The first declaration to make is that elements of the opposition who campaigned on exclusivist platforms can not inspire confidence among the majority of the population. Thus, only progressive members, including many regional nationalists, of the opposition have a fleeting opportunity to lead the civic movement no matter what political arrangement is made to resolve election results. The first step in such an endeavour is to convene regional civic conferences wherein communities can articulate their thoughts about the way forward for the Ethiopian federation and select their civic leaders. Subsequently, leaders from all regions can organize to form the national civic forum which will synthesize contributions from the regions into a national document. The proposed forum differs from the national conference which TPLF convened in 1991 as communities will have greater freedom to set the agenda and select their representatives without external intervention. One goalpost that ought to guide the new civic alliance is: regional autonomy within a civic federation.

The progressive opposition has an advantage over others in instigating the movement, since it has not been tainted by the old practices of divide and rule. However, it does not have a monopoly on exploring the civic road, and the challenge is how to build a representative civic fabric. TPLF, by contrast, has been damaged by its strategy of political manipulation and coercion, and the outcome of the election has taught it a sobering political lesson; that is, it could not expects its humiliated partners to come to its rescue at the hour of its need. In spite the of recent turn of events many of those who voted for the opposition are weary of the chauvinists’ return to power and might entertain a new contract with the government. This could mean some of the credit TPLF had with communities could possibly be salvaged. In order for the Party to regain some degree of trust with non-Tigray communities, individual leaders and the party must be ready to take the real risk of losing power. The first step in its rehabilitation is to candidly admit its past misdeeds, publicly commit itself to a new dispensation in which the security forces will not interfere with the political process, and consequently create an independent body to which the military and police forces are accountable. Further, it will have to acquiesce to new freedoms in which communities openly debate their affairs and elect their representatives without constraint. Only such a radical scheme from its Orwellian ‘all animals are created equal but some are more equal than others’ has a chance to restore some degree of credibility to the party and inspire the public.

Given the variety of ways of orchestrating a democratic future, here are four real possibilities in Ethiopia. First, the gov-
erning party can bury its head in the sand and continue to intimidate the public in order to hang on to power. Such a strategy is destined to fail. The only way a coalition with TPLF can have a life span longer than the next five years in a democratically inclined Ethiopia is to undertake a transparent and serious analysis of the ethnic formula and why the voters rejected the party that liberated the country from a fascist dictatorship. Such re-assessment must be qualitatively different from past *gimgemes* in which certain groups had the privilege to scrutinize the ‘wrong-doings’ of underprivileged groups. Endorsing this approach does not guarantee TPLF’s continued dominance but it will give the country the chance to build on the progressive contributions made in the early 1990s and transcend political ethnicity. Second, the chauvinist opposition could aim to seize power using massive street demonstration in Addis Ababa in order to reinvent Amhara dominance over three-quarters of the national population who are non-Amhara. This strategy will also lead to a dead-end. Third, the progressive elements of the opposition from various regions have an occasion to embark on the creation of a national civic movement which is respectful of cultural differences among the population, but that does not ossify it into state-sanctioned political identity. Establishing such a movement will require incredible dedication and good faith, an uncommon feature of Ethiopian politics. One of the key challenges for such a movement is how to build trust among a new generation of leaders that are genuinely representative. Creating such a movement is the most exigent route but could also be the most promising avenue to a civic future. Finally, a combination of circumstances driven by current political pressures might lead to a calamitous end. A cunning but dishonest TPLF remains dominant, an opposition that is driven by the tribal haughtiness or lust for power, and a disorganised public alienated from national politics could usher the end of Ethiopia as one country. *This is the nature of the crossroads which the 2005 election signifies: reject ethnic chauvinism, respect cultural differences, and nurture a just civic federation, or perish.*

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**Endnotes**

1. Previous opportunities for civic reconstruction were wasted, including 1974, 1991.
2. The opposition mainly consists of two groups: chauvinists led by the Amhara elite and regional nationalists. The regional nationalist can be divided into two main groups: civic and sectarian nationalists.
3. We might never know the exact number of seats won legitimately by the opposition or the government party.
6. Ibid. p. 6.
7. Colonialism in Ethiopia meant the supremacy of the Amhara and the conquest and subjugation of non-Abysinian cultural groups such as the Oromo, Somalis, Afar, Gambella, and many others.
10. Many supporters and apologists of the old order deny that Amhara ethnicity was a major political factor in the past. Instead they claim that a class system was the devil. This is quite similar to some of the arguments put forward by apologists of the apartheid regime some of whom completely denied the existence of Afrikaner state privileges.
Briefings: Who Calls the Shots? ... Arms Exports

11. Labeling political opponents as terrorists is the hallmark of ethnic politics.


Who Calls the Shots?
How Government-corporate Collusion Drives Arms Exports

Campaign Against the Arms Trade

The Official Reasons for Arms Export Support

The UK government continues to offer a programme of political and financial support to UK-based arms exporting companies at levels disproportionate to those received by civil industry. Those questioning this support are directed towards the wider gains that are said to accrue from involvement in the international arms market, i.e. economic, strategic, and peace and security benefits. Yet these rationales lack credibility to such an extent that other explanations are required.

The Real Reasons Behind Arms Export Support

There are a number of alternative explanations for the government’s support of arms exports. These range from the existence of unstated foreign policy goals or the government’s susceptibility to company lobbying on jobs, to the less tangible influence of Tony Blair’s military bent. Many of the explanations are useful and may provide part of the picture, but analysis of a potentially key rationale has so far been lacking: the influence and political power of arms companies within government. This rationale dovetails with the others indicated above but also provides perhaps the single most significant reason why, against ethical concerns and economic reason, the government continues to promote UK weaponry around the world. This report considers how the military industry has retained and developed this political influence despite the end of the Cold War and the arrival of a government touting an ‘ethical’ foreign policy.

The Revolving Door

The close customer/client relationship between UK-based arms exporters and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is incomparable across government. No other industry has attracted such a large number of high ranking departmental staff while at the same time offering many of its own employees to the MoD via secondment. The institutional boundaries between the two bodies are so blurred that the existence of any real separation has been questioned.

A Web of Advisory Bodies

These boundaries are further eroded by overwhelming industry representation within an extensive network of UK and European-based bodies advising government on military policy. This network is not only more extensive than those advising high-level government on non-military areas of policy, but is continuously growing under the Labour government, raising urgent questions about transparency, accountability and favourable access to ministers.

Use of Lobbying Companies

The industry’s profile within the domestic decision-making arena is raised further by military industry’s use of lobbying companies whose purpose is to distort the advocacy playing field in the inter-
ests of their clients. UK lobbying companies cannot but benefit when a number of their employees, including those representing UK-based arms-producing companies, used to be government advisors or work for the Labour Party.

Influential Labour Peers

Though they are relatively few, a number of Labour Peers have links to arms-producing companies. They have enjoyed influential government jobs and/or have links to some of the highest echelons of the Labour government.

The arms industry has contributed largely undisclosed amounts of cash to the Labour Party and to one of its major projects, the Millennium Dome, at a time when both have faced financial crisis.

Provision of Public Services

Areas previously considered core government-run sectors are now being considered candidates for, or are already being run as, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). The arms-producing companies have been eager to participate and the MoD is now at the forefront of military PPPs. The integration of companies into core government activities provides them with increased political influence. Also, because of the potential political fallout, the government is extremely unlikely to let any such activities fail, further motivating it to pursue corporate-friendly policies.

Conclusion

Each individual relationship between the government and arms companies might not in itself be considered objectionable or evidence of improper behaviour. However, the range of possibilities for influence provided to arms companies and the extent to which they have been taken up lead to a cumulative impact that is not appropriate to democratic decision-making. The picture that emerges is one where the government and military industry are so deeply interconnected and their interests so tied up with each other that whole areas of public policy-making have come to reflect corporate wish-lists.

Attempts to reduce arms exports or the subsidies associated with them will fail as long as arms companies are allowed the influence they currently have over the UK government. Given the lack of political will (and the obvious influential opposition to any emergence of such will) it falls to public opinion to persuade the government that they are responsible to the electorate rather than the arms industry.

### Major Military Spenders in 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Spending in $bns</th>
<th>Spending per capita</th>
<th>World Share</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>455.3</td>
<td>1,533</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>[35.4]</td>
<td>[27]</td>
<td>[4%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>[19.4]</td>
<td>[136]</td>
<td>[2%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>0 to 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIPRI Yearbook, 2005, OUP; numbers in brackets [] are estimates.
Defence Systems & Equipment International: Lifeblood of the Arms Trade
Ian Prichard & James O’Nions

The DSEi Arms Fair 2005 will be held from 13 to 16 September in London. The world’s military has been promised that it will be 30% bigger than last time, and that ‘products and services related to Homeland Security, anti-terrorism, access control, and personal security’ will be on display as well as the usual rockets, tanks and machine guns.

DSEi: Who Runs It?
Defence Systems & Equipment International (DSEi) is organised by Spearhead Exhibitions ‘in association with’ the Ministry of Defence. It is a formal relationship that exists for no other arms exhibition in the UK and, when it comes to promoting arms sales, it’s a winning combination. First and foremost, arms companies want to meet buyers and that’s what Spearhead and the MoD provide. As DSEi’s 2005 brochure states, it delivers: ‘Well-organised, top level international delegations; UK ministers and senior staff involved in UK defence procurement; Senior international visitors and military influencers’ In 2003 (like most major arms fairs, DSEi is two-yearly), the 973 companies from 28 countries enjoyed the ‘customer-rich environment’ provided by 20,000 visitors from 65 countries. In 2005, it is likely that more companies will enjoy an even ‘richer’ environment.

Taxpayers’ Money
DSEi is heavily subsidised by the government. Direct costs alone were estimated to be £400,000 in 2003 and we cannot guess the indirect costs of the huge government support and involvement. The policing of the event was an even greater cost. Immediately after the event the government estimated police costs of around £1.7 million, saying that the final cost remained to be established. When it was established several months later, the cost to taxpayers had reached over £4 million.

Closed & Opaque
Spearhead is now owned by Reed Elsevier plc, the massive publishing group. Its Reed Exhibitions business organises six ‘aerospace and defence’ trade fairs including Latin America Aero & Defence, Taipei Aerospace and Defence Technology Exhibition and of course DSEi. When asked at their AGM about the ethics of organising arms fairs,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>AS SUPPLIERS Rank</th>
<th>AS SUPPLIERS worth in $mn</th>
<th>AS RECEIVERS Rank</th>
<th>AS RECEIVERS worth in $mn</th>
</tr>
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<td>US</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25,930</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,450</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3,395</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6,358</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
<td>not listed</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>975</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,436</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4,878</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,252</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26,925</td>
<td>not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,692</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIPRI Yearbook, 2005, OUP
the Chairman astonishingly said it was ok as long as ‘we don’t deal ourselves in these kind of things, I suppose’. When pressed again over Spearhead and DSEi, the board claimed that they were providing ‘an open and transparent process’. This is a difficult claim to assess given that, as Reed Elsevier states, ‘It is not open to members of the public.’ You might have thought that several million pounds of taxpayers’ money would buy the general public a few tickets!

**The Defence of DSEi**

There is nothing redeemable about the arms fair. Even DSEi and supporting organisations such as the Defence Manufacturers Association (DMA) are at a loss to know how to defend it in public. Their responses to criticisms have sunk to the desperate level of suggesting that it isn’t an arms fair! However, the DSEi 2005 brochure is clear on the situation. It states that ‘DSEi provides a platform for the whole of the defence and military aerospace community …’ and ‘fulfils an important role within the selling process for defence companies’. Then, of course, there are the arms companies.

**The Sellers**

As of 17 June, there were 927 exhibitors confirmed for DSEi 2005. They include Lockheed Martin, the world’s largest arms company and manufacturer of fighter aircraft, missiles, nuclear weapons, etc etc. Lockheed is joined by other massive US arms producers such as Raytheon (missiles), Northrop Grumman (radar and missile systems, warships, space systems) and General Dynamics (armoured vehicles, tanks, nuclear submarines). Then there are the major European arms companies: BAE Systems (fighter aircraft, warships, torpedoes, missiles, tanks), Thales (naval systems, avionics), EADS (fighter aircraft, missiles, helicopters) and Finmeccanica (helicopters, missiles). These companies will all have enormous stands at DSEi and will dominate the exhibition as whole. However, there is plenty of competition for specific weaponry. There will be at least 15 cluster bomb producers present. We don’t know if individual companies will be actively marketing their cluster munitions at DSEi, but they have in the past and there will be nothing to stop them this year. In terms of small arms and its ammunition, BAE Systems and General Dynamics are joined by a plethora of companies including Arsenal Co of Bulgaria, Glock and Steyr Mannlicher of Austria, FN Herstall of Belgium, Heckler & Koch, Rheinmetall DeTec and J.P Sauer & Sohn of Germany, Alliant Techsystems of the US, Diemaco of Canada, Giat Industries of France, Nammo of Norway, Helston Gunsmiths of the UK and Pakistan Ordnance Factories.

**Official Invitations**

Official delegations from other countries attend DSEi at the invitation of either the Ministry of Defence or Spearhead. In 2003 there were 79 official delegations from 56 countries. On more than one occasion controversial invitees appear to have been avoided by the MoD, only for Spearhead to invite them anyway, saying that they are staying within the government’s guidelines. In reality, of course, the two work hand in glove over DSEi.

Israel is one example. Whilst the government are still happy to allow arms exports to Israel despite the 38 year occupation of Palestinian territories, judged illegal under international law, and well documented and serious human rights abuses including collective punishments and extra judicial killings, it appears it has not always wanted to be seen to actually invite the country to DSEi. In both 2001 and 2003 Spearhead did the job for them. Of course, given the presence of numerous Israeli arms companies as exhibitors at DSEi, the absence of an official delegation would be rather
incongruous. Of course, the UK government often isn’t that circumspect about who it invites anyway. Colombia was invited in 2003, a country whose military not only have documented links with the right-wing paramilitaries who murder hundreds of trade unionists, human rights advocates and rural workers each year, but who have also carried out some of these killings themselves; 2003 also saw the Ministry of Defence invite delegations from both India and Pakistan, despite them having been on the brink of war with each other just the year before. Pakistan also was and remains a military dictatorship.

Arming Africa

Between them, the MoD and Spearhead officially invited 15 African countries over the past three DSEi exhibitions. These included Tanzania and Angola, whose very low Human Development Index ratings indicate that they are two of the poorest countries in the world. Encouraging these countries to spend money on arms hardly helps them pull themselves out of poverty, nor helps stop the continent’s many armed conflicts. Even the supposedly middle income African countries who have attended DSEi, such as South Africa and Botswana, receive millions of pounds of overseas aid from the UK, and have nowhere near the resources they need to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic currently ravaging the continent.

A number of the African countries invited also have serious human rights problems. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office website says that in Algeria there have been ‘numerous documented allegations of human rights abuses by the security forces and state-armed militias, including the enforced disappearances of at least 4,000 people, abductions, torture and extra-judicial killings,’ whilst in Nigeria the FCO says that ‘the Army has committed serious abuses of human rights.’ Yet the MoD invited both these countries to DSEi in 2003. The official invitation lists were not available as CAATnews went to press, but there is no reason to think that these countries and others with poor human rights records won’t be invited again in 2005.

The International Arms Fair Circuit

DSEi is just one, albeit one of the biggest, of a series of military exhibitions that take place around the world. They represent ‘a key event for the total supply chain’ as Spearhead put it about DSEi. Other major arms fairs include Eurosatory and the Paris Air Show, both in Paris, IDEX in the United Arab Emirates and Defendory in Greece. Outside Europe, South Africa’s Africa Aerospace and Defence exhibition and Brazil’s Latin America Aero and Defence are also significant.

Like DSEi, some of these fairs started out as primarily national expositions to boost a particular country’s arms industry. Though this function still exists, in an internationalised industry, arms fairs have increasingly become big business ventures in their own right, organised by corporations like Reed Elsevier. Similarly, the Defence Export Services Organisation’s role isn’t limited to DSEi; in 2004 alone it spent over £1 million attending thirteen international arms fairs, promoting UK arms exports from Malaysia to Chile to Jordan.

In a very real sense, then, these fairs are the international arms trade. They are where negotiations are conducted, collaborations planned and purchases considered. They are a key part of the machinery which keeps this abhorrent industry running, and DSEi is more significant than most. That’s why CAAT will be urging all those who care about social justice, human rights and peace to join the opposition to DSEi this autumn in whatever way they can.
**Eduardo Mondlane & the Rise & Fall of Mozambican Socialism* **

*Reflections in Honour of the 85th Anniversary of his Birth, June 1920*

However tempting an exercise it may be when contemplating the abrupt removal from the historical process of so exemplary and important a person as Eduardo Mondlane, speculation as to ‘what might have been’ had he lived is likely to be an exercise of only limited value. In the present case, this is true even for the analysis of the pre-independence period in which Mondlane both made his political contribution and also died. The tensions within Frelimo had been temporarily papered over at the 1968 Congress, but they were far from being resolved; indeed they may even have helped produce Mondlane’s assassination. Had he lived, would he have been able to finesse the Kavandames and the Simangos more deftly and resolve more amicably the key strategic questions that were dividing the movement? And, if this were not possible (I rather doubt it was), would he at least have been able to orchestrate the rising ascendency of those directly linked to the military wing of the movement (and to the dynamics of popularly-rooted guerrilla struggle) in a positive manner on at least two fronts: to have allowed the military struggle to advance successfully while also to have helped pre-empt the dangers of hierarchy and authoritarianism that the necessary militarisation of the Mozambican struggle seems, in retrospect, to have carried with it?

But if these are impossibly speculative concerns how much more so are questions about ‘what might have been’ had Mondlane lived to usher Mozambique into independence? True, this latter question has not failed to be asked, and it has not been debated merely as a matter of academic speculation either: it has actually been, from time to time, the stuff of post-independence political propaganda and electoral sloganeering. Renamo itself having attempted from time to time to claim for and away from Frelimo the mantle of Mondlane: that is, the mantle of Eduardo Mondlane the good Mozambican nationalist, the nationalist who would not have been as ‘Communist’ as Samora Machel and his most immediate political entourage (most of whose members had been Mondlane’s own most immediate colleagues and protégés, it should be noted) had proven to be. We have, of course, the countervailing evidence of one of Mondlane’s last political statements, preserved on tape by Aquino da Bragança from which tape I myself transcribed it and subsequently translated it into English:

> I am now convinced that Frelimo has a clearer political line than ever before … The common basis that we had when we formed Frelimo was hatred of colonialism and the belief in the necessity to destroy the colonial structure and to establish a new social structure. But what

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DOI: 10.1080/03056240500329338
type of social structure, what type of organisation we would have, no one knew. No, some did
know, some did have ideas, but they had rather theoretical notions that were themselves
transformed in the struggle.

Now, however, there is a qualitative transformation in thinking that has emerged during the
past six years which permit me to conclude that at present Frelimo is much more socialist,
revolutionary and progressive than ever and that the line, the tendency, is now more and more
in the direction of socialism of the Marxist-Leninist variety. Why? Because the conditions of
life in Mozambique, the type of enemy which we have, does not give us any other alternative.
I do think, without compromising Frelimo which still has not made an official announcement
declaring itself Marxist Leninist, I can say that Frelimo is inclining itself more and more in this
direction because the conditions in which we struggle and work demand it.

As Mondlane continued in the same interview, it would be ‘impossible to create a
capitalist Mozambique’ because ‘it would be ridiculous to struggle for the people to
struggle, to destroy the economic structure of the enemy, and then reconstitute it in
such a way as to serve the enemy.’ And he also stressed the importance of ‘learning
from the concrete experience, including the errors, of the socialist countries which
since 1917 have worked and lived the socialist experience.’

As I pointed out in my introduction to a new edition of Mondlane’s book, The
Struggle for Mozambique, published in the early 1980s (Mondlane, 1983; Saul, 1983),
these statements seemed to reflect accurately the most positive strand of ideological
development within Frelimo during the period of armed struggle, the strand that
became dominant in the struggle for control of the movement after Mondlane’s death
(see also Saul, 2005a). It is a strand exemplified in a recent interview with one of
Eduardo’s proteges, Jorge Rebelo, who was a Politburo member in the early years of
independence:

We all agreed that we were going to gain independence, but this was not the ultimate object;
that was in fact the creation of a progressive society which would bring an end to misery in our
country. This was not merely a slogan. It was inside of us.

As Rebelo (Rebelo, 1995) continued, ‘We can’t help but be shocked by the distance
between that which was our objective and what is the reality today’, a comment
which raises issues to which I will return momentarily. Here it is important to affirm
that this strand of progressive ideological development is also eminently consistent
with, is, in fact, a further extrapolation from, themes already developed in
Mondlane’s book. Of course just what Mondlane thought to be conveyed by the term
‘Marxism-Leninism’, what he might have seen to be the ‘errors’ of the ‘socialist
countries’, and how his continued reflection on such matters might have played into
Frelimo’s post-liberation practice are things we can never know. Nor can we know
whether such reflection by him might have spared Frelimo some of the policy errors
it undoubtedly did make in pursuit of a socialist future for Mozambique.

Not that it is easy to decide what weight such errors themselves had in defining the
ultimate failure (or was it a defeat?) of the Mozambican socialist project. Indeed, one
of the great debates that attends current scholarly contemplation of the rise and fall
of Mozambican Socialism is precisely the relative weights to be attached to the
project’s own inherent weaknesses as against the overbearingly negative impact of
the hostile environment in which the project was being mounted. Self-evidently, that
hostile environment expressed itself most proximately through the sustained
programme of straightforward destabilisation inflicted upon Mozambique by, first,
Rhodesia and then South Africa (with whatever other shadowy forces in the wings). Beyond that there was the hostile environment of global capitalism – albeit a global capitalism reinforced in its economic workings after 1980 by the Reaganite political strategy of ‘roll-back’. It is easier to see now than it was in the mid- to late-1970s – which, after all, witnessed a high-water mark for anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist forces in Vietnam, in Nicaragua, and elsewhere – just how difficult it was increasingly going to be to get away with committing a socialism anywhere in the world, let alone in the southern Africa of South Africa’s Reagan-friendly ‘Total Strategy’.

Still, errors there also were, errors in the spheres of social and economic policy where, despite dramatic gains in health and education and even, to some extent, in gender policy, a transformative economic programme never quite got off the ground. Undeterred by the weaknesses of inherited institutions for the purposes they now envisaged and despite the lack of trained cadres, Frelimo entered into the post-independence fray driven by a certain cocky overconfidence carried over from the heroic days of armed struggle. Listen, once again, to Jorge Rebelo (1995) who recalled leaving a meeting at the Ponta Vermelha Palace just after independence and having President Machel say:

Now we have the power and we can finish with misery in Mozambique in two years. Someone said, ‘No, two years is too short a time.’ And Machel replied, ‘Okay, three years then.’ ‘We have to say now’, Rebelo continued, ‘that this was a bit of voluntarism (voluntarismo) on our part. We were imagining things that in reality were not possible. But that’s what we wanted to do.’

Frelimo’s hand was also forced by the precipitate departure of the Portuguese to nationalise things more quickly and more sweepingly than they might otherwise have done. In addition, a considerable price was paid by Frelimo for associating its project (for good reason and bad, I hasten to say) too closely to a particular kind of socialist theory and practice, to the Marxist-Leninist variant proffered by comrades from the then Eastern bloc (with its own ‘errors’, be it noted, seldom mentioned); this was something I learned for myself at close hand while teaching with such comrades (though they weren’t very comradely towards me at the Faculty of Marxism-Leninism at Eduardo Mondlane University where we all worked in the 1980s). Here was a vision that sanctioned a high-tech definition of economic transformation (the importance of ‘the forces of production’, don’t you know) – big projects, tractors and the like – and, equally fatefully, an underestimation of the importance of the peasants (as being not quite proletarian enough!), not least economically, to the transformation of Mozambique.

By the time Frelimo began to learn from its mistakes and understand that subtler transformative policies were more appropriate to its socialist goals – a guarded use of the market mechanism for certain purposes, for example, and a more positive embrace of peasant participation in economic development – the escalation of destabilisation and of western containment policies had begun to shut the door on such possibilities. By now a full-scale and uncritical retreat to the market, worldwide and local and unqualifiedly neo-liberal in its auspices, was all that seemed open to Frelimo: a condition of such relief from the burden of debt as might be forthcoming, a condition of any Western facilitating of the peace process (Saul, 2005c).

It is not, however, the task of this article to evaluate the neo-liberalisation of Mozambique that has been attendant upon the peacemaking process in that country.
and that continues to define current policies there. Without downgrading the importance to the lives of ordinary Mozambicans of the fact of the peace, so valuable in its own right, that was achieved once, in Chester Crocker’s immortal words, the Frelimo leadership has abandoned its ‘Afro-Marxist fantasies’. I will only say, however, that my hunch is to agree with the analysis presented some years ago by the American economist David Plank (Plank, 1993). For the latter argues that Mozambique has most recently experienced a particularly dramatic form of ‘recolonisation’ (his word) and one potentially even more pervasive and difficult to shake off than was the Portuguese version of colonialism.

Can we at least ask how Eduardo Mondlane might have fared in these heavy seas of ‘destabilisation’ and ‘roll-back’ and ‘recolonisation’? As stated earlier there are diminishing returns to efforts to speculate about such a question. Still, one must suspect that he would have been pushing, for reasons already discussed, to find room for manouevre – within the global economy, within the region, and within the damaged economy and society left behind by the Portuguese in Mozambique itself – to advance more rather than less progressive, even socialist, policies to meet the needs of ordinary Mozambicans. In short, no more recent image of Mondlane as ‘neo-liberal’ avant la lettre – whether that image be wielded by spokespersons for Renamo or, as is quite conceivable nowadays, by spokespersons for the new Frelimo – can really stand up to close scrutiny.

This may be of some significance. As we know, it would be naïve at this late date to argue that the era of the old ‘Frelimo state’ and its ‘left developmental dictatorship’ – with deeply compromised economic, social and political policies – did not have its grievous flaws. Nonetheless, reflecting on the first thirty-plus years of Mozambican independence – years marked most recently by destabilisation, by internal war and by ‘peacemaking’ (Saul, 2005b) – one could still conclude with the observation that what has been lost, most visibly, from the liberation struggle itself but also from earliest period of post-independence Mozambican history is something terribly important. It is, precisely, the loss of too much of the sense of social and public purpose that once prevailed, a purpose premised on the envisaging of society-wide transformations that could actually change the lives of the vast majority of Mozambicans in positive ways. That such commitment to the collective weal has been lost will bring no tears to the eyes of a Chester Crocker (ferocious Cold Warrior and, under Reagan, assistant US secretary of state for African affairs), perhaps. But the fact remains that its loss has been the price both of the kind of war inflicted on Mozambique and of the kind of peace achieved there. If development in any meaningful sense is ever to occur in their country, Mozambicans will eventually have to rediscover just such a sense of purpose, I think. And in doing so they will have to rediscover, among other things, something of the socialist legacy of Eduardo Mondlane.

But what about another question of contemporary resonance, what about the question: ‘Mondlane the democrat?’ No less speculative than the question: ‘Mondlane: socialist or neo-liberal?’, this question does nonetheless provoke thoughts about post-independence Mozambique, not least in its socialist phase, that carry us onto especially interesting analytical terrain. For in retrospect it might be argued that, insofar as Mozambique’s future lay in FRELIMO’s own hands at the moment of independence, the most fundamental flaw in its project, even more fundamental than its weakness in the sphere of economic policy-making, was precisely its weakness in the sphere of democratic theory and practice.
Not that Frelimo ignored this issue altogether. Indeed, the Frelimo leadership revelled in the fact that a great deal of its military success came from listening to and working with the people on the ground as the movement advanced its armed struggle. Moreover, one of its most dramatic policy initiatives in the very first days of its holding power was the attempt to deepen the populace’s own sense of fundamental empowerment through the establishment of the *grupos dinamizadores* in urban neighbourhoods, rural villages and in workplaces. But the messiness of such democratic processes-in-the-making did not greatly appeal to those used to the military orderliness of Nachingwea camp. It proved all too easy for Frelimo leaders, in their arrogance of power (albeit often, at least in the early days, with the very best of intentions and full commitment to the popular cause) to convince themselves that they knew best, and absolutely, what was required. Moreover, this was an organisational trajectory that the adoption of official ‘Marxism-Leninism’ with its stern Stalinist rationale for vanguardism and its firm sense of historical certainty could only reinforce.

For the fact remains that opposition was often merely crushed and that mass organisations (the women’s organisation and the trade unions and the like) ostensibly created as mechanisms of popular empowerment all too quickly became more like transmission belts for delivery of the party line. Critical debate that should have been the life-blood of a revolutionary process all but dried up in a stale and predictable media. ‘Tradition’ (seen to have its negative side in spheres like gender relations and exaggerated deference to old-style authority), religious conservatism, and ethnic and regional sensitivities became, as examples of *obscursantismo*, only so many negative constraints to be overridden from on high, rather than being viewed as the deep-seated social realities they were, to be worked upon politically, balancing leadership against mass initiatives, in much more nuanced and open-ended ways. At its most grotesque this tendency was revealed in the ‘solution’ to problems of urban overcrowding that became *Operacao Producao*. Here was a prime example of the kind of transformative tactics that, in their negative impact, would ultimately provide hostages to Renamo and also help to rot out much of the high moral purpose that had originally inspired Frelimo.

This is not to be wise after the event. Writing in the early 1980s in an introduction to the new edition of Mondlane’s book, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, mentioned earlier (Saul, 1983), I had already evoked such thoughts, seeing them as being as relevant to contemplating the then still (somewhat) open future of Mozambican socialism as they may now be to writing that socialist experiment’s epitaph. I noted a number of ‘danger signs’ that threatened the vigour of the emancipatory process that Frelimo professed to value, including considerable ‘inertia in facilitating mass action and self-organisation by the workers and peasants’; ‘the over-valuing of top-down interventions and administrative solutions’; and ‘the adoption of an ‘official Marxism’ whose ‘sterile definitions’ could serve ‘to deaden Marx’s emancipatory message’. Such tendencies seemed to me to cut against the profoundly democratic thrust both of Mondlane’s book and of his political proclivities more generally. As I then wrote in concluding my introduction, Eduardo Mondlane’s own socialist, even ‘Marxist-Leninist’ premises (as expressed to Bragança in the interview cited above), remain ‘framed by his book, by its insistence that Frelimo’s political project cannot exist outside of or above the Mozambican people itself’ and that ‘as long as the sensibility that informs Mondlane’s book remains at the centre of Frelimo’s practice, there is a strong likelihood that the country’s goals will be achieved’!
Once again, we cannot say for a certainty what would have become of Mondlane’s own highly developed democratic sensibility under the pressures that sprang from the kinds of regional conflagration, institutional disorder and economic difficulty that his successors had to face, not to mention from the temptations of power that ensnared so many of his African counterparts (to go no further afield). What we can say is that these successors, the Frelimo leadership, did not manifest nearly enough of this democratic sensibility in their socialist years (or more recently, for that matter), as a number of the old militants from that period have confessed quite ruefully to me in recent interviews. To be sure, it is difficult to isolate out this one factor, the failure of democratic sensibility, from all the other relevant variables. Nonetheless, the costs of its absence were probably quite high.

Of course, even if this point is granted, it does not follow that formal democratic institutions now in place in Mozambique are any more empowering for ordinary Mozambicans than were the political structures established by socialist Frelimo. Thus, for me, there was a particularly sad irony in the recent observation of a Mozambican friend, a journalist and a firm supporter of freedom, not least of the press, in his country. He wished for no return to the bad old days of government dictation of the ‘party-line’ to his newspaper. Yet, he confessed, he cannot escape the feeling that the workers and peasants in Mozambique had actually had more power under the ‘old’ Frelimo regime. Then, he said, the leadership took their interests more seriously (even if it never found ways to institutionalise a genuinely ‘popular democracy’ in any very effective way), and their voices were actually heard more clearly than they are now, under liberal democracy: in the present system their votes are merely canvassed in a competitive manner that has little to do with advancing their life chances or helping them to clarify their socio-economic options.

Thus, perhaps, the witches’ brew that the potent combination of formally liberal-democratic institutions and socio-economic recolonisation can produce, a proof that even if the existence of multiparty elections is one necessary condition for democratising a country it is very far from being a sufficient one. Harken then to contemporary efforts to rebuild the Mozambican polity from the ground up, to help empower civil society, not least those of its members who are among the poorest of the poor, to make the kinds of demands on the Mozambican state that may ultimately force it to recover something of its founders’ social vision, the vision of, among others, Eduardo Mondlane, as I have argued here. It is no accident that two widows of two former Presidents of Frelimo, martyrs both, have often been engaged in such work. I speak, of course, of Graça Machel and Janet Mondlane. In their work, and in the work of others in Mozambique similarly engaged, can we doubt that we hear echoes of the voice, the democratic voice, of Eduardo Mondlane.

* An earlier version of this paper, written and presented to the memory of Eduardo Mondlane, first president of Frelimo, was given at a workshop in his honour at his alma mater, Oberlin College, on 3 October 1998. Not coincidentally, this event occurred very nearly 30 years from the day of Mondlane’s assassination on 3 February 1969 in Dar es Salaam by agents of the Portuguese colonial power in Africa, a day particularly difficult to forget for those of us who knew Eduardo and who were also living in Dar at the time. This moving Oberlin workshop was attended by his widow, Janet Mondlane (see Manghezi, 2001) and various others members of his family, as well as by numerous friends, former comrades and admirers. It also bears noting that June of this year (2005) will mark the 85th anniversary of Mondlane’s birth in Manjacase, Mozambique, in 1920 (see Anon., 1972 and Shore, 1983); hence the timing of the present publication, to mark Eduardo’s birthday.
Bibliographic Note


Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: Now Who Calls the Shots?

Alastair Fraser

This paper argues that Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) can be understood as a technology of ‘social control’, which seeks to shape domestic political space. Despite widespread recognition that the World Bank and the IMF continue to impose orthodox policy conditions on debt relief and loans to African countries, many suggest the requirement in PRSPs for civil society ‘participation’ introduces a progressive element that could, in time, subvert the logic of coercion. In contrast, this paper suggests that it is precisely through participation that international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and bilateral donors are working with the IFIs** to secure ever more intimate supervision of African political communities. Thus, if the answer to Hanlon’s (1991) rhetorical question ‘who calls the shots?’ under structural adjustment was ‘the IFIs’, the answer under PRSPs is ‘an uneasy coalition of NGOs, donors and the IFIs’. These groups share an agenda of securing consent to liberal systems of political and economic management. Through the PRSP and related processes they divide the labour required to manufacture consent, seeking to build ‘reform coalitions’ by transforming the objectives and nature of states, bureaucracies, social and political movements and, at their most ambitious, populations. In the process they imperil African sovereignty, self-determination and hopes for substantive democracy.

Since the 1980s the IFIs have been lending money to African countries on the basis that they accept ‘conditions’ – changes in their economic and social policies that the IFIs think will help them pay back the loan. Critics protested that the process undermined democracy and sovereignty by imposing one-size-fits-all solutions in aid dependent African countries. In response to these criticisms, the IFIs announced in 1999 that these Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) would be replaced by Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Under the new framework the IFIs trumpet their enthusiasm for ‘country ownership’. PRSPs, they argue, build ownership because rather than the IFIs imposing policies, countries are supposed to write their own three year national development plans, which detail macro-economic policies, government spending targets and also social development programmes. The IFIs then judge whether these PRSPs are an acceptable basis for writing off debts or making new loans. They hope governments will be happier to implement plans they have written themselves. Furthermore, to meet the charge that imposing conditions is undemocratic, the IFIs now insists that other stakeholders, such as NGOs, churches, unions and business, rather than just government, are involved in writing the plans. This is called ‘participation’.

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PRSPs thus in theory reduce the policy conditions that the IFIs attach to loans and debt relief, but define new process conditions. Having been instrumental in lobbying for these innovations, development think-tanks, Northern NGOs and bilateral donors initially welcomed PRSPs as a means to reverse power relationships between donors and governments, between citizens and states and between North and South. By February 2005, PRSPs were being implemented in 45 countries.

There is now a burgeoning literature assessing the quality of the participatory processes surrounding PRSPs and the impact of the new dispensation on policy conditions. Within this literature four broad characterisations of the changes brought by PRSPs compete. First, anti-globalisation critics charge that participation is a sham and that the shift to PRSPs can be understood as a public relations exercise that has had little impact on the fundamental ‘dependency’ relationship in which the IFIs continue to dictate policy to African governments (Bendaña, 2001). A second view, held by some IFI staff, donors and researchers, is that the transfer of responsibility for initiating policies is more substantive than critics allow. They suggest that limited change in the policies contained in the new national development plans reveals not that the IFIs maintain control over outcomes, but that recipient governments have learnt, through the sometimes difficult experience of structural adjustment, that international economic realities offer few choices but to embrace market-oriented reforms (Harrison, 2001). A third position, held by most NGOs and donors, as well as the World Bank’s own Operations Evaluation Department (OED, 2004), argues that participation holds the (as yet unrealised) potential to transform relations between donors and recipients. Maxwell (2005) suggests that the principles of the PRSP sit at the heart of a new meta-narrative for best practice in aid relationships, displacing the Washington Consensus. The debate over how much progress has been made is thus largely informed by case-studies of PRSP processes that focus on process qua process, asking whether participatory planning techniques are being implemented according to their true principles (Piron and Evans, 2004; AFRODAD, 2003; Richmond and Ladd, 2001; Booth, 2001; McGee, Levene and Hughes, 2002). The final position contradicts the view that participation results in gradual empowerment by pointing to the limitations of African ownership resulting not from the way participation is being implemented, but from the underlying principles of participation itself. Brown (2004) and Craig and Porter (2003) argue that participation and ownership can be understood as ‘technologies of control’ since they mystify power relations, depoliticise negotiations, and thus secure IFI control of outcomes. Brown worries that

the discretionary element inherent in this model of participation seems likely to create a markedly quiescent form of representation. On the one hand, those who continue to be excluded under discretionary arrangements have no legal right to demand representation. On the other, those who are included will be put under pressure to accept whatever they are offered, on the grounds that, as supplicants, they could have received much less (Brown, 2004:244).

While this article accepts and builds on many of the technology of control arguments, it makes three additional claims. First, it elaborates the manner by which participation disciplines the national political economy. Craig & Porter describe the focus on participation as emerging from the IFI’s concern that, if excluded, civil society becomes a ‘primary agent of dissent’ (2003: 58), but provide a limited account of the means by which dissent is disciplined. Brown suggests that the benefits that
accrue to governments from manipulating participatory processes help legitimate their policies and insulate the executive from accountability to society. The power being mystified in Brown’s model is both the financial power of the IFIs and the elected dictatorship of the state over society. I wish to argue that, in addition to this possibility, which is most likely to occur in the limited number of cases where the IFIs trust the local political authorities, participation is also open to manipulation by relatively powerful international actors (international NGOs, aid donors and the IFIs) such that the process strengthens both their own leverage in relation to less trusted states, and also that of selected elements of civil society. Participation can thus be used not only to constrain local social forces, but also to configure local and international forces into ‘reform coalitions’ inside and outside the state, themselves capable of constraining not only other fractions of civil society but also the state itself. I therefore refer to a social technology of control.

Second, this article draws attention to potential means by which participation disciplines individual participants. This involves affecting changes in individual and group consciousness and identity. This suggests that, in seeking to understand the PRSP process, researchers need to focus not only on the ability of participants to shape PRSP policy outcomes, but also the ability of the process to re-shape those participants and through them, the social and political constituencies they represent. Third, this article suggests a range of actors and interests involved in designing and wielding the social technology of control. Brown, and Craig and Porter present the PRSP as an IFI policy, to which other actors adapt. On one level this is self-evident. However, I make the argument that the PRSP is also in some senses a joint project of the IFIs, bilateral donors and Northern NGOs, all of whom collaborated to design the process, all of whom expect their interests to be served by it, and all of whom understand that the process cannot ‘perform’ without the active engagement of all the others. They support and engage with PRSPs on a collaborative basis.

In seeking to develop this argument, this article is structured as follows: section one discusses how the IFIs have come to see participation as a potential solution to a crisis of adjustment and outlines how participation came to prominence in the PRSP. It then presents critiques from within international relations and development studies which challenge the liberatory rhetoric of participation and civil society, and describe how they might instead operate as ‘social technologies of control’. Section two analyses a sample of aid industry documents, in order to assess the possibility that PRSPs represent a concrete example of such a social technology of control. The argument is made that actually existing African political identities, institutions and representatives are excluded by the ‘small print’ of the liberal constructions and assumptions that underpin PRSPs. I therefore conclude that, despite the rhetoric of ownership, PRSPs provide a context within which an uneasy coalition of the IFIs, donors and Northern NGOs are seeking to remake African states and societies in their own self-image, thus securing a stable consensus for liberal systems of economic and political management, and legitimating the increasingly intrusive supervision of African political communities by Northern actors. I make no claim that this whole package is a self-conscious project for all of the actors in this coalition, nor that it succeeds on its own terms in transforming African political communities. However, I do assume that such concentrated and intimate interventions will have both intended and unintended impacts on African political economies. Understanding how these play out will imply a quite different research agenda from the majority of existing case-studies on PRSP processes.
Structural Adjustment, Democracy & the Discovery of Participation

The IFIs responded to the debt crisis of the 1980s by adopting a leadership role in a creditors’ cartel, using their financial leverage to intensify the supervision of African economies. Initially, the IFIs sought simply to ensure debt repayments, but rapidly became more ambitious, attaching increasingly detailed conditions to new loans and debt relief, despite the failure to reverse economic fortunes (UNCTAD, 2001). Throughout the adjustment era the IFIs struggled to reconcile political management of this economic failure with their major shareholders’ stated commitment to liberal political systems. Squaring this circle has required a barrage of technical solutions that seemingly conform to their ‘non-political’ mandate (Veltmeyer et al. 1996) whereas, in practice, a strong anti-democratic impetus runs through all of them, up to and including the latest ‘participatory’ turn.

Two themes can be traced throughout the period. First, World Bank thinkers have been disappointed by the failure of ‘reform coalitions’ – potential future beneficiaries of adjustment that might provide political support for the policies – to emerge. Given their non-political mandate they saw little they could do to bring such coalitions into being. Second, they have been concerned to suppress popular aspirations for rapid development gains.

By the end of the 1990s, Joan Nelson noted that the repeated failure to achieve IFI growth projections generated,

\[
\text{a corrosive mixture of public cynicism, defeatism and anger – precisely the opposite of the gradual emergence of economic confidence and political trust \ldots crucial to economic stabilisation and \ldots the consolidation of democracy (1989:20).}
\]

She thus argued that popular aspirations themselves represent a key political problem such that ‘solid and durable success cannot be achieved until underlying political and economic expectations can be lastingly re-moulded [downwards, presumably]’ (1989:30). The key challenge for the IFIs was how to achieve this.

The Emergence of Participation

The emergence of participation as an essential element of the PRSP in 1999, and thus as an organising principle of Bank interventions in Africa, can be understood as an attempts to overcome these crises. To understand how participation came to be imagined as the latest one-shot fix, and worked into policy, we need to look briefly at the idea of participation and at the process by which it came to prominence in Bank thinking.

Participation has its roots in Latin American ‘conscientisation’ literature, but its key advocate in the current context is Robert Chambers (1983) who has energetically promoted ‘Participatory Rural Appraisal’ (PRA) as the solution to the failures of ‘top-down’ development projects. Through PRA, participants, including the trained development professional ‘facilitating’ the process, experience a transformation in their own consciousness of the conditions and causes of underdevelopment. Throughout the 1980s, NGOs experimented extensively with PRA in their own programmes and became convinced that it offered an improved method of development implementation, increasing local populations’ investment in projects brought by outsiders.
Four overlapping processes saw a gradual increase in the amount and depth of participatory policy and practice within the Bank. First, from the late 1980s, facing criticism from NGOs and within the US political system on issues including the environment, indigenous people’s rights and dams, the Bank introduced participation as a safety check in these particular project areas. Second, from the early 1990s, as a range of major bilateral donors introduced participatory planning mechanisms as standard practice in their own projects, they encouraged the Bank to do the same, sponsoring a ‘Bank Wide Learning Group on Participatory Development’ and publishing various policy statements and ‘best practice’ resource books (World Bank 1994, 1996). Third, from the mid-1990s, the Bank also started moving participation up from the level of local project planning to economic policy and sectoral work, and eventually to country-wide political and economic planning. Fourth, the Wolfensohn Presidency brought new openings to expand and formalise these trends. In the late 1990s, questions of civil society participation became tied into demands for debt forgiveness through the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, leading eventually to the PRSP process itself. Only at this stage did the IMF sign up to a policy agenda that emerged very much within the Bank.

Throughout these four phases, collaboration with external academics, bilateral donors and NGOs was central to the Bank’s work. Establishing how the PRSP came into being, and the central role of NGOs in its development is an important element of the argument that PRSPs should not simply be understood as a World Bank project, but as a joint-project of a wide range of actors. As Christiansen and Hovland argue:

*The PRSP story is characterised by a multitude of links between the various players, both policymakers and researchers. The discussion of the main institutional actors … illustrates clearly the high level of contact between individuals in different institutions. It was also significant that individuals moved between institutions and thus carried ideas with them. As one interviewee put it, ‘none of the players is more than two handshakes away from any of the others’. The formal and informal networks contributed to the speed with which the PRSP ideas were spread and accepted in international development policy (2003:viii).*

Throughout the NGO-Bank discussions on participation, NGOs were aware that they were making progress with their agenda, wanted to support the ‘good people’ inside the Bank, and were impatient for the rest of the institution to travel more rapidly in the direction it had set out upon. The authors also suggest that the inner circle was dominated by Northern researchers, bilateral donors and NGOs.

Reflecting on Brown’s critique that PRSPs risk undermining democracy and allows for deeper colonisation of political space by Northern actors, Anthony Bebbington argues,

*Even if these are – or might one day be – the effects of such scaled-up, ostensible commitments to participatory policy and to such apparent openness to more politicised discussions of poverty and exclusion, I doubt such effects were the intent of those who committed their lives, careers and often families to fostering such changes (2004:279).*

He suggests the question that needs answering is, ‘how was it possible to promote such new languages and arguments within these institutions; and then, how were these languages and initiatives reworked and captured?’ (2004:280). My answer to this important question is that NGOs have not been particularly concerned about undermining democracy or the colonisation of political space. If the Bank's primary
objective – solving the crisis of adjustment by building reform coalitions and dampening aspirations for development – was visible throughout the World Bank’s investigation of participation, NGOs that encouraged the agenda must either have accepted the Bank’s analysis or compromised with it in order to secure their own objective: increased influence within Bank and African state-led development planning processes, and increasing budget allocations both to themselves and to their currently favoured social spending priorities.

I contend that this is the case. Solving the crisis of adjustment was transparently uppermost in the Bank’s mind throughout the period that NGOs were lobbying for participation. For example, a 1995 Bank research document on participation in Country Economic and Sector Work lists the potential benefits that chime closely with the Bank’s concerns about low implementation rates of structural adjustment programmes:

- A sense of partnership with borrowers;
- an increase in the Bank’s credibility within countries and among stakeholders;
- a wider and deeper use of local knowledge, improving the substance of the work itself;
- a much increased sense of ownership of the product, which in turn facilitates the adoption of recommendations;
- speedier action on report results;
- expedited Bank review of the work because of acceptance by the borrower (Aronson, 1995:8).

It is noticeable here that it is the sense, not the fact, of partnership or ownership that are important. How was it then that the Bank believed adopting participatory mechanisms might give it concrete means for achieving these transformations in perceptions of previously hostile actors, thus securing the implementation of conditions against the kind of resistance to adjustment the IFIs witnessed in Africa through the 1980s?

First, the Bank’s great hope was clearly not that participation would change the Bank, but rather that it would generate a new willingness on the part of borrowing country governments and civil societies to ‘learn from’ the Bank and implement that knowledge. For instance, the Participation Sourcebook notes that participation offers opportunities for ‘social learning’ whereby, ‘people within a local system learn the value and rationale of new social behaviors specified by an expert’ (1996:4).

Second, participation offers the possibility of direct IFI and donor contact with domestic political constituencies and debates. The World Bank’s Participation Sourcebook discusses the notion of stakeholders applying to all the different actors involved in the aid and development business – the IFIs themselves, foreign aid donors, borrowing government, and civil society. The image is one of all stakeholders engaged in a dialogue of equals to find a rational solution. This blurs the distinction between stakeholders rooted within the local society and those not, while the idea of a non-hierarchical, dialogical process allows powerful, non-local actors to be more forceful in expressing its own views.

There were, however, limits on what the Bank thought could be done. Despite excitement about the possibilities of participation, the Bank remained aware of legal, theoretical and practical problems with it. Perhaps the most significant was the
concern that new processes would not deliver if they were established in the absence of demand for them from either borrowing country governments or civil societies. This generated concerns about how to encourage borrowing country governments, if not to initiate, then at least to accept participation, and about what such processes might look like in the absence of the kind of civil society organisations that might be willing and able to participate. Bank researchers agonised about how far the IFIs could engage in solving these problems without offending against the sovereignty clause in its Articles of Association. In the mid-1990s, the last line that the Bank appeared unwilling to cross was taking responsibility itself for organising interests within borrowing countries, and directly mediating between them and the state.

Nonetheless, while participation claims to vest speaking and decision-making rights in the hands of local people, the Bank was clearly keen to ensure its own voice and decision-making power were strengthened in the process. With the range of new powers the Bank accrued to itself through participation, it seems hard to identify the benefits of supporting the strategy for those seeking to oppose adjustment. However, throughout the period, mainstream NGO lobbyists were pushing the Bank to go further, crossing even the lines it lacked the courage to.

The NGO Campaign: Participation as Trojan Horse or Strategic Retreat?

How then did NGO lobbyists understand their campaign for participation to be increasingly scaled-up and for the Bank to directly support civil society? Just before James Wolfensohn took over the Presidency in 1994, the World Bank’s fiftieth anniversary meeting in Madrid faced street protests. Campaigners that considered the Bank had done nothing significant to address their concerns marked the anniversary by denouncing the engagement strategy of more moderate groups, boycotting meetings and declaring, ‘Fifty Years is Enough!’

For the ‘insider’ lobbyists that believed they were making progress pushing participation, this provoked a challenge. Should they also walk out? Paul J. Nelson, one such lobbyist, writing his strategic reflections on Bank-NGO relations in 1995, came to a different conclusion. Nelson reasoned, first, that the arrival of Wolfensohn marked an opportunity to ensure that insider influencing continued, rather than the Bank and NGOs turning their backs on each other, and the participation experiment. He predicted (correctly) that Wolfensohn’s strategy, rather than supporting the kind of backlash many frustrated Bank staffers would have liked to see against NGOs, would be to divide ‘reasonable’ from ‘extremist’ voices, and to use the reasonable NGOs to drive a reform agenda within the Bank.

Nelson argued that opposition to adjustment was becoming politically outmoded, suggesting that NGOs, ‘Acknowledge the need for macro-economic adjustment – balanced current accounts and good economic management – and help stimulate development and discussions of concrete, locally-based plans in the national political context’ (1995:190).

The key issues Nelson identified for lobbying were, firstly, debt relief and, second, participation, which he argued should be ‘a top strategic priority for NGOs ... no other single measure would penetrate the Bank’s standard operation and its information system as thoroughly as the expanded use of participatory methods’ (1995:191). Nelson’s understanding of the relationship between adjustment, debt and participation, and his belief that the latter two could be strategically disentangled from adjustment illustrate clearly that the ‘debt relief plus participa-
tion’ agenda, which was to become a celebrated success amongst NGO campaigns, can also be understood as a strategic retreat from previous, more critical positions.

I have sought to make the argument that NGOs have been closely involved in the development of the PRSP despite the fact that a social control agenda was already clear within the Bank’s approach. I also suggested that a sense of defeat over structural adjustment and political timidity (at least partially resulting from funding dependency on bilateral donors) provide one potential explanation of NGO positioning. However, an alternative reading suggested by Nelson would be that NGOs so believe in the power of participation methodologies to ‘reverse the perceptions’ of the powerful, and thus to secure the priorities of the poor, that they saw it as a Trojan Horse. Their assumption was that once the Bank accepted the need for and logic of participation it would have unleashed forces beyond its control. Such perspectives, with an almost religious belief in participation (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001), inform a good deal of contemporary NGO lobbying for participation. Before moving on to make the argument that the Bank and NGOs share a substantive agenda for reform, it is worth pausing to consider how participation might operate differently – as a disciplining mechanism.

**Participation as a Social Technology of Control**

Arguments developed by Cooke (2001) and Hopgood (2000) in the fields of development studies and international relations provide some clues as to how participatory processes might operate as a social technology of control. Cooke challenges the dominant view that Participatory Rural Appraisal empowers participants by drawing attention to potential tyrannies of the group, capable of remoulding the self-perception of participants. He argues that work-shopping and role-playing involve particular techniques of coercive persuasion, such that, ‘group processes can intentionally be shaped to set-up specific psycho – and group dynamics to achieve particular outcomes’ (2001:116). This facilitates the ‘un-freezing’, ‘changing’ and ‘re-freezing’ of personal identity. Un-freezing occurs through a dramatic illustration of the potentially bad consequences of maintaining the status quo. Visioning exercises can then be used to promote a change of consciousness by illustrating a better future. Finally, a re-freezing of identities and objectives occurs through techniques designed to reinforce and secure group ownership of any consensus achieved through the workshop.

Many of Cooke’s arguments find a close parallel in Hopgood’s challenge to ‘post-metaphysical’ theories of international relations. He builds on Andrew Linklater’s use of Habermas’ notion of a ‘communications community’ whereby the outcomes of discussions are ethically defensible, because each individual has an equal right to participate in a rational dialogue to design the rules by which participants will co-exist. The rules of the communications community look a little like those of the PRA meeting, including conditions that no person or moral position can be excluded in advance, and that participants challenge their own ontological bases / truth claims, and anticipate that their positions will change through dialogue. Norms emerging can only be validated with the consent of everyone whose interests stand to be affected. These constructions claim to create ‘value-free’ or ‘post-metaphysical’ accounts, which secure elements of human freedom, generating virtuous outcomes without asserting a specific form of the good life. In other words, they claim to impose process conditions, without defining policy outcomes.
However, Hopgood argues that these models rely on an idealised model that, when applied to real people, requires them to accept a number of rules of the game. The ‘thin’ liberal conception of a neutral political process is thus not sustainable either theoretically or practically in the absence of a ‘thick’ normative content. The outcomes are in fact shaped by the fact that, in order to participate, real-world individuals have to be ‘unencumbered’, theatrically renouncing their existing particular identity, until they are stripped bare as abstractions. They can then be ‘re-encumbered’, a process of education, supported by incentives that generate acceptance of a series of liberal norms. Thus what appear as neutral processes in fact require as a pre-condition, the inculcation of liberal values amongst participants. The very act of establishing the discourse community therefore, ‘presumes that persons are at least minimally liberal (other-regarding, egalitarian) in the first place. But what of the real people, people possessed of a vast array of prejudices, antagonisms, preferences, wants and desires, often embodied in highly legitimate social practices?’ (Hopgood, 2000:10). Section two assesses the potential for apparently neutral processes of dialogue to act as the kind of social technologies of control described by Cooke and Hopgood in the concrete case study of the PRSP process, investigating the capacity of the process to un-make and remake personal and group identities.

PRSPs in Practice: The View from the Aid Industry

As we have seen, one of the key claims made for the PRSP process is that it will generate ownership of policy conditions. Given that ‘the concept of ‘ownership’ is a relative one’ (Eurodad, 2001:3), this section asks whether changes in practice under the PRSP are likely to bring us any nearer to autonomous, democratic development. In seeking to answer this question, I will look firstly at a range of assessments of the experience of the first round of PRSP negotiations. These studies were all undertaken, or commissioned by, agencies that have not only argued for greater participation, but are actively involved in the negotiation and implementation of the PRSP process, including NGOs such as Christian Aid (Painter, 2002; Richmond and Ladd, 2001); Eurodad (2001); Oxfam (2002, 2004); Save the Children Fund (Marcus and Wilkinson, 2002); and the multi-agency project on ‘The Reality of Aid’ (German et al. 2002), as well as bilateral donors, particularly the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) (McGee et al. 2002; Godfrey and Sheehy, 2000). As such, they tend to have a technocratic bent, identifying ‘problems and solutions’ within the context of broad acceptance of the PRSP framework. I then look at the recommendations for policy change that these ‘constructive critics’ offer, and finally at the advice they provide African partners. This latter analysis suggests a series of more fundamental limitations on autonomy and democracy implicit in the PRSP and based on prejudices shared by the IFIs and constructive critics.

Assessments of the PRSP Process

NGOs and donors, who have led the field in developing participatory approaches to development, find numerous faults with the PRSP process. Although practice across different national contexts varies, McGee et al. describe most processes not as participation, but as ‘information-sharing’ or ‘consultation’ exercises. Assessments typically find that the experience of many of the PRSP processes has involved:
narrowly defined agendas, established by government in advance;

detailed proposals for policy change ‘pre-cooked’ and presented as items for discussion within defined constraints;

limited processes of iteration. Rather than initiating debate, civil society criticisms and alternatives have been ‘processed’ by government in an extractive manner;

domination of participatory processes by urban, professional groups, humanitarian NGOs and their umbrella bodies. Many of the major mass-based constituencies within civil society, rural based and peasants’ groups, trade unions and religious groups, have not engaged with the process;

limited time allocated to participation, resulting in invitations to meetings arriving at short notice and very brief gaps between the release of consultation documents and the deadline for comments;

presentation and discussion of PRSPs in highly technical language and a failure to translate documents into local languages.

There is thus a consensus that major constraints on the ‘depth of participation’ have applied in most cases. There is also a broad agreement that the PRSP process has, so far, failed to generate any significant change in macro-economic policy conditions. While the PRSP process has led to increased budget allocations towards ‘pro-poor’ spending, Mc Gee et al. find that ‘NGOs and their coalitions have been totally unable to influence macroeconomic policy or even engage governments in dialogue about it’ (2002:14). The consistency of policies put forward in PRSPs is frequently taken as central evidence of this problem.

Within the assessments, blame for the failure of the PRSP process to influence macro-economic policies is shared between civil society, national governments and the IFIs. Many assessments display a marked disappointment at the failure of civil society in developing countries to develop well-articulated positions on macro-economic debates. Many also suggest that national governments, as the lead agency in designing and managing participation, have frustrated the process, considering participation an external condition, which they have to fulfil to satisfy donors.

Most commentators also raise concerns about constraints on ownership enforced by the IFIs. Although frequently discussed as if they are simply national planning processes, discussions under the PRSP are not primarily about planning. IFI ‘approval’ of the final strategy determines access to debt relief and new credit. In many cases this is the real reason why ‘planning’ is taking place at all. IFI approval has become more and more influential as the IFIs increasingly act as ‘gatekeepers’ to numerous other potential sources of capital. As German et al. note,

If the IMF and World Bank reject a government’s PRS, the government would lose access to trade credits, aid and finance and probably default on its debt obligations. Ultimately, its domestic economy could collapse (2002:10).

Thus ‘approval’, though sequenced at the end of the policy cycle, casts a shadow across the entire process, encouraging all actors to self-censor demands that might jeopardise desperately needed funds.
This pre-empting of IFI preferences is made possible by the IFIs’ willingness to expound on the values and policies by which they make their assessments. For example, IMF head Horst Kohler, told a 2002 ‘Town Hall Meeting’,

*the macro-economic framework is discussed with the country and it is not a prescription or dictate from Washington … We do not have a one-size-fits-all approach.*

He then immediately proceeded to define the limits on acceptable policy:

*if you have inflation rates of 10, 20 or even more percent, that’s devastating for the people … and it’s the same with the budget … the stability of a society really also depends on the fact that this society knows it has to live within its means* (World Bank, 2002b).

The statement hints at the expanded challenge facing the IMF under the PRSP process: how to *teach a society*, not just a government, how to live within its means.

In case any doubts arise in the country as to where the limits of acceptable policy lie, contacts between the IFIs, national governments and civil society both inside and outside of the PRSP process provide an opportunity for clarification. IFI staff (perhaps working as ‘technical advisors’ within government ministries) advise civil servants as to the kinds of policies that would be welcomed or frowned upon by the Boards of the Bank and Fund. And if developing country governments still fail to take the hint, the IFIs also have in place a number of institutional ‘backstops’ to secure their desired outcomes over the longer term. The Joint Staff Assessment (JSA), produced to advise the Boards of the IFIs on whether or not to approve PRSPs, provides an opportunity to give ‘feedback’ to national governments on the PRSP and to lay down markers for negotiation of the next PRSP, only three years later. The IMF is clear about the limits of its tolerance: ‘Conversely, there may be strategies that are sufficiently flawed that the Fund cannot support them even though they are country-owned’ (IMF, 2000:2)

Given the range of tools available to the IFIs and the enormous risks for any poor country that sought to test the limits of the IFIs’ tolerance, it is not surprising that standard neo-liberal policies continue to dominate. As a result, as Tim Kessler argues, if one PRSP looks a lot like a standard IMF package - with a larger social protection budget – that doesn’t necessarily prove that alternative policies were ignored. But if most of them - or all of them – have that familiar laundry list of macro and institutional reforms, then there’s a real problem. If the Bank and Fund will only ‘endorse’ PRSPs that fit into its preconceived box of standard policies, then it’ll be one-size-fits-all adjustment lending with a politically correct name (Kessler, 2000, quoted in Marshall et al. 2001:8).

The range of criticisms described above illustrate that many who argued for participation are far from happy with how it is operating. However, in order to understand where the boundaries on their vision lie, we also need to look at the recommendations they make for change.

**Policy Proposals**

The same broad recommendations are present in almost every assessment studied, including the World Bank’s own ‘retrospective study’ (World Bank, 2002a). First, there is a call for ‘capacity building’ to ensure that Southern civil society groups have the information and skills to participate effectively. Second, every one of the assessments reviewed argues that there should be more participation in the
development of PRSPs. Where the contradiction between ‘ownership’ and increased external involvement is recognised, this seems to be a price the constructive critics are willing to pay to ensure that maximum pressure, including the ultimate sanction of withholding funds, is placed on governments unwilling to play the participation game. Even those commentators who reject IFI involvement fall short of advocating allowing developing country governments to develop their own plans without international supervision. German et al. for example, describe PRSPs as,

the antithesis of domestically rooted and owned national poverty strategies … Foreign Aid has undermined decades of collectively negotiated governance processes in Africa, destroying the values that held societies together.

They then quickly add,

authentic ownership of these strategies depends not only on the quality of national efforts to consult and reach social consensus … but also requires donors to open the political space in which such efforts will evolve (emphasis added) (2002:8).

Finally, there is a broad consensus that the IFIs need to take a back-seat in the process of setting macro-economic conditions. Again, these demands are almost always qualified by arguments for some form of conditionality. German et al. argue boldly, ‘Delink all forms of aid and debt cancellation for the poorest countries from all types of conditions...’ before adding that ‘... Donors and developing country partners need to negotiate conditions for resource transfer based on shared values’ (2002:7).

Thus, while many of the constructive critics recognise that PRSPs are being used as a legitimisation mechanism for neo-liberal economic conditions, most are loath to let the PRSP go. They remain committed to building ‘bottom-up’ conditionality (externally policed conditionality based on policies established through participatory processes), see the PRSP mechanism as a flawed but powerful means of securing it and show concern for the reputation of the process and the continued engagement of civil society groups with it. How then should we understand this apparent paradox?

Practical Engagement
Constructive critics might argue that they support PRSPs because more radical strategies, aimed at securing autonomous, democratic development, (for example by reducing the IFIs’ structural power over developing countries through total, unconditional debt cancellation), are politically unfeasible, jeopardising widespread support for participation, aid and debt relief. However, we can look beyond assessments of the PRSP and recommendations for policy change. In order to understand how actors operationalise their approach to the PRSP, we can also look at ‘How To’ guides to PRSPs such as Oxfam’s Guide to the PRSP Process (2002), targeted at their Southern partners, and at the World Bank’s PRSP Sourcebook (Tikare et al. 2001). By making visible the contradictions, evasions and assumptions in this literature, I aim to show that the dogged attachment to the PRSP reflects more than a simple victory of hope over experience and that, in fact, both the Bank and many of the ‘constructive critics’ find autonomous, democratic development politically unattractive. In other words, despite tensions over policy and practice, the IFIs, bilateral donors and Northern NGOs are all wedded to a ‘liberal project’ (Young and Williams, 1994) which desires, and acts to secure, the intensive international supervision of African political communities. The PRSP represents an exceptionally
useful tool for the promotion of this liberal project, since a ‘division of labour’
between the IFIs, donors and NGOs helps to prop up the fragile myth of the equal
sovereignty of states, whilst securing the globalisation of developing country
politics.

In order to make this argument, I aim to show that in the PRSP, Northern actors share
a definable set of ideal political outcomes and act to delegitimate alternatives to
liberal political and economic arrangements through a wholesale assault on
existing political identities, projects and political institutions in Africa. These are
gradually being replaced by international norms and standards, by accountability
to external assessment, and by internationalised elite policy networks. ‘Bottom-up
conditionality’ thus paradoxically legitimates increasing intervention and implies
insulating political processes from the majority of the population.

The Assault on Existing Political Identities
As previously discussed, Hopgood notes that, before entering the ‘discourse
community’, participatory theories require individuals to be unencumbered of their
existing social and political identities and re-encumbered with appropriate modern,
liberal identities. Illustrating that such a transformation could be attempted in
relation to African civil society in the concrete circumstance of the PRSP is no easy
task since the aid industry constantly stresses its respect for people’s own identities
and its recognition that people and communities are situated within specific
contexts, that local knowledge is central to participation, that civil society is diverse,
and that this diversity represents its strength. However, the task of critical analysis
is to investigate the underlying limitations that such apparently progressive terms
write into debate, asking what range of identities and political projects are
legitimated and promoted, and what alternatives de-legitimated and squeezed out. I
want to argue that respect for identity, context, knowledge and diversity are severely
constrained by the fact that in the PRSP process, primacy is accorded to ‘poverty
discourse’, and the generation of a form of ‘planning knowledge’ useful to the
development of a national anti-poverty plan.

Nelson argued that in the pre-PRSP era, the diagnostic phase, ‘pre-appraisal’, based
on future profitability calculations was, ‘deeply rooted in the World Bank’s
management and operating style’ (1995:117). Bank staff took a strong interest in the
identification of the ‘problematique’, establishing – in the process – constraints on
‘appropriate’ knowledge to apply to the task in hand, and the solutions that could be
proposed, and thus enabling them to disengage from the later stages of the process.
Under the PRSP, ‘pre-appraisal’ has been replaced by the ‘poverty diagnostic’
phase. Researchers undertaking Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) during
this phase are encouraged by both the IFIs and NGOs to be particularly attuned to
marginality, and specifically, to gender, physical ability, ethnicity, generation and
most importantly, poverty. The ‘local knowledge’ of the objects of research is thus
legitimated with reference to a proven experience of marginality. This process enables
a particular construction of the problematique that PRSPs set out to solve, and
suggests a new one-size-fits-all solution – an anti-poverty programme, developed
according to international norms of ‘best-practice’.

By focusing attention on what people lack (power, wealth, status) and on their
ascribed identities (old, child, poor, female, disabled etc.), poverty discourse thus
describes people and countries as objects, victims of their circumstance. Francis
writes that,
Even those without material means can still be consumers of development, at the price of being reduced to atoms of poverty with no more social identity or history than being ‘poor’ (2001:85).

Furthermore, since ‘we’ know what ‘their’ problem is, and can immediately suggest a technical solution, people hardly need represent themselves. As Craig & Porter (2003) note, PPAs do little to describe existing local political movements that might represent popular demands.

The ascribed identities of poverty discourse can be contrasted to identities based on the consciousness of particular groups, formed in the interactions of memory, history, culture, religion, place, group and perhaps most significantly, of interests and political ideology. Investigating these subjective identities and desires implies viewing people as subjects, able to think and act independently, to shape events, mandate legitimate representatives and mobilise collective political action. However, since the knowledge represented here may not be expressed in terms of poverty, it can legitimately be excluded by a process that declares itself interested above all in ‘poverty reduction’. We can see this exclusion at work in McGee et al.’s concern that civil society participation will be dominated by ‘interest groups more interested in pressing their own case’ (2002:9). Though classical liberal theory understands civil society’s principal role as the defence of private ‘interests’, McGee et al.’s position illustrates the narrow range of projects this contemporary (more moralistic?) liberal project can support. In the process, it delegitimates, amongst others, trade unions and producer groups that exist primarily to promote their members interests.

Similar constraints are also at work in the assumption, shared by the IFIs, donors and NGOs, that what PRSPs both can and should do is to generate a national consensus. This focus on consensus asserts, or insists upon, a harmonious civil and political society, bereft of mutually exclusive ideologies and interests. Abrahamsen notes that under governance discourse, ‘civil society emerges as undifferentiated and harmonious, and there are no classes, races, no genders, ethnic groups or oppressors’ (Abrahamsen, 2000:56). Actors who disrupt this equilibrium immediately place themselves in a position to be condemned for their inappropriate or ‘non-participatory’ attitudes.

Despite a heavy rhetorical focus on local knowledge and diversity, participation under the PRSP is mainly interested in people’s ability to perform according to established liberal norms of political behaviour and to insert their ‘knowledge’ into the framework of planning tools. These tools are designed to collate and represent experiences of poverty towards a pre-determined end, the production of a plan for national development backed by IFI lending.

In this context, the ‘failure’ of African civil society to engage with the PRSP process becomes more understandable. PRSPs are designed by and for groups capable of expressing their project in terms of planning knowledge and poverty discourse – but few such groups exist, and few are likely to emerge from domestic social processes. PRSPs thus inevitably fail to engage with the assumed identities through which active human agents define their own ends; in other words, with the forces driving actually existing civil society in Africa, particularly groups which mobilise around conflicts of interest and identity and pursue their projects through strategies of resistance and non-co-operation. The problem of a lack of ‘capacity’ in civil society can, therefore, be understood as a lack of capacity to rehearse political arguments in the form of ‘planning knowledge’. And ‘capacity building’ can be understood as a process of teaching elite cadres within civil society to express themselves in an
appropriate and professional manner – to perform as a version of Western ‘good citizens’.

**Attacking Existing Political Institutions**

Before the PRSP era, African states were recognised as the only authority mandated to negotiate with external actors on behalf of their populations. However, a deep suspicion amongst donors and the IFIs towards African states has long informed their desire to engage wider stakeholders. Furthermore, the bias towards consensus involved in participation tends to delegitimate struggles for a majoritarian mandate between conflicting interests, ideologies and representatives. This orientation has serious implications for the legitimacy accorded those political forces which have ‘captured’ formal state power through either democratic and more physical ‘struggles’ – in other words all existing governments. The state thus appears as the antithesis of bottom-up, local, sensitive and consensual processes, and the demand for participation emerges as a challenge to the state’s monopoly on representing the citizenry, and from a claim that an alternative popular sovereignty resides in civil society. As Brown notes,

> the legitimacy of the PRSP process ... derives as much from the alleged limitations of representative democracy as from the manifest qualities of the participatory approach (2004:243).

This development is not without its critics. A number of Southern states have raised concerns about handing influence to groups unwilling or unable to test their popular support through democratic mechanisms. Former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers also warned,

> I am deeply troubled by the distance that the Bank has gone in democratic countries towards engagement with groups other than the Government. .... when there is an attempt to reach within societies to develop Country Assistance Strategies, there is a real possibility, it seems to me, of significantly weakening democratically elected governments (quoted in Eurodad, 2001:5).

Eurodad discount Summer’s concerns as reflecting a ‘‘zero-sum game’’ attitude: that more involvement by civil society means less democratic decision-making (2001:5). By contrast, they argue that the state benefits from participation, gaining new information and a stable domestic political consensus from which to negotiate with external actors. In the rest of this sub-section, I seek to assess these competing claims, and to understand the relationship between participation and sovereignty, and thus the impact of participation on the balance of power between African populations, however represented, and external actors seeking to promote their own ideas and interests.

The primacy accorded representative institutions over civil society has featured prominently in NGO documents as a cause of ‘poor governance’. Christian Aid, for example, commented disapprovingly that in Malawi, ‘The Government acted on the belief that once elected it had a mandate to govern and design policy without being questioned by unelected bodies’ (Painter, 2002:5). Typically the constructive critics argue that this democratic deficit can be remedied by participation, presenting the possibility of moving up the ‘ladder of participation’ from ‘information sharing and consultation’ to a point where stakeholders ‘initiate and control’. The way in which these ideas, drawn from the literature on PRA, have been (carelessly?) dropped into
the discussion of IFI-led national planning processes is telling. By imagining African governments into the same position as external facilitators, they are constructed as politically illegitimate actors.

More recently, however, both the Bank itself, and donors such as the UK’s DFID, which has been a staunch advocate of PRSPs, have started to worry about the relationship between PRSPs and democracy. Furthermore, some of the most effective campaigns against PRSP conditions have adopted the Parliamentary route. For example, the resistance to adjustment conditions documented by Larmer (2005) in Zambia involves trade unions creating pressure on elected representatives, and in turn on the Executive, to seek a re-negotiation (so far unsuccessful) of the terms of the PRSP. Some of the more radical NGOs have seen a way in to criticism of the policies, arguing for the engagement of Parliaments and elected political representatives in the PRSP process. This has included a global petition of Parliamentarians arguing that they should have the right to debate and vote on PRSPs before they are endorsed by the IFIs. However, even where NGOs have been at their most reflective about participation (Rowden and Ocoya Irama, 2004), the role of Parliamentarians is very much alongside participation of the poor – the question seems to be how to draw Parliament into involvement in the PRSP – to ensure political ownership of the process. This is somewhat different from asserting the primacy of elected institutions and formal democratic political processes over hazy, non-representative participatory processes.

Increasing Surveillance of the State

The challenge to state authority under PRSPs is not merely rhetorical. Through the PRSP the IFIs aim to secure adjustment conditions against any government backsliding. This explains the shift towards releasing credit in ‘tranches’, triggered by reviews. However, surveillance is political as well, and the PRSP provides a means of empowering ‘reform coalitions’ to defend adjustment against the re-assertion of popular demands (classically through wage strikes from government employees), and resulting ‘political’ budgetary allocations. It is thus not surprising that ‘budget monitoring’ is promoted by the World Bank as the most significant role of civil society in the PRSP:

"Participation in decisions regarding budget allocations, spending patterns, and public service delivery is thus a key entry-point for civil society engagement … enhanced participation in budgeting means a more powerful voice for the poor, improved public transparency, strengthened external checks on government and ultimately, greater efficiency and efficacy (emphasis added) (Tikare et al. 2001a:119-120)."

We should be wary of claims that this brief is ‘empowering’. Budgeting under adjustment conditions often resembles the cutting and serving of a shrinking cake – the main political task being to manage any resistance to austerity measures. What is perhaps more surprising is that many of the constructive critics share the IFIs’ concern with implementation and identify the budget as a central target for participation. Historically, leaving conditions on the shelf has been a central developing country strategy in resisting adjustment, but Oxfam are happy to recognise their alliance with the IFIs in blocking this strategy. Oxfam note that the budget process is traditionally secretive (as it is in industrialised countries) and welcome the fact that, ‘this is beginning to change in a number of countries largely under pressure from the IMF and the World Bank to make the process more accessible and transparent’ (Oxfam, 2001:21).
This positioning could be understood in three ways. Constructive critics may trust that they will, in the long run, be able to secure their spending priorities throughout the policy cycle. Alternatively, they may not actually prioritise macro-economics, being satisfied with any wellfais market crumbs falling from the PRSP table. Or it may be that they share the IFIs’ concern to establish the primacy of the PRSP over domestic political processes and welcome the leverage that the IFIs provide in securing a long-term shift in power away from widely condemned political cultures and institutions and towards civil society. In other words, the constructive critics may not trust the IFIs, but they appear to trust unsupervised African political processes a lot less.

Constructing a Professional Civil Society

In participation theory, as with the PRSP, ‘process’ is often presented as more important than ‘outcome’. Advocates of participation suggest that they are responding to a demand, driven by the ‘emergence’ of civil society, to open up new political spaces, and that it is from these that innovative solutions to underdevelopment will emerge. However, this assertion stands in awkward contrast to widespread recognition of the absence, in many countries, of the type of civil society that might like to participate in PRSPs.

This creates a problem for international actors under pressure to deliver the normative and institutional content to make new processes perform. As Hopgood notes, it is not enough simply to strip away inappropriate identities. In order to engage in discourse, actors need to be ‘re-encumbered’ with new ‘ends’ – projects to pursue through participation. What I am suggesting here is that international aid donors and NGOs play a key role in the process of ‘re-encumbering’ civil society to fill new political spaces. This involves creating and ‘capacity building’ a ‘professional’ African civil society, encouraging new and existing groups to engage in the PRSP process, and providing a tailor-made set of civil society ‘ends’ for them to pursue.

The Bank appears primarily concerned with accessing ‘expert knowledge’ on local development challenges and with mobilising ‘reform coalitions’. For instance, the PRSP Sourcebook encourages governments to think carefully about how to win support for adjustment.

Participation is inherently political, and understanding the dynamics of participation, particularly in macro-economic policy-making requires thinking in terms of interest-groups and incentives … Demystification of what the policy is, the rationale behind it, and its impacts will be critical in giving various societal groups incentives to support the policy and build positive coalitions of stakeholders (Tikare et al. 2001a:37)

However, the constructive critics face a difficulty. Given the centrality of poverty discourse to the PRSP, the dominance of neo-liberal think-tanks, business associations and human rights groups is a subject of significant anxiety for NGOs and donors. They are keen to secure the participation of what are referred to as ‘pro-poor’ organisations – preferably those able to directly lay their hands on the poor. However, most of the constructive critics also recognise the massive difficulty of finding groups both able to claim some legitimate representative function in poor communities, and construct their arguments in the technical form required to participate in a PRSP. The growth industry in civil society is thus amongst modern, professional groups willing and able to declare themselves pro-poor; express their demands in a technocratic framework; and accept the legitimacy of international-
ised policy forums, including the PRSP. Groups claiming to ‘reflect’ (as opposed to represent) the interests and needs of poor constituencies appear almost as interpreters, capable of understanding local articulations and re-presenting them in terms of approved poverty discourse.

**Encouraging Engagement with the PRSP & International Actors**

Bilateral donors and NGOs thus encourage ‘African civil society’ to fill the political space provided by the PRSP process by providing advice, training and funding to ensure that more and more civil society groups emerge, and that those willing and able to engage do so. Not unlike the relationship between donors and African governments, the funds, information and advice come with implicit and explicit conditions, introducing new sources of ‘accountability’ for a professionalised civil society.

However, the methods and priorities of aspirant participants in these internationally oriented, modern, liberal and technocratic discourse communities stand in stark contrast to those leading ‘new social movements’ – the mass based, sometimes democratic, frequently identity-based organisations that lead political resistance to SAPs. Historically, mass civil disobedience in response to adjustment (the IMF riot) have in some ways strengthened developing country governments’ efforts to resist conditions, providing a concrete illustration of the limits of political feasibility of reforms. McGee (2000) suggests that new policy networks emerging from the PRSP process might provide African states with an alternative method of illustrating to the IFIs the limits of political feasibility. As civil society groups provide the state with ‘evidence’ on the negative impacts of adjustment and the realities of poverty, they strengthen the hand of the state in negotiations with the IFIs. She also recognises however that this potential has not been realised. This is perhaps not surprising given the instincts of many in the aid industry to support alliances between the IFIs and civil society, and against the African state. Oxfam’s ‘Guide to the PRSP’ for example provides clear advice to Southern partners that they should engage with the PRSP process ‘constructively’, implicitly accepting the legitimacy of the process, and build new networks to promote their agendas. This includes suggesting that groups orient themselves not towards confrontation or critique, but prepare for negotiation, self-censorship and compromise in their engagements. Oxfam also advises Southern civil society to ally with the IFIs and donors in order to influence their governments. The Guide advises, ‘Use Donors and the WB/IMF: These often have a strong interest in Public Expenditure Management and at the same time exercise a lot of leverage over governments ... Increasingly donors are actually putting staff inside Ministries and these in particular can be invaluable sources of information. Developing good relationships with these donors is essential’ (2001: 25). This strategy of Northern NGOs has caused resentment amongst social movement activists (Dembele, 2003, for example).

Yet in some places, the complaints are beginning to be heard. One notable exception to the dominant ‘insider lobbying’ strategy advocated by most Northern NGOs is ‘Re-thinking Participation’ (Rowden and Ocaya Irama, 2004) which was recently published as a discussion paper by Actionaid. While the paper argues PRSPs may have brought some benefits, principally in terms of learning and relationship building for civil society, and in improving relations between civil society and the state in countries where little trust previously existed, Rowden and Ocaya Irama also warn about the dangers of dominance in the process by Northern NGOs, and of the process undermining sovereignty and democracy in recipient states. They
suggest that NGOs should argue for increased domestic democratic oversight of the process, and focus their own efforts on alternative public forums, civic mobilisation and engagement of parliamentarians – in brief, an agenda for civil society relying less on links to the powerful and international community to build their influence, and more on securing their own domestic support base.

Legitimating Intervention

The drive for engagement described above is particularly important in order to underpin the World Bank’s argument that, ‘Economic policy is primarily driven by domestic politics, not by outside agencies. The key to successful reform is a political movement for change, and donors cannot do very much to generate this.’ (Devarajan, Dollar and Holmgren 2001). However, I have argued throughout this discussion that many actors in the aid industry are energetically engaged in an effort to do precisely this – to generate internationally-oriented reform coalitions. As Hopgood argues in relation to the ‘civilising mission’, whilst there has been a ‘decline in the publicity surrounding the inculcation of virtue, the process itself, spreading the virtues to make liberalism work, still goes on, unceasingly, just without the fanfare’ (2000:3).

A division of labour between international agencies plays a central role in enabling this inculcation of value to take place without finally condemning the fragile myth of sovereignty. This division of labour involves the IFIs opening up new political spaces within developing countries by enforcing process conditionality, before these spaces are rapidly ‘filled’ both by external actors and trusted local groups. Thus although the World Bank has hesitantly expanded its mandate, it is precisely because the IFIs cannot confidently engage with domestic political processes that they have sought increasingly close collaboration with bilateral donors and civil society through the PRSP. There is a degree of confusion within the Bank as to how far its mandate will stretch, but by employing a division of labour, no one agency can clearly be accused of a dramatic breach of sovereignty. Rather an ‘extended state’ makes multiple ‘contacts’ or ‘networks’ across state boundaries. Intervention becomes a series of minor, inter-linked actions, none of which, on its own, appears sufficient to cause grave offence against sovereignty but which, as a whole, increasingly shift the locus of decision making from South to North.

In this situation, it is not feasible to argue that particular external actors determine outcomes. Rather, given the multi-faceted supervision of developing country politics under PRSPs, ‘the international is always present at the national and local levels’ (Abrahamsen, 2000:1). Analysis of this situation requires a focus on the interactions between domestic and external actors. As Abrahamsen argues, ‘little will be gained if the recognition of the history and agency of Africa and its peoples leads merely to the opposite extreme, namely of the abstraction of the continent from its international setting’ (2000:7).

The greatest weakness of the dominant literature on the PRSP process may therefore be its acceptance of this abstraction, a move that renders the role of external actors invisible. To give an extreme example, DFID give high priority to PRSPs in a summary document designed to explain the Department’s role to a public audience. But they make no mention of the role of the IFIs, commenting, ‘If they are to help people climb out of poverty, developing countries must develop and carry through their own master plans called poverty reduction strategies’ (emphasis added) (DFID,
Such accounts present the PSRP not as a central encounter in the international relations of a developing country, but simply as the sort of thing any poor country might do as a matter of best practice in public administration.

Oxfam, who one assumes would still recognise themselves as a ‘Northern’ NGO, also appear not to see any relevant distinction between domestic and international actors, viewing PRSPs as an opportunity for African civil society and for Oxfam to normalise and institutionalise its own influence over policy processes in developing countries: ‘PRSPs offer Oxfam and other NGOs major opportunities to influence policy and practice at local, national and international levels, both at the formulation and implementation stage’ (Oxfam, 2002:6-7).

The few commentators who note the risk of ‘ventriloquising’ Northern demands into local processes typically blame donors, not civil society. German et al. note, local policy processes … [are] disempowered by the better-prepared, well-informed globally articulate donors who could not resist stepping into the policy vacuum (German et al. 2002:14).

The fact that these commentators do not appear to experience the same anxieties over the role of international civil society hints at the way the concept of civil society facilitates boundary crossing. Imagining oneself part of a ‘global civil society’ or the ‘international community’, involves the invocation of global or universal values and the construction of both personal and organisational identities unencumbered of their very real social and cultural power.

Many international NGOs (and the IFIs themselves) work hard to establish some form of claim to a ‘local’ mandate. Beyond participation, strategies include hiring more ‘local’ staff to run offices in Africa and the North and the adoption of ‘federal’ structures. It is hard to believe that anyone truly believes that these strategies give organisations any kind of a mandate from African societies. However, the blurring of boundaries achieved appears to help Northern actors explain their interventionist role in African political communities. This is perhaps the only way they can present the PRSP as a legitimate, nationally owned process.

Conclusion

This article started by seeking to understand the origins of the IFI’s concern with participation, situating the emergence of PRSPs within the context of a multi-faceted crisis of adjustment. An historical analysis suggests that, in seeking to make structural adjustment perform as advertised, the World Bank has experienced a mission creep. The Bank persistently finds that its every solution to the problem of African under-development is undermined by factors below the level of its previous intervention and, driven by that discovery, has burrowed deeper and deeper into the fabric of African political communities in order to finally reach the source of the problem.

An initial concern with getting the prices right soon shifted to a concern with getting the wider policy environment right. Backsliding on policy advice then led to a determination to discipline the ruling elites by imposing conditionality. Nonetheless, democracy allowed the election of new governments hostile to adjustment, and social unrest continued to undermine implementation. The Bank responded by developing a surveillance architecture capable of disciplining democracy. Still,
forms of bureaucratic resistance and obstruction persisted. Graham Harrison’s (2004) description of ‘Governance States’ provides a detailed account of the manner in which institutional reform, civil service training and donor technical assistance has allowed an ever more intimate supervision of every facet of the state bureaucracy in selected countries. Harrison describes a set of states that have ‘succeeded in internalising the impetus of governance’, meaning that they have achieved, ‘progress towards the resolution of a set of structured tensions generated by a decade of neo-liberal reform in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s’ (2004:4).

However, Harrison’s argument focuses on the successful disciplining of the state machinery in Africa. It has little to say about politics at a sub-state level, about the ability of African societies to resist the governance agenda and to make their own history. The Bank, on the other hand, has long been worrying about the ‘next layer down’. It did so impotently in the 1980s as the ‘reform coalition’ literature expressed nagging anxieties about the difficulty of the long-distance social engineering of the state and civil society needed to embed adjustment. Despite experiments with participation, it was thus not until the emergence of the PRSP that the Bank developed a self-confident and comprehensive mechanism to attempt such an ambitious feat. The Bank tends to suggest that as a ‘learning organisation’ it recognised weaknesses in its previous moral and developmental scheme, took some good advice, and found the light. PRSPs have generated great pride and a new sense of mission for some IFI staff, allowing them to see themselves setting the pace in aid policy. Alternatively, to the extent that NGOs have gradually become disillusioned with PRSPs, they also present the process as one through which the Bank has taken another ‘NGO word’ and twisted its meaning to secure their own interests.

We can also speculate that the Bank’s ambitions do not stop at the level of more or less institutionalised representative bodies within civil society. One layer further down we may find the populations of African states. The beliefs and attitude of these individuals may eventually become the target of Bank interventions. Williams (1999) has argued that, in order to make its market model work, the Bank attempts to remake African people, constructing a ‘homo economicus’. Craig and Porter make the argument that this agenda is intrinsic to the normative project pursued by PRSPs: ‘both poverty reduction and social inclusion policy and strategy represent a refinement of the liberal political project, specifically a mode of “inclusive” liberalism, in which the disciplined inclusion of the poor and their places is a central task’ (2003:54).

We can provide an account then of the possibilities inherent in the participation agenda for key Northern actors seeking to develop PRSPs as a social technology of control. This article demonstrated that this is their aim. However, whatever the intentions of external actors – to impose particular conditions, to inculcate particular values, to neutralise resistance – this tells us little about how these processes are playing out in the concrete reality of African countries. PRSP processes are unlikely to easily supplant ‘deep’ social processes which actually existing political and social movements will react to and construct. Rather, negotiations are likely to proceed as a series of ‘performative rituals’ (Mercer, 2003), in which all actors construct their voices strategically. The extent to which a shift from coercion to consent gradually becomes possible can only be discussed in the context of a new research agenda – one that provides detailed ethnographic descriptions of the impacts of participatory planning processes on the personal and group identities of African actors, and on the bases for the formation or collapse of new coalitions, both promoting reform and resisting adjustment.
Aware of the tendency towards performance, the Bank continues to suffer from uncertainties about its right and ability to transform African political economies, about the failure of the IFIs’ core economic propositions to generate dynamic economies in its client countries, and about the long-running institutional and legal tensions between the Bank’s historic mandate and its expanded modern mission. Given the wide range of unresolved tensions, the Bank remains aware that the rhetoric of participation has outstripped the reality. The fall-back position for the IFIs throughout the PRSP period has thus remained ‘business as usual’. In other words, until participation can prove itself capable of generating and policing consent to core IFI priorities, the IFIs hold on to the most important coercive mechanisms at their disposal. We are nowhere near a world of post-conditionality.

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** Editor’s Note: International financial institutions (IFIs) are public banks, using taxpayer money to invest in countries outside their borders, often in the name of fostering economic development, at home or abroad. Many of these IFIs are also large backers of fossil fuel projects around the world. They include both multilateral and bilateral development banks and export credit agencies. **
Development Denied: Autocratic Militarism in Post-election Zimbabwe

Sarah Bracking

This article examines the recent ideological position of ‘Vote for Development’ which the ZANU-PF government in Zimbabwe pursued during the election campaign of March 2005, and the brief period of freer expression that accompanied the campaign. This strategy of power, the willingness to seemingly embrace democratic process, is then compared with the post-election situation in Zimbabwe, where despite having entrenched themselves in government, the ZANU-PF leadership is conducting a campaign to destroy the infrastructural, physical, economic and social assets of the urban poor. I review the ‘Operation Restore Order’ against informal traders, and the ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ (‘Operation Clear Away the Trash’ – or grime, rubbish, filth) of 25 May to early July 2005 against peoples homes, and ask how we can categorise the Zimbabwean state in its contemporary, seemingly contradictory, form.

They the villagers had been straining together in one direction for years, and Matenge [fictional chief] had been straining in the opposite direction, always pulling them down. Because of this they had politely avoided him, but today they wanted to see his face when their cattle were dying while his cattle were safe … They wanted him to know they were not after his Chevrolet or big house. They would even tell him this with gentle smiles and pleasant gestures and reassure him that it was only their lives they wanted to set right and he must not stand in their way (Bessie Head (1969), When Rain Clouds Gather, Heinemann, pp. 172-3).

He (Maurice Nyagumbo) has learnt that only total confrontation can be opposed to total oppression … For him such liberation means more than the transfer of power to a new set of masters, even though they be black (J. Conradie (1980), Preface to M. Nyagumbo, With the People: An Autobiography from the Zimbabwe Struggle, Allison & Busby, London.

In reviewing these two historical moments, the article illustrates how the politics of spoils has operated during the election period and after, concluding that the current destruction of the livelihoods, homes and sometimes lives, of the urban poor is part of a longer running turn to authoritarianism by ZANU-PF (see Raftopoulos, 2003), the election experience notwithstanding. I also argue that this authoritarianism is a default mode of an anti-developmental, spoils-based political economy, which is partly conditioned by international isolation and illiquidity; excluded by the IFIs from access to hard currency, and initially dissembled by structural adjustment, the elite pursues a zero-sum extractive form of accumulation against its own citizens.
Review of African Political Economy

Operation Restore Order & Operation Murambatsvina

These ‘operations’ serve to steal from the poor to reward and resource government uniformed personnel with the spoils of the election: the 20,000 vendors arrested by the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises Development [sic] in May 2005 watched their wares destroyed or stolen by the police, to make way for other traders with party cards. The government claimed they were trading illegally, but most were licenced, including the 3,000 Bulawayo small traders whose City Council pleaded with the Government to respect the licences it had issued. These included the traders of Unity Village in Main Street, Bulawayo (opened by Minister John Nkomo); and of Fort Street Market (opened by Cain Mathema, now Governor of Bulawayo). Other legal markets destroyed include the Green Market in Mutare (where traders had paid Z$800,000 for shop licences as recently as January) (Sokwanele, 17 June 2005); Fifth Avenue and Avondale in Harare, and established tourist markets across the country from Beitbridge, to the ‘Baghdads’ and craft stands of Victoria Falls (Sokwanele, 15 June 2005) and structures at Kariba, leaving little hope for an already desperate tourist industry (see Zambezi Times Online, 29 March 2005).

However, the violence is also wanton, symbolic and punitive, signifying ZANU-PF’s determination to maintain power and social control in the face of a population who (probably) didn’t provide a majority vote for it, with areas who voted for the opposition MDC the worst affected. The security personnel [sic] moved from destroying small businesses to peoples’ homes, making at least 200,000 people homeless (and perhaps as many as 1 million), and costing the lives of the weak and vulnerable including two babies who had been reported as frozen to death in the winter cold (Habitat International, 9 June 2005; Joint NGO Statement, 23 June 2005). Sokwanele summarise that:

Already, vendors’ licences are being reissued in Harare – but only to those who have a valid ZANU-PF card. Similarly, in those areas that have been razed to the ground, such as White Cliff Farm, land is already being re-pegged, and the sites are being allocated to members of the army and police. Furthermore, people from MDC supporting cities are being displaced into ZANU-PF strongholds in rural areas, where it is quite simple – those who do not support ZANU-PF will not be allowed access to food this winter (Sokwanele, 18 June 2005).

Whole suburbs are disappearing, razed to the ground by bulldozers, police and army, horses and dogs, with ever-present overhead buzzing helicopters, and then burnt out as the army becomes bored of herding people into lorries. These include Hatcliffe Extension, Mbare, Joshua Nkomo and White Cliff Farm. Other places affected are the Harare suburbs of Mabvuku, Glenview, Dzivarasekwa and Chitungwiza; the Mutare suburb of Sakubva (but not Chikanga, where many junior Central Intelligence Officers (CIOs) have taken up residence); other areas in Bulawayo such as Chinotimba and Killarney; Victoria Falls, Chipinge, Kariba, Chinoyi, Beitbridge, and Gwanda.

In Killarney squatter camp, Bulawayo, concrete churches, cooperative development schemes and schools were razed, although many residents had already taken down their own homes before the arrival of the army and police – such is the acute fear of this regime and desire to keep hold of building materials from total destruction. In Hatcliffe, a mosque, churches, a school and shelters for orphans of the HIV pandemic, were bulldozed as the distraught nuns of the Catholic church and their very small charges looked on (Sokwanele, various June 2005). Meanwhile, Zengeza MP, Goodrich Chimbaia and St Mary’s MP, Job Sikhala went into hiding, as the security services [sic] threatened them with arrest for inciting resistance, while an
estimated 45 per cent of Chitungwiza’s one million residents who had lived in informal housing, were made destitute (SW Radio Africa, 20 June 2005). The new destitutes join the ranks of the already chronically poor, both housed and unhoused. For example, Bulawayo Mayor Japhet Ndabeni Ncube has recently accused the government of falsifying death records to hide malnutrition related death. He claims that the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) is working with the registry department to supply false figures to Bulawayo City Council, since recorded burials at the cemeteries do not tally with figures coming from the Registry Offices (ZimOnline, 17 June 2005).

Some displaced persons, an estimated 10,000, live on the roadside toward Domboshawa, others with Zimbabwean ID cards were returned in army lorries to their province of origin as stated on the card. They were taken to the Sabhuku (sub-chief), where they were more often than not asked for their ZANU-PF party card, and without it denied land and expelled again into the wilderness. Some ‘home’ villages expelled arrivals themselves: after all, often they too have no food. Those without Zimbabwean ID were initially taken to fenced holding camps and stored like beasts. The raised suburb of Mbare had many Mozambican traders, Hatcliffe many of the 200,000 displaced Malawian ex-farm workers from the misnamed ‘Land Reform’ of previously white-owned farms. The regime has no regard for such people: as Didymus Mutasa stated three years ago (Mutasa was made minister for national security in April 2005, putting him in charge of the CIO, Mugabe’s secret police):

We would be better off with only 6m, with our own people who support the liberation struggle … We don’t want all these extra people (The Sunday Times World, 12 June 2005).

The Mutation of the Post-colonial Democratic State in Zimbabwe

So how has such an exclusionary mode of political rule developed? In short, Zimbabwe now exhibits a form of authoritarianism that can be traced from the social transformation catalysed by the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) of 1991-95, the economic crisis after 1997, and the more general economic and moral bankruptcy of the post-colonial nebula of hybrid liberal democracy. In a general sense, authoritarian social formations are a consequence of failed markets,1 and just as European fascism was born of the 1930s Great Depression, elements of fascist state practices can be traced to the failure of the first generation of structural adjustment in sub-Saharan Africa, and the continued failures of the second generation PRSP mechanisms. Interestingly, the Commission for Africa urges debt relief by arguing that failure to assist the weak neo-liberal elite in Africa will have dire consequences, such as wars, failed states and failed development (Commission for Africa, 2005). This article argues that it is failed market capitalism more generally that spurs a regression into authoritarianism, and that, in contradistinction to the Commission for Africa, it is liberalisation itself, or at least forced liberalisation, that can hasten the assent into decline. Thus, providing development finance to political elites is not necessarily an insurance against failed development.

Thus, in Zimbabwe, inclusive social democratic development, briefly pursued in the early 1980s, was rejected (Astrow, 1984), and by 1991 the ruling elite had embraced capitalist individualism (see Dashwood, 1996; Mlambo, 1997:ix-x). ESAP saw further rapid accumulation by an expanded economic elite, who were positioned to take advantage of incoming development finance and new development projects, such that the programme increased social and economic inequality and widened class stratification (Bracking, 1999). While a commitment to social welfarism was
retained for much longer in the institutions of the working poor and rural subsistence farmers (Sachikonye, 2001:153-158), events ultimately undermined these discourses, as ESAP prompted an economic fire sale of outdated production capacity and the construction of an austerity based competitiveness for some new ventures (see Mwanza, 1992:4-7). In short, the ESAP of 1991-96 provided the momentum for the economy to become uncompetitive in key industrial sectors (Chipika et al. 2000; Sachikonye, 1999) while causing increased hardship for the poor and promoting uneven development (Mlambo, 1997). There was a rapid generation of finance capital and an associated finance class, made up of patronees of the ruling party, working in autonomous companies, yet dependent on the party-state for their sustenance in key respects, most centrally around the allocations of foreign exchange and business licences (Bracking, 1999).

However, overall the liberalisation of capital markets lead to deindustrialisation, although this was not experienced by all industrial sectors (Chipika et al. 2000:105-7), and increased poverty (Mlambo, 1997:85-88). As a consequence, sections of the established industrial elite were bankrupted, the economy contracted, but social privilege ensured that access to resources was enjoyed by some as a consequence of state sanction and instruments, and large firms experienced benefits from ESAP (Chipika et al. 2000:108). Thus, as a result of ESAP, divisions began to emerge between beneficiaries of state support through indigenisation and empowerment policy, and pre-existing and independent capitalists. The ‘party capitalists’ increasingly viewed ‘free market’ entrepreneurs, such as Strive Masiyiwa, as linked to imperialist and white interests, and labelled them sell-outs to national liberation, resenting accumulation outside party networks (see Bracking, 2003). Since 1997 businesses run by people identified as ‘outside’ the ruling party have increasingly been run out of the market, their operating conditions made hopeless impossible by targeted failures to the power supply, invasion by Chinotimba’s ‘War Veterans’, or simply bureaucratic obstacle and revoked licences. The election slogans in 2005 even included an overt ideological endorsement of the ‘Industrial Chimurenga’, the forcible takeover of profitable businesses by the ruling ‘party-state’ in the ‘empowerment though takeovers’ policy (see below).

The collapse of the post-colonial liberal state and market economy are not complete, however, and reference is still made in government discourse to tenets of ideological liberalism, and ironically to the desired modernity and rationality of the West. For example, the resonance of the post-colonial in the ideological landscape is evident in the justification, if it can be called such, for Operation Murambatsvina. Zimbabweans were assured in the state media that those so cleaned up were ‘only isotsis’ (thieves), and that the modern urban lifestyle of honest Zimbabweans required that all housing and trading should be certified, sanctioning the removal of the troublesome poor. The Herald even gave evidence of the precedent for this urban social policy from the UK case, claiming that ‘Britain orders demolition of 400,000 illegal houses’, in the UK Midlands and North, aimed at giving the United Kingdom a new outlook. The Herald continued that Zimbabwe had ‘recently embarked on its own clean-up campaign to rid the country of illegal settlements, makeshift industrial and market stalls’, with the implication that legitimacy from the former precedent could be conferred on the latter, such that in both cases [sic] displaced people were to be resettled in planned areas (The Herald, 9 June 2005). Needless to say, that while some stands, apparently for zero deposit, and rural resettlement areas are available to card carrying members, there is no generalised provision for the displaced.
Legality aside, informal settlements are themselves testament to the failure of urban planning to fully escape the path dependence of the colonial era, with housing schemes and industrial development peripheralised to peri-urban ghettos. Chitungwiza, for example, has, or had, become by 1998 a settlement of nearly one million poor people, far larger than the residual Central Business District and central suburbs inherited from the white settlers, such that 46 per cent of the total urban population were residing in Greater Harare, which includes these satellite towns (CSO, 1998). Cautioned, and well-researched warnings of the urban housing problem have not been acted upon, so that informal settlement became the only answer for the poor (Tevera and Chimhowu 1998:13-17). The low income housing schemes launched in the 1980s failed to meet the huge demand for accommodation (Kamete, 1998), so that for much of the 1990s informal squatter settlements around Harare have existed despite the authorities' periodic clearances (Tevera and Chimhowu, 1998:15-16).

Given low tolerance of large settlements – such as those near the Mbare Musika bus terminus (cleared for Queen Elizabeth II's visit in 1991), Porta Farm or Churu Farm – homelessness became disguised by the growth of backyard shanties and a rental market in these informal dwellings. Tevera and Chimhowu (1998) reproduce a Harare City Council (1989) summary that in Glen View 28 per cent of stands had shanties by 1989, with figures high for all high density suburbs and highest for Tafara at 57 per cent. The authors' further survey work reveals an average household size in backyard extensions of 4.2 persons in 1998, varying from 5.7 persons in Mbare to 3.8 in Glen View (Ibid.).

It is these shelters which have now been largely demolished, in a reversal of the tolerance shown in the 1990s toward informal dwellings. In that sense, this change in urban housing policy, to forcible removal, is reminiscent of political trends more generally, where hoary problems such as poverty are increasingly met by a rejection of an inclusive welfare paradigm per se. Dating from the late 1980s, and encouraged by ESAP, the inclusiveness of political discourse has been eroded by an autarkic development ideology framed around the interests of the elite. The latest incident underlines the extent of this tendency toward social conservatism, with the government demonstrating their mastery of a ‘redlined’ development project (see Ferguson, 1999:238-254), by redefining citizenship as preferentially belonging to the political class, the inheritors of the revolution.

Their disdain for the poor is partly related to the conservatism that they have rediscovered from the erstwhile white elite: a desire for poverty to be out of sight. It also has a contemporary frame, where the continued poverty of the urban informal sector has become a constant reminder of industrial decline, formal sector unemployment and the contraction of the economy brought on by the retreat of the IFIs since 1998. The poor are also a visible reminder of ‘underdevelopment’, a circumstance which questions the legitimacy of the modernity and conspicuous consumption of the new rich. Urbanisation is thus substituted in favour of a romanticised return to the land, where not uncoincidentally political pressure to provide welfare for the poor is much less.

The Political Context of Social Authoritarianism

In Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business, Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos further outline the skeleton of the institutional and ideological contradictions of the post-colonial in the present context (2003). While the meaning here might differ
somewhat to that which these authors would provide, the antimonies of the post-colonial are reflected in the acute observations and conceptual constructs which form their analysis. It is worth citing from the introduction at some length, on current ‘core discursive divides’ and ‘political dichotomies’:

a historicised and racialised assertion of land restitution and justice, versus an ahistorical, technocratic insistence on liberal notions of private property, ‘development’ and ‘good governance’; a new form of ‘indigenous’, authoritarian nationalism (based around claims of loyalty and national sovereignty), versus a non-ethnicised, ‘civic’ nationalism (grounded in liberal democratic notions of rights and the rule of law); a radical, Pan-Africanist anti-colonial, anti-imperialist critique of ‘the West’, versus a ‘universalist’ embrace of certain aspects of neoliberalism and globalisation; and a monopoly claim over the commitment to radical redistribution, versus a monopoly claim over the defence of human rights (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003:17).

The authors continue that these polarities are ‘in large part’ founded in competing narratives of Zimbabwe’s national liberation history (see Ranger, 2003), a key notion employed in the Government’s recruitment of consent. In this ‘unfinished business’ of the national liberation struggle, the country is depicted as being in a permanent, unending war against the (former) colonialisations and imperialists. They have also, however, provided an analysis which resonates outside Zimbabwe, which speaks to an essential aspect of post-colonial politics observed elsewhere: the finely balanced path dependent on choices between consolidating the liberal democratic state or resourcing the patrimonial state; between the emergence of the neo-populist, or the consolidation of the social democratic (on South Africa, see Szeftel, 2004), and by extension here, the potential for the emergence of fascist social process within the state. What is referred to here as the ‘party-state’ emerges from the process whereby the ruling party effectively invades and fills the public space of the state, as was also the case in Gramsci’s account of fascist Italy, until the two are not dissociable (see Kaulenu, 2004).

There are circumstances which catalyze such contradictory politics, outlined by Cousins in Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003), in relation to the real ‘failure of post-liberation ‘development democracies’ to address the structural, social and political legacies of colonial and apartheid rule’ (Ibid. p.37). This failure is of course related to the parsimonious aid and trade policy environment of the indentured neo-liberal adjustment period since the early 1980s. This context provides the opportunity for authoritarian nationalism, and the politics of economic restitution, to combine and counter development failure ideologically, in opposition to the social incrementalism of neo-liberalism. However, and of significance here, this combination of nationalism and radical sounding economic restitution can ironically be pitted against SAP-induced austerity discursively without benefiting the poor materially, since it hides the deepening of class stratification. Also, and here really is the rub, the combination of nationalism and populist restitutionalism, actually undermines radical liberal and social democratic discourses which could beneficially include the poor. Similarly, the project of nation-building has undergone an exclusionary revision with a

shift from national development to a revived nationalist revolution, manifested and managed through an ever-deepening authoritarianism, (which) has involved a racial reconfiguration of the terms of national belonging and access to land, security and citizenship … based primarily on an essentialised narrowing of the principles of inclusion (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003:38-9).
Thus the urban poor have been increasingly depicted as ‘unrooted’ and ‘totemless’, with lesser claims to citizenship because of a distance from the rightful inheritors of the nationalist revolution, the *mwana wevhu* (lit. sons/children of the soil) (Ibid.), while the citizenship of white Zimbabweans has been increasingly denied. The current expulsions of the urban poor reveal the extent to which citizenship has been narrowed.

**The Parliamentary Election: a Compromised Performance**

The key policies of the 31 March 2005 election confirm these trends. The economic crisis after 1997, and political crisis after the failed plebiscite of February 2000, were worsened by the notoriously violent parliamentary elections of June 2000, and then by the (also violent) Presidential ‘The Economy is the Land: the Land is the Economy’ and local council elections of 2002. This election was free of the extreme political violence of these earlier elections, but it was not ‘free and fair’ of more sophisticated interventions. These included gerrymandering, an inaccurate voters’ roll, intimidation in that an ‘environment of repressive laws were extensively used’, and inaccurate counting (see Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), 2005:5-6, 16, 8 and all).

However, the ruling party ZANU-PF, through the ‘party-state’, did go to extensive lengths to meet the majority of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) *Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* (2004). Indeed, a number of initiatives were taken by the newly formed Zimbabwean Electoral Commission (ZEC) to meet best practice in the conducting of elections. The amount of polling stations was increased and three boxes instead of one, assigned to alphabetically organised surnames, were provided to ameliorate queuing. The elections were held in one day, using transparent ballot boxes and indelible ink to prevent multiple voting (which did, however, wash off quite easily), and the (original) counting occurred *in situ*, to avoid security issues around the protection of the integrity of ballot boxes overnight and in transit. School teachers were recruited and trained as observers and largely prevented violence or party propagandising around the polling stations. A surprising few weeks of ‘Glasnost’ emerged, consumed eagerly by the general population who relished the possibility of a ‘fair fight’ at the polls. Campaign posters from all the candidates papered walls with proficient regard for the equity of numbers of posters per candidate. Supporters of the competing parties drank together and large numbers of people attended MDC rallies.

Significantly, and with an estimated 500 regional and international observers present (ZESN, 2005:26), the election was largely free from violence. Some bodies were not accredited to observe, which included the SADC Parliamentary Forum, the Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA), the Commonwealth, the European Union, and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. However, despite these exclusions, competent agents did observe and monitor the electoral process and the degree of participation from relevant and accredited observer institutions was high. Local observers – which included the army of teachers combined with accredited and respected Zimbabwean institutions such as the Institute of Governance of Africa University and the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN, 2005:26) – agreed that major improvements in the Zimbabwean democratic process were in evidence. In a technical sense the elections were, up to the final tally, an accurate measurement of the votes cast.
There have been some excellent accounts of this election by, in particular, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (2005), and proficient commentaries, such as those by the Sokwanele/Zwakwana group on the final night and final count, and on the key numeric discrepancies which suggest the result was compromised (Sokwanele, 5 April 2005). Highlighted by Sokwanele, and discussed by the ZESN (2005:43-45), is the difference between the votes cast figures mysteriously announced (accurately) on television on 31 March by a ZEC official, and the aggregated totals for the candidates announced on 1 April 2005. For example, ZEC announced 19,763 people had voted in Chegutu, but the next day total votes cast for the candidates added up to 24,828. By contrast, in Beitbridge, ZEC announced that 36,821 people had voted, but the totals for the candidates only added up to 20,602 (The Standard, 6 April 2005, see also Independent, 8 April 2005), while Goromonzi, Manyame, Kariba, and Mutare South also had significant discrepancies (ZESN, 2005:45). Such discrepancies were possible, because in many constituencies polling results were phoned through to an opaque central officer to be collated, and not pronounced in situ as promised (Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), 6 April 2005). Official copies of tabulated results from polling stations and at constituency level, and details of postal votes have not been made available to the public by ZEC.

Yet the election was endorsed by the South African government observer Mission, led by the South African Labour Minister Mr Membathisi Mdladlana who declared it largely conformed to the SADC Guidelines, and ‘reflect(ed) the will of the people’ (Mdladlana, 2005). They had not reviewed the tallying mechanisms used above the level of the Constituency at the opaque Election Supervisory Commission (ESC), (although their rapid endorsement of the result continues to stymie international solidarity for Zimbabweans). Also, the SADC observer team, led by Mrs Pumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the South African Mineral and Energy Minister, reported that the election was ‘peaceful, credible and dignified’ (SADC Observer Mission, 2005), although one member, Democratic Alliance MP, Dianne Kohler-Barnard, walked out of the final meeting in disgust and dissent (Kohler-Barnard, 2 April 2005). The SADC Electoral Commissions Forum (SADC ECF) Mission (2005) and African Union Observer (AU) mission (2005a; 2005b) were similarly congenial, although all missions raised some critical issues, and the AU Observers asked for a ‘probe’ into the results (Daily News, 5 April 2005).

However, significant in constitutional terms is the fact that the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) is an independent body only in so far as it remains accountable to the higher institution of state, the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), on to which members of the military are seconded. The ZESN go further, and point out that the multiplicity of election management bodies in the country – the ZEC, ESC, Registrar-General of Voters and the Delimitation Commission – is contrary to the SADC Principles and Guidelines, adopted before these elections by the Zimbabwean government (ZESN, 2005:9). Thus policy areas still outside the ZEC include the question of who is allowed to vote (under the Registrar General), and those in the Diaspora were denied such a right; and the demarcating of constituency boundaries, carried out by the Delimitation Commission, which reduced urban constituencies.

Critically, the process of registering to vote held in February 2005 did not succeed in providing an accurate roll, and was carried out by the Registrar General. It was also carried out after the Delimitation exercise. The high numbers of people ‘turned away’ on the day, as many as 10 per cent in some constituencies (The Zimbabwe Independent, 1 April 2005), but rising to 25 per cent in some constituencies (ZESN,
2005:41) were depicted as people who had carelessly forgotten their ID by the state media, but were principally those whose names were missing from the electoral roll. The reasons why people were turned away have not been measured, but it has been reasonably suggested that some were not included because they had Ndebele surnames, or because they did not live in a ‘formal’ house which would appear on (much) earlier rolls.

In brief, the electoral process was improved logistically, and conformed to best practice guidelines for elections in circumstantial and contextual terms. However, ZANU-PF behaved strategically when it came to deciding well in advance who would be able to vote, and then on how the counted votes would be reported inaccurately.

**Zimbabwean Elections 2005: A Performance of Power**

Beyond the procedural label of ‘free and fair’, an evaluation of these elections raises a number of interesting points concerning the nature of power in the Zimbabwean state, which include reflecting on the continued popularity of the Government in some areas. First, the tenacity and expediency of ZANU-PF’s patriotic nationalism as a post-colonial ideology was reflected in the vigour with which its candidates, party workers and supporters campaigned. There is an uncomfortable truth here for opponents of the regime, in that the election campaign from ZANU-PF resonated successfully with peoples’ concerns in the areas of gender and development and the protection of national sovereignty. The MDC, by contrast and perhaps understandably, appeared less well versed in how they might run the country and the policies they would pursue. Second, it was clear that the MDC, excepting in rural areas where members of the Executive were personally known, failed to significantly penetrate the ZANU-PF heartlands, where they have a clear disadvantage in terms of communication. Indeed, rural remoteness continued to deny the poorest a practical choice, in that many were not aware that there was one, or believed the ideological warning that the MDC were a vanguard for the return of the colonialists. In other words many choose ZANU-PF from an individual assessment of their practical interests, however conditioned, a step too uncomfortable for many Western journalists to make.

One person’s propaganda is here another person’s ideological position, and to conflate the latter into the former is to display the arrogance of Eurocentrism. For example, there is a large number, probably a majority in the rural areas, who remain committed ZANU-PF supporters. Many of these supporters are women who were particularly pleased with the central role given to gender in this election, which included the use of ‘women only’ shortlists and the appointment of Comrade Joyce Mujuru as a Deputy President in the lead up to the poll. Although others contest that ‘women only’ shortlists were used disproportionately in constituencies where the sitting ZANU-PF MP was thought to be less than loyal, and some see Comrade Mujuru’s appointment as expedient in preventing a more weighty candidate for the Presidency from emerging, ZANU-PF loyalists saw a commitment to gender and development, enhanced by International Women’s Day rallies during the election campaign.

For those rural constituents of a slightly more ambivalent loyalty, a mixture of ideology and realism/sanction brought in the vote, in a variant of the Prisoner’s Dilemma. Whereas a ‘citizen’ is conceptually connected to the state by reciprocal obligation and fiscal accountability, thus theoretically having some power over
policy and development outcomes, the rural Zimbabwean is a subject (see Mamdani, 1996) in that development resources are within the largesse of the ruling party, or ‘party-state’. They were reminded of this in the electoral language of donation, as opposed to rights within a social contract that was used at rallies. The MP (of whatever constituency) was persistently depicted as having paid for resources from their own pockets, as having ‘given’ the voters of area $x$ goods $y$ in recognition, and expectation, of their continued loyalty. In seats where the incumbent was MDC, in a variant of this exchange, the people were assured of forgiveness and future reward if they voted correctly this time, and reminded of the dearth of resources they had received with MDC representation. For example, ‘Comrade Kasukuwere said voting for ZANU-PF would bring development to Mufakose since the elected MP would be from the ruling party’ (*The Herald*, 28 March 2005).

The other reason for a majority ZANU-PF rural vote, other than genuine support and political patronage, is, accordingly to one Gutu shop owner, ‘fear’, and rural Zimbabweans are ‘easily afraid’ (personal exchange, 27 March 2005). Contextually, this is in relation to 25 years of post-Independence failed development, where everyday life in rural areas such as Gutu, Masvingo, Chivi and Matabeleland South, have largely been hermetically sealed in colonial conditions, with no electricity, pumped water, media, brick houses, and with much reduced expectations and aspirations. The ‘Vote for Development’ campaign sits uncomfortably with the human indignity of rural areas that have hoped for development since Independence, but whose residents have grown old and tired of their own aspiration.

A closer examination of the campaign shows that threat and consequence – either reward or punishment – within the populist nationalist discourse were not hidden, such that symbolic violence was used even while actual violence was in abeyance, in the threat contained in the (mostly undoubted) return of a ZANU-PF government and how it would behave in the post-election period. For example, the main slogans of ‘Vote for a Women’, ‘Vote for Development’ and ‘Consolidating our Sovereignty’ were accompanied by a bombardment of newspaper spreads on (very conservative sounding) numbers of new schools, clinics, roads and University places provided since Independence by ZANU-PF, which represented the rewards of loyalty. These were accompanied by the ‘2005: Anti-Blair Campaign’ headline policies listed as:

- Getting back your land
- An end to racist factory closures
- An end to racist withholding of commodities
- An end to politically motivated price increases
- An end to sanctions
- No safe havens for corrupt bankers
- No disruption to fuel supplies
- No to political interference
- Empowerment through takeovers
- Faster economic turnaround
- More foreign currency inflows
- Keeping our Zimbabwe
- End to Blair’s MDC

And the final exhortation to ‘Bury Blair, Vote ZANU PF’. At least the first four of these are referent to the supposed racialist (white) undermining of the national liberation project and economy. In this trope, any economic malaise is, or has been, blamed on the white population, as a comprador representative of the British
imperialists proper. Similarly, the policies of rejection of ‘political interference’ and affirmation of ‘keeping our Zimbabwe’ resonate with the repeated message that the British are considering reinvading, coinciding with sporadic reports of troops allegedly found at the Mozambique border, or British spies training MDC youths in South Africa to form an advanced invasion party or to unleash violence (*The Sunday Mail*, 20 March 2005). The message is of perpetual war, the ‘unfinished business’ of Hammar and Raftopoulos’s title, of fear and threat from the outside world requiring repulsion by the brave liberationists and their trained armed service personnel and party militias.

Significantly, in terms of the mode of economic accumulation in Zimbabwe, and pertinent to the analysis above, the policy of ‘empowerment through takeovers’ appears as the first ‘positive’ policy after ‘getting back your land’ such that the mode of policy implementation can be assumed to be found in the same model of power. That is, some state-endorsed ‘legal’ instruments of transferring ownership combined with state encouragement for the activities of self-professed agents of restitution, such as the War Veterans. In this discourse, empowerment can refer to the kleptocratic government policy of intimidating business owners, both black and white, into deserting their businesses to be taken over by the Youth militia, ‘Green Bombers’, or War Veterans. These are the promised spoils of the election, with the ‘End to Blair’s MDC’ remaining ominously ambiguous but related to the T-shirt slogan of ‘consolidating our sovereignty’.

On the campaign trail, electors were also reminded that the Glasnost period was a chance for them to do as they were expected: to vote loyally for those who fought for the country and be rewarded with various markers of ‘development’ or face a future of violence and destitution if they did not do the right thing. Urban voters in Harare and Bulawayo, who had already endured retaliation for voting MDC last time in the slashing of Council budgets, and eventual usurpation of their democratically elected Councils in favour of ZANU-PF appointed Commissions (see Kamete, 2005; and Davies, 2005, on Harare), were still prepared to run the gauntlet of fear. The ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ is their reward, since they are now the metaphorical ‘trash’. The rural voters were indeed more easily scared, but also more easily moved by the rhetoric of national patriotism and the promise of development, which many of them still adhere to ideologically.

**Post-election Consequences: Restoring Economic Control**

Since 1997, Zimbabwean politics have been marked by a President, and government, struggling to maintain authority and legitimacy. After three difficult and allegedly stolen elections, the ruling elite has decided that forced dispossession, social engineering and de-development is the answer to the problem of maintaining power. The economy had been in decline since the War Veterans payout of 1997, which had sparked a 50 per cent loss in value of the Zimbabwean dollar (Sachikonye, 2002:14), while the withdrawal in 1998 of the Bretton Woods institutions exacerbated government debt. Even by 1999, over 75 per cent of Zimbabweans, up from 40 per cent in 1990, were living under the poverty line (Sachikonye, 2002:15). By 2005, less than 20 per cent of adults were employed in the formal sector (Sokwanele, 18 June 2005), while hyperinflation in the post-election period, as a consequence of the artificial production of money before the election, has lead to further acute shortages of basic commodities. The government is acting both in retaliation for its urban defeat, and pre-emptively to avoid opposition arising from
the near impossibility of everyday life. However, while the election results no doubt provide the trigger for this behaviour, there is also a more long-running structural cause, embedded in the political economy of crisis.5

While ESAP (1991-95) began the process of liberalisation of the economy, and while the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) was designed to follow it from 1996-2000, the Bretton Woods institutions withdrew funding in 1998. The subsequent anarchy of unplanned liberalisation has included hyperinflation and the emergence of a dual economy, exacerbated by illegal seizures of property. During the crisis period of the last 8 years, many bankrupt businesses have been bought for a fraction of their real or potential value, such that the state-class has benefited from economic crisis and insulated itself from inflation by investing in a largely bullish stock exchange (of the relisted companies). The mining sector is becoming indigenised as multinational corporations withdraw (ZimOnline, 15 June 2005), while the illegal seizure of farms continues (Sokwanele, 17 June 2005). Indeed, processes of liberalisation, ironically politically problematic in their planned IFI format, are prolific and successful in their current form. Workers and peasant livelihoods have been devalued to the point of destitution as assets, goods and labour markets are squeezed by crisis conditions and illegality. The ruling elite has benefited from the profitability of asset stripping, rent taking, worker impoverishment, and government patronage.

However, the internationalisation of these businesses has been problematic, largely as a consequence of the draining of the banking system of foreign exchange, itself largely caused by the forced removal and destruction of white – and increasingly non-ZANU-PF, but black owned – agribusinesses and large farms. With tobacco, floriculture, winter season agricultural exports, ceramics, furniture, cloth, cement and ranching businesses disrupted, earned foreign exchange is extremely rare. The principle form of export income has ironically become the remittance earnings of migrant workers, themselves mainly forced out by the economic recession or political violence, such that the new party-state class have grown to view these remittances as the potential financial saviour of the ‘Third Chimurenga’, prompting an ambiguous attitude to international migrants.

However, with a large spread between the official and parallel exchange rates – or arguably, between the ‘forced’ and ‘real’ economy-international migrants have largely chosen to move their money informally, unofficially, and exchange it illegally in the recent period. The 2004 ‘HomeLink’ scheme for Diaspora income seeks to prevent this by enlisting money transfer companies, including Western Union and MoneyGram, into the ambit of the government scheme, and making this the only legal way to send money (other than bank transfers which attract a heavy commission) (The Financial Gazette, 27 March 2005). In other words, the ‘real’, liberalised economy had escaped the state class, with millions of Zimbabwe’s urban, peri-urban and trading rural poor using some asset income from a distant migrant to produce a putative, competitive but informal trading economy. Indeed, popular merchant capitalism was the only vibrant sector, giving confidence to the ideas of a new political movement for democratic change, the MDC. The post-election strategy of ZANU-PF seeks to capture control, and thus reverse these gains of the people.

It is here that we find the structural political economy context for the arbitrary, violent and dissembling actions of the newly installed government: the peoples’ development had escaped their control and this is uncomfortable to their deeply
authoritarian models of social order. In the post-colonial, post-independence ideology of ‘patriotic nationalism’, wealth is the rightful property of those that fought for it – those in power and their cronies – not the inheritance of the informal sector. Autonomous capitalism is a threat to this form of authoritarian power, and thus the people involved must be cleaned up like so much rubbish in the ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ campaign.

Conclusion

The riot police who entered Killarney on 9 June 2005 were acting without any warrant or court order and in defiance of a statutory provision (The Urban Councils Act, section 199) that affords to the local authority alone the right to remove illegal structures, and even then only after due process of law and notice to those affected. However, such ‘facts’, including the facts that many of these homes were legally built, and the businesses legally licenced, and the listing of any number of UN instruments of censure in response to their destruction, fall outside the worldview of illiberal autocratic militarism. Zimbabwe state action is instead justified by its exponents through extensive propaganda and enacted by a police and army machine trained in unaccountable, but ‘patriotic’ violence. Sadly, many Zimbabweans also believe the government explanation that the action is required to reduce crime in urban centres, and some report an improvement in that regard.

Thus, the ZANU-PF government, and a large minority of Zimbabwean people are antithetical and deaf to the exhortations of liberalism as found in the numerous human rights instruments that are currently being infringed. Well tutored, they believe such criticism to be imperialist propaganda. Indeed the international groups wanting to express solidarity with the marginalised have a discourse problem. These agencies repeatedly cite detractions from human rights instruments which codify liberal and social democratic values, while the Zimbabwean regime pursues its forced social engineering using justifications from another paradigm, a residual national liberationist and anti-imperialist paradigm which obscures lawless authoritarianism and remolds it as patriotic nationalism (on this latter see Ranger, 2003). Also, the Zimbabwean regime retains a supportive core in the armed services and rural population, which makes it difficult to express solidarity with its victims, despite the valiant attempts of the internal opposition to expand political space and democracy.

However, as we can see from the process of managing the election (or conducting a performance of an election), the Zimbabwean regime is still embedded in its post-colonial justifications and flirtations with the semblance, if not substance of democracy. The ruling party went to great efforts to win the election on 31 March, toting computers into schools, printing free T-shirts and money, promising tarred roads, food and ‘development’, and exhorting that ‘We are a sovereign nation! We will never be a colony again!’ However, the people also knew of the consequences of voting for the sell-outs and compradors of imperialism – the MDC – in the negation of all the above and violence and hunger besides. The practice of solidarity has to recognise this continued ambiguity in the ruling party; its claimed adherence to democracy and the ideological defensiveness of its people, the majority of whom believe they live in a democracy which is threatened by imperialists. This bears on imminent international intervention when on the day of the clearance of Hatcliffe Extension the government issued a formal invitation for the UN World Food Programme to return.
The international humanitarian community is now in one of those increasingly common moral quandaries where it might act to concretise and normalise a process of human rights abuse – feeding the non-citizens, the stateless, and the ‘not wanted’ in the camps to which they have been assigned – rather than being able to influence redress of the initial act of betrayal. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court has codified the deliberately widespread or systematic transfer of a civilian population as a crime against humanity. This current forcible transfer of large parts of the Zimbabwean urban population, with estimates of numbers affected ranging from 100,000 to 2 million, to rural areas and camps, relegates them to a state of dispossession, and likely destitution or starvation, and is thus just such a crime. The international humanitarian community needs to help the victims, but choruses of liberal affront are insufficient to prevent this (or any) rotten elite from building on the success of such practices, when those behaviours are simultaneously a strategy to retain power and wealth.

The Zimbabwean government maintains a network of security and uniformed personnel in an authoritarian state machinery for the purposes of ruling through fear and strategic violence. To counter this, internal opposition within ZANU-PF has periodically been visible, with some party members seeking to re-establish party democracy. Other ZANU-PF supporters have resisted the razing of their homes. In the upper echelons there has also been dissent, which led, for example, to the sacking of six Provincial Governors and Cabinet heavyweights, such as Jonathan Moyo and Emmerson Manangagwa, in the lead up to the election. However, internal change in authoritarian regimes can be hopelessly slow, such that other African governments need to do more to build African institutions able to respond to authoritarian governance with a solidaristic policy able to restore social justice to abused peoples. The protection of sovereignty against imperialism is laudable but inadequate as an African foreign policy position when it allows authoritarian state violence to go unchecked.

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Endnotes

1. Polanyi warned us, ‘fascism, like socialism, was rooted in a market society that refused to function’ (cited in Stiglitz, 2001:xv.). According to Stiglitz, he saw, ‘fascism and communism … [as] not only alternative economic systems; … [but] represent(ing) important departures from liberal political traditions’ (Ibid.). I am not arguing that Zimbabwe is a fascist state in a strict definitional sense, but that its practices have similarities to this historical form.

2. There remains a job of research to establish how ownership and wealth has changed in Zimbabwe since 1994. On similar processes in South Africa there is the excellent Iheduru (2004).

3. This expresses itself in a short term liquidity problem, met by courting Chinese investment in the five-year long ‘Look East’ policy; where Operation Restore Order was initially justified as responding to Chinese traders’ demands for protection of their legal ventures against unfair competition (ZimOnline, 21 May 2005). The Government of Zimbabwe has also recently bought six fighter jets from China (The Guardian, 14 April 2005); and resettled Chinese farmers on former white owned lands and unproductive black-owned farms in a ‘land-for-investment’ scheme (ZimOnline, 18 May 2005), including on Eirene Farm, previously seized by Perence Shiri from its owners Hamish Charters (Sokwanele, 17 June 2005).

5. It is this use of an authoritarian and antiliberal state dominated by a single party, using uniformed antidemocratic armies and party militia in the pursuit of nationalism as a defence against a supposed external enemy that confers core elements of fascism to the current situation (see McLean, 1996:177-8 for a definition of fascism) While fascism is deeply embedded in European history and state formation, the term has a generic meaning in the retreat from free market capitalism, democracy and liberalism, and Sokwanele use it in this context (14 June 2005). Members of ZANU-PF would do well to remember the principles of social democracy, before the fruits of liberation are lost on the well-trodden historical path of authoritarian in the name of (someone else’s) ‘revolution’, or ‘liberation’.

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Violence & Social Order Beyond the State: Somalia & Angola

Jutta Bakonyi & Kirsti Stuvøy

This paper examines the activities of non-state actors in war in Somalia and Angola. Arguing that prolonged wars are characterised by the emergence of social orders of violence beyond the state, our analytical focus is on how actors establish and sustain these orders. A core influence is the insight from research on war economies that war is not equal to the breakdown of societal order, but represents an alternative form of social order. We therefore examine the economic activities of insurgents in regard to their embeddedness in social and political spheres. The central question in this paper is how economic, political and symbolic aspects interact and determine as well as transform social orders of violence. With the examples of Somalia and Angola, two rather distinct cases of non-state orders of violence are examined. It is argued that these orders represent forms of authority with fundamental structural aspects in common. We suggest that these orders can be systematised on a continuum between two poles of institutionalisation of authority beyond the state: a warlord system and a quasi-state system of violence.

The recruitment strategies, financial activities, and the conduct of violence by non-state actors during armed conflict are among the core topics of contemporary conflict research. Drawing upon the empirical examples of Somalia and Angola, we focus on the activities of these actors in order to comprehend the dynamics of violence. A core influence is the insight from research on war economies that war is not equal to the breakdown of societal order. In fact, the economic approach to conflict argues that wars must be examined as an alternative form of social order. Our analytical focus is therefore on how actors establish and sustain social orders of violence beyond the state. While research on war economies explains violent actions as rational economic or rational-political strategies, we argue that economic activities are a form of social interaction. In order to understand the continuation of conflict and the changing actors of violence, the objective of research must be to examine the socio-political context, in which economic activities are embedded.

The various local, national and international influences on insurgent groups indicate that orders of violence vary considerably in regard to structure and organisational basis. Our focal point of analysis is the historical emergence of insurgents and their establishment and organisation of different forms of such orders. The long-lasting and devastating wars in Somalia (1988 - ) and Angola (1961-2002) have led to the formation of two rather distinct social orders. While Somalia is characterised by a proliferation of violent groups, mainly centred around
a single person, here referred to as warlord, the insurgent movement UNITA in Angola managed to establish a rather centralised form of power resembling a state organisation. Although these orders have distinguishable characteristics, they have fundamental structural aspects in common. It is therefore suggested that social orders of violence can be systematised on a continuum between two poles of institutionalisation of authority beyond the state. On this continuum, these two poles are recognised: a warlord system and a quasi-state system of violence. These systems represent two ideal typical orders of violence and are only to be understood as heuristic categories guiding empirical studies.

This article proceeds in three parts. Beginning with a critical assessment of the economic approach to violent conflicts in the following section, we use the case studies of Somalia and Angola to explore how insurgents’ economic activities are embedded in political and symbolic practices in section three, ‘The Social Order of Violence’. Drawing upon the results of this comparative analysis, an analytical approach to the further examination of social orders of violence in a comparative perspective is introduced in the concluding section.

War as a Rational Economic Activity & a Rational Strategy of Authority

The emphasis on the economic functions of war (Keen 1998) in the late 1990s contributed to an upsurge in academic debates on how belligerents act during war. As the expected peace dividend subsequent to the fall of the Berlin Wall had failed to materialise, the understanding of prolonged violent conflicts became a central motive of research. An actor-centred approach was developed in order to understand the interests guiding practices of violent actors. In their comprehensive and systematic study of war economies, Jean and Rufin (1999) argued that economic activities during war significantly influence the organisational structure of armed groups and their strategies. Parallel to this concern with how economic activities influence conflict dynamism, others have focused on economic considerations as main causes of conflict, particularly in the ‘greed vs. grievance’ debate. With notions such as ‘resource wars’ (Klare, 2001) and the ‘curse of resources’ (Auty, 2001; Homer-Dixon, 1991, 1999), it is suggested that both abundance and scarcity of resources make the outbreak of conflict inevitable.

The analyses of the interests and strategies of warring parties during conflict have led to the emergence of two alternative explanatory models of war. First, a perspective according to which war is a rational economic activity, and second, war as a rational strategy of authority. The first explanatory model emphasises that winning as an objective of war is substituted by an interest in economic profits, and that armed groups utilise violence as means to achieving economic profits. War is thus described as a form of entrepreneurship. Violent appropriation of resources, the control of production and trade, ‘taxation’, as well as the supply of security services all represent various sources of finance for actors of violence. These activities do not only provide the funding for armed groups, but also contribute to individual enrichment. Thus, an interest in the continuation of conflict emerges. It is pivotal therefore to address the interests of the actors as well as the utility of use of violence during war. How actors conduct violence strategically is assessed by observing the direction of violence, whether it is top-down or bottom-up, and how these forms of violence are linked to different groups of actors (Keen, 1998:12). Top-down violence is conducted by state elites in situations in which they fear the loss of
their powerful positions within political and economic spheres. This elite behaviour results in the mobilisation of marginalised groups, who aim to secure their survival through robberies, thereby making bottom-up violence a rational strategy of survival. Hence, according to the explanatory framework of war as rational economic activity, the interconnectedness of top-down and bottom-up violence determines conflict dynamism and contributes to the continuation of conflict. When violence becomes a prerequisite for economic reproduction, the parties to a conflict lose interest in bringing the conflict to an end. Violent conflict is thus institutionalised as a form of economic interaction. Elwert takes this even further, and argues that the economic principle of profit-maximisation as a primary motive of the parties to conflict is institutionalised in a ‘market of violence’ (Elwert, 1997). A pre-condition for the emergence of such markets is the erosion of the state monopoly of violence. In consequence, ‘open spaces of violence’ are created in which there are no rules that limit the use of violence (Ibid. p.88). On the market of violence, ‘economic imperatives’ (Ibid. p.90) define the use of violence as a strategic means to the appropriation of resources and the generation of profits.

The depiction of a strategic connection between violence and economic market behaviour as the central cause of dynamism and persistence of contemporary conflicts represents an implicit introduction of a utilitarian action-model and a rational choice perspective. Assumptions about actors’ conscious motives and their prime interest in achieving maximum gains with minimal costs are introduced for the purpose of making sense of the ‘coming anarchy’. When these utilitarian assumptions are transferred to conflict research, the emergence of a violent social order in war is reduced to an emphasis on individual economic gains (cf. Cramer, 2002; Schlee, 2000). The transfer of the modern market model to societies at war (Elwert, 1997, 1999) ignores that a minimum of political regulation, or a minimum state, is a prerequisite for the establishment of the market as the central economic institution of modern societies. Elwert’s market of violence emerges under complete opposite conditions where rules are lacking within ‘open spaces of violence’. This makes the application of a utilitarian model of action highly problematic. As Tyrell has pointed out, it is implausible that actors are able to plan and act rationally under conditions in which there are no rules and ubiquitous use of violence exists (Tyrell, 1999:277). Even the establishment of pre-capitalist market places was based upon the existence of ‘unwritten, pre-legal customs’, that established a form of organised competition (Martinelli and Smelser, 1990). In addition to examining the functions of violence for economic purposes, the role of social institutions, norms, and rules for the behaviour of actors and for their economic activities in war must be addressed.

The competition for access to economic resources and profit during war is also significantly shaped by the threat of and use of violence. Since violence is a fundamental factor for the conduct of economic activities in wars, the establishment of an organisation of violence, such as an armed group, a short-term alliance, or a protection racket, is a pre-requisite for the achievement of profit. The conduct of economic activities is not isolated from patterns of authority, and thus, the market can neither be the sole nor the central institution of war economies.

The functionalist view that links violence to an economic rationality of individual enrichment stands out against a perspective on war economy in terms of altered forms of authority. The conceptualisation of war as a rational strategy of authority links conflicts to globalisation. The transformation processes induced by economic globalisation contribute to a complex reorganisation of forms and mechanisms of authority on the local, national and international level, and consequently, it is
argued, the forms of conflict are altered (Duffield, 2001:2-15) The territories of sovereign states are today overlapped by decentralised networks through which state and non-state, local and international actors of violence interact. Contemporary wars, termed ‘post-modern conflict’ (Duffield, 1998) and ‘network-war’ (Duffield, 2001), are characterised by violent competition between such networks for control of locally available resources and access to the global market. The dynamism of the violent competition is shaped by the specific local organisation of the networks because it is on the local level that the actors must establish the political and social conditions for the organisation of their economic activities and the continuation of conflict. In adherence to the motto ‘think globally but act locally’ (Duffield, 1998) the actors of violence mobilise particularistic loyalties such as ethnic, social and cultural affinities of the local population for the purpose of establishing support. Local norms, conventions and codices of behaviour thus significantly define the functional logic of the networks. During conflict these informal institutions are continuously transformed (Duffield, 2001:190ff), and comprehending the logic of this transformation is a main task of research. While Duffield notes that this is not possible by using the category of rational economic behaviour (Ibid. p.138f), Reno has taken further steps in order to identify the causal factors of such processes of transformation of authority. The erosion of formal statehood in many contemporary conflicts does not imply the termination of authority, argues Reno. In contrast, during a violent conflict new forms of authority are established, referred to as shadow states. The organisational basis of a shadow state is personalised structures of authority. The establishment of such structures is made possible through the control of locally available resources, the monopolisation of local markets, and the access to international markets (Reno, 1995:1-27; Reno, 1998).

Violence is used for the purpose of controlling resources and people necessary for the extraction of resources and for forestalling competition from political enemies (Reno, 1998:8). The main functional principle of the shadow state is patronage. Patronage networks are used to (re-)distribute economic resources, thereby securing the loyalty of those who enjoy the distributed resources. Due to this commercialised relationship between patrons and clients, the rational economic interests of the actors involved, both the elites and their followers, determine the form of authority in the shadow state (Ibid. pp. 220, 224). By focusing merely on the distribution of economic resources, Reno reproduces the economic reductionism of current conflict research that he also criticises (Reno, 2002:103). When the relationship between the authority and the governed is based upon materialistic and rational motives, i.e. instrumental rationality, this creates a rather unstable relationship. A stable form of authority demands the simultaneous mobilisation of various forms of legitimacy as well as a belief in legitimacy (Weber, 1980:122). The endemic use of violence characteristic of shadow states indicates that this form of authority is based upon a rather limited legitimacy. In order to establish fully the means of legitimisation, the relationship between the elites and their mediators, between the elites and the local population, must be the object of study. Reno, however, does not explore the determinants of societal transformation during war beyond the influence of patronage. In regard to the claimed dominance of rational economic strategies in patronage systems, Reno’s reference to patrimonial authority is particularly odd. Patrimonialism expresses in essence the necessity to examine how political, economic and symbolic aspects interact.

In sum, therefore, the economic approach to conflict does not comply with the objective of studying war as a complex ‘system of profit and power’ (Keen 1996:14),
but remains focused on mainly economic aspects. The principle of rational economic behaviour is uncritically transferred to the explanatory frameworks of war as economic activity and as a system of authority. This concentration on instrumental rationality also explains the exclusion of actors on the ground in the economic approach. Instead of being passive, these actors also develop strategies for the purpose of securing their survival.\(^6\) One example of such survival-strategies is the influence of (forced) migration on violent conflicts. Diaspora-communities uphold links to their home-countries and may impact the options and actions of local actors (Zack-Williams and Mohan, 2002), and thus, potentially affect conflict dynamism (Angoustures and Pascal, 1999). In the two explanatory models of the economic approach, the partaking of non-elites and non-profiteers in war is explained solely as a result of instrumentalisation. While modern war profiteers are described primarily as rational actors, their followers – the combatants – are not. The actions of combatants are described as responses to appeals by elites to their cultural and ethnic affiliations (Keen, 1998:40; Elwert, 1997:94; Duffield, 2000:84). Even if there is certain empirical evidence of ethnic mobilisation in conflict, the argument according to which combatants are instrumentalised by elites a priori excludes the ability of combatants to act on the basis of independent considerations, i.e. as subjects on behalf of themselves (Tyrell, 1980:62; 1999:278). In regard to the social organisation of armed groups, the economic approach does not account for the affective and irrational motivations of action that together with rational behaviour, although not necessarily economic rationality, define the basis for action.

The conceptualisations of war as a rational economic strategy and as a rational strategy of authority within the economic approach do therefore not improve our understanding of the forms of social transformation during conflict. In the following section we explore the functioning of social systems of violence in Somalia and Angola. This is the basis upon which we present an alternative analytical approach to the study of social transformation during conflict in section four.

**The Social Order of Violence**

The social orders of violence beyond the state emerge in context of a weak consolidation of the state in the Third World, and may both precede and result from crises in statehood. Although the state is here analytically distinguished from an insurgent social order, the state competes with the insurgents for legitimacy and access to economic resources and hence, interacts with insurgents. Overall, the capacity of the state to perform core state practices influences conflict dynamism (Ballentine, 2003:8f). The hybrid forms of political authority in many Third World states, in which modern and traditional forms of domination are interconnected (Eisenstadt, 1973; Médard, 1996:76-97; Schlichte, 1996; Schlichte & Wilke, 2000) is a source of social contradictions (cf. de Sardan, 1999) that are often articulated in the violent competition for the control of state. Insurgent movements may, however, develop a certain indifference towards the state during conflict. Regular use of violence initiates a radical social dynamic (Trotha, 1997:25) on all social levels. Hence, the use of violence can be analysed as a social process, in which violent actions shape new structures and new forms of behaviour, thereby redefining the forms of societal organisation. Long-lasting wars often lead to the institutionalisation of a new 'system of profit and power' (Keen, 1998:14), here referred to as social order of violence. According to Norbert Elias (1983), each social order comprises three elementary functions: the control of physical force (political authority), the guarantee of material means (an economic structure), and the production and
preservation of symbolic means of orientation, with the latter shaping patterns of behaviour and defining specific group identities. The need to guarantee the material means of the actors of violence underlines the importance of establishing war economies. The control of physical force points to how the use of violence is dependent upon rules: within insurgent groups and militias the use of violence is limited and regulated according to institutionalised patterns of authority. The use of violence against non-members is usually not entirely arbitrary, but based upon an understanding of a common enemy as well as certain rules and procedures. These rules are institutionalised through a process of legitimisation. The interaction between the actors of violence in an insurgent group as well as between insurgents and non-group members reflects upon a ‘combination of myth, memories, values, and symbols that defines [...] who is a member of the group [...] and what it means to be a member’ (Kaufman, 2001:25). The emergence of we-groups and the usage of rhetoric to prepare for the violent exclusion and exploitation of people from other groups, are of particular interest in regard to the impact of symbols on orders of violence: For

internal war to become possible, it is also necessary that groups stereotype, dehumanise, and scapegoat the Other [...] what Bowman calls the ‘discursive project of transforming neighbours into enemies’ (Jackson 2002:17).

This often includes an intergenerational process of cultivating negative emotions and hate (cf. Schlee, 2003:339). The central question is how these elementary functions, i.e. economic, political and symbolic aspects, interact and determine as well as transform social orders of violence. We aim to conceptualise the social order of violence as an interdependent web of social interaction across political, economic and symbolic spheres. Our suggestion is that this enables a focus on common structural aspects of orders of violence on the basis of which such orders can be systematised along a continuum from quasi-state to warlordism. Adapting the original usage of the term quasi-state (Jackson, 1990), the quasi-state system of violence describes an insurgent movement that does not enjoy formal recognition, i.e. lacking ‘juridical statehood’, but the institutionalisation of insurgent authority in society implies that it possesses ‘empirical statehood’. Thus, the term quasi-state describes a social order of violence that co-exists with the state and exercises the monopoly of use of force within a specific geographical territory. On the other hand, the usage of the term warlord characterises a rather weak institutionalised form of authority without effective control of either a specified territory or backed up by a cohesive organisation (cf. Riekenberg, 1999).

Somalia: A Warlord System

In the pre-colonial Somali society the clan was a cornerstone of social organisation. Political decisions as well as access to land and water were regulated within the clan system. During the period of colonial and post-colonial state building this traditional form of social organisation underwent substantive changes. The Somali state under former military dictator Siad Barre represented a typical neo-patrimonial system, in which the traditional Somali clan-structure was integrated into the modern state apparatus. At the beginning of his reign, Barre was eager to incorporate members of all major Clan-families in the state administration. However, the decrease in accessible resources in the late 1970s led to the successive exclusion of certain clans from the state and hence, from economic benefits. The dwindling base of state legitimacy was compensated with a rapid increase in repression. Having lost the ability to integrate even larger parts of the population
into his patrimonial system, Barre could safeguard his power only with the direct use of violence. The decline of the state was accompanied by a massive informalisation of the economy. The institutional core of this informal economy was constituted around a complex system that organised the money-transfer from Somali labour-migrants in the neighbouring Arabic countries. In this so-called franco-valuta system, local middlemen exchanged the hard currency of the migrants into Somali Shilling and submitted them to the local family members of the migrants. The middlemen then used the foreign currency to pay for the import of foreign goods into Somalia. Even the main source of foreign currency, the export of livestock, was successively integrated into these informal trade- and finance-networks. As a result, the formal economic and currency system came almost completely to a halt in the mid-1980s (Jamal & Weeks, 1993:89f.).

The informal trade networks were organised according to clan-affiliation. The social control as well as trust within the kinship groups substituted the lack of juridical guarantees from the state. It was the more marginalised clan groups in the north, particularly in the Isaaq, who were among the first labour migrants. They acquired a considerable share in the franco-valuta system (Gundel, 2002:263) and thereby developed a certain independence from the state.

In the longer run, political and economic discrimination as well as increased repression against certain clan groups were directly linked to the formation of insurgent groups that mainly mobilised recruits on the basis of clan-affiliation. In this context, another social dimension also gained importance: while the nomadic clans had a tradition of violent self-help, the less bellicose structures of the sedentary or (half)sedentary farmers and agro-pastoralists in the south made it more difficult for them to form and arm their own militias, further undermined by their marginalisation in the Somali army. In addition to discrimination by the Barre-regime and experience with organisation of violent self-help systems, the access to informal economic structures was a further prerequisite for the formation of violent groups. The first insurgent groups were established in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the predominantly nomadic northern regions of Somalia. The Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) recruited its militias mainly from the north-eastern clan Darood/Majerteen, and the Somali National Movement (SNM) was dominated by the clan Isaaq. Both insurgent groups were formed by former military or state officials, who had sought political asylum in Ethiopia, from where they also led the fight. While the SSDF soon had to halt their activities, at least temporarily, the SNM intensified their activities and was at war with the Somali state from 1988.

The successive disintegration of the state reached its peak at the end of the 1980s, as the state monopoly of violence was not sustained. Barre privileged his own Darood/Marehan clan and continued to discriminate members of other clans. Army members refused to fight against members of their own clan, and deserted from the security apparatus, often to join the insurgent groups. For example, many Hawiye left the armed forces only to join the military wing of the USC, led by General Farah Aideed. In 1989, the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) was formed mainly by ex-soldiers of the Darood/Ogaden clan. Led by Colonel Omar Jess, they fought in southern Somalia. The insurgent groups mobilised members of their own clans and supplied them with weapons. Using classical hit and run guerilla tactics they formed small and relative autonomous fighting units on the basis of sub- or even sub-sub-clans. At the same time the disintegration of the army was accelerated as Barre delivered weapons to the male members of his own Darood/Marehan sub-clan and to other loyal clan-factions. By the end of the 1980s the Somali military
had disintegrated into a relatively disconnected ‘federation’ of clan-militias. In regard to organisation and procedure, the army was hardly distinguishable from the insurgent groups. The clan became the cornerstone not only for the recruitment of fighters but also for the economic organisation and financing of the various armed groups. The migration of clan-members first to the neighbouring and later to the industrial states of Europe and North America became increasingly important. The ‘near Diaspora’ (Koser and Van Hear, 2003:3) in the refugee camps in Ethiopia was used both as a recruitment-base and as a material support centre especially for the SNM. The ‘wider Diaspora’ (Ibid.) attracted the attention of the western public and also delivered considerable financial resources to the insurgent groups. The already existing transfer payment system of the franco-valuta was globalised through the establishment of worldwide informal remittance companies and, with the employment of modern IT-technologies, the efficiency of the system was improved.17

Within Somalia, armed clashes were accompanied by a war economy in its most simple form: robbery and looting. It would however be misleading to attribute these violent actions only to the greediness of the combatants. They were highly influenced by clan affiliation, which defined the core identity of combatants and also represented an emotional drive for their activities. The decentralised and barely institutionalised militias developed their own dynamic of violence. Of the 15,000 combatants involved in the clashes in Mogadishu in 1991, less than 1,500 were organised in classic military formations (Pérousse de Montclos, 2003:42). While the leaders of the insurgent groups expected rural fighters to return to their homes after Siad Barre was defeated (Compagnon, 1998:79), the young male fighters had enjoyed a previously unknown freedom as members of the insurgent groups. Their access to weapons had given these youngsters a certain power position that they were not willing to give up voluntarily. The innumerable roadblocks in southern Somalia, guarded by young and often Qat-chewing militias, so-called Moorjans (looters), are a visible sign that banditry and looting still form an important part of the lifestyle for many young men. In Mogadishu the Moorjans are nowadays among the main security problems (Marchal, 1997).

Due to the fact that the insurgent groups were organised as a federation of local recruits and relative autonomous sub-clan groups and thereby lacking the clear structure of authority of more formalised military formations, conflicts between the leaders of the sub-clans and the central leadership were pre-assigned. Shortly after the USC entered Mogadishu, latent disagreements between two of the leaders of the USC, General Aideed on the one side and Ali Mahdi, a local businessman, on the other, escalated and led to the first disintegration of the USC. Their competition for state power soon led to new fighting. Since both Ali Mahdi and General Aideed were members of the Hawiye Clan, the conflict between them was articulated in an established manner - as a conflict between the two sub-clans of Mahdi and Aideed respectively.18 Both warlords tried to strengthen their power position by mobilising alliances with other clan groups. The establishment of such alliances corresponds to the traditional strategy of communal conflicts in Somalia, where weak clan groups attempt to form alliances even without close kin relations, in order to fight against a common enemy. The warlord is, however, not a traditional position in the social setting of Somalia. Warlords have not emerged from positions as traditional authorities, but mainly from former urban ‘petty bourgeoisie’, i.e. military, political or economic elites who came to power during the reconstitution of the state in the post-colonial era. Their claim to represent clan-interests is nowadays continuously challenged by the emerging political and economic actors who are gaining power in the course of this long lasting war. While the infighting within the USC continued in
Mogadishu, former president Barre fled to his home region Gedo, and attempted to mobilise his clansmen in the Somali National Front (SNF). In the southern Somali triangle between Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa intensive clashes between factions either connected to Siad Barre, General Aideed or Ali Mahdi, escalated. These fights took place in the agriculturally important regions, and the clashes then acquired a new economic quality. The different Hawiye and Darood militias soon occupied the fertile lands of the unarmed and military less experienced sedentary clans (cf. Besteman and Cassanelli, 1996). These fights were accompanied by mass-executions, rape and the deployment of slave labour. In context of the historical claim of superiority by the nomadic clans over the sedentary clans (cf. Casanelli, 1988), in the case of the so-called Bantu even articulated as racial inferiority, the language of clan interests won a new dimension. It was now used as an ideological justification of the brutal actions directed against the sedentary people and at the same time as an idealisation of the occupiers as freedom fighters.

While the violent competition for land continued in the south, the robbery and looting in the cities increased. Between 1991 and 1993 a decisive amount of machines, copper etc. was exported (UNDP, 2001:144). It can be assumed that some of the looters accumulated considerable profit from these economic activities. In contrast to the looting youth gangs, these economic entrepreneurs must have had considerable knowledge of the international trade networks. In order to establish an export system, these actors must have organised their crimes well, and thus, they were hardly newcomers in the economic establishment (Ibid.). In addition to profits from looting, many of the former traders had adapted the informal trading networks to the war situation. Shortly after the collapse of the state in 1991 it was the trade with the narcotic Qat that offered a particularly lucrative source of income (Green, 1999:44).

In order to protect themselves against violent robberies, these businessmen had to cooperate with actors of violence. The Qat trade was thereby not only an important income for the business class, but also for the associated warlords and their militias (Ibid.). The businessmen paid the warlords for the protection of their goods, and the clan militias secured the safe passage of the transport-vehicles through the numerous checkpoints and roadblocks. Currently, about ten planes enter Somalia from Nairobi daily, carrying about 7.000 tonnes of Qat worth around US$50 million a year. Due to the profitability of this trade, the control of ports and airports is another important source of income. The Somali traders as well as international organisations, which form an important part of the Somali war economy (cf. Mubarak, 1997; Gundel, 2003), have to pay rent for the usage of ports and airports. Additionally, the traders are forced to pay taxes for the imported goods. Since no single militia has managed to establish control of the international airports in Somalia, each major city now has its own landing strips. Along the Somali coastline a considerable number of ‘natural’ ports are in use. While the new Somali business class uses this infrastructure for their import and export trade, the taxes and fees linked to this trade is a financial basis of many warlords and their militias.

As a source of finance, the remittance industry today hardly supports the various violent factions. Originating mainly from ‘wider diaspora’, remittances are delivered to family-members, thereby maintaining the traditional system of reciprocal obligation. The remittances are, however, important for the reconstruction of an internal market in Somalia, as most of the production inside Somalia functions in only a rudimentary fashion. The rising demand for imports connects Somalia to the world market and to international trading networks. The import of food, clothes,
electronic goods, Qat and cigarettes is contrasted by a much lower export of livestock, a few other agricultural products, and charcoal. The imports are however not only directed at the consumers in Somalia, but are re-exported to the neighbouring countries of Ethiopia and Kenya. The profits from this trade are concentrated in the hands of only a few traders and warlords, while the bulk of the Somali population is still experiencing extreme poverty and high levels of social and physical insecurity (Le Sage and Majid, 2002).

The cooperation between warlords and the business class is essential to conflict dynamism and the reproduction of the Somali warlord system. In the absence of state regulations, the traders and the warlords have opted for a more or less voluntary and for both sides profitable agreement. This system is based on the appropriation of fast and short-term profits from trade and is not directed at the development of sustainable production capacities. Since there are no juridical regulations and guarantees, the necessary trust between entrepreneurs and warlords is established on the basis of the common affiliation to a certain clan- or sub-clan. However, the foundation of this trust is brittle. Various newly arrived businessmen have mobilised their own militias, in competition with their former partners, and have thereby contributed to the further disintegration of insurgent groups. The expansion of the national and international trading structures further destabilises the fragile alliances between the business class and the warlords. The unstable order of the warlord system is economically inefficient, too expensive and insecure. Although the business class pays fees at the checkpoints and roadblocks of the various factions, increasingly the protection money does not guarantee reliable security for the transport of goods as the danger of looting and robbery prevails. Meanwhile, parts of the business class represent a driving force in the search for alternative security arrangements such as the establishment of district and regional administrations, or the support of Sharia courts that have in some districts previously guaranteed at least a minimum of security. Up until today, however, none of these alternatives have shown significant success. The main challenges to the establishment of stable authority in Somalia concern the distribution of power among the clan elites; how to put an end to the disintegration of the armed fractions along the lines of the sub-clans; how to improve relations between the clans and minorities; how to deal with the question of land ownership, and how to reconstruct the role of traditional authorities. Nearly all the warlords have been integrated into the peace negotiations that have been going on in Kenya since October 2002 but these have not provided any solutions to these major challenges. However, in autumn of 2004, the talks achieved a particular success in their ability to establish a parliament in which the seats are distributed proportionally between the clans. All the important warlords are involved in this parliament. A transitory president, Abdullahi Yussuf, has been named as well as a prime minister and a government. After more than 12 years, Somalia again has a government, with the downside that it resides in Kenya. While negotiations continue, the claims to authority and representation within Somalia are continuously decided upon by means of violence.

**UNITA in Angola: A Quasi-state Order**

The peace agreement signed between the government and the insurgent group **União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola** (UNITA) in April 2002 marked the beginning of a reconstruction process in a country that had experienced armed conflict since 1961. The armed uprising against the Portuguese colonial power was followed by an internal war after independence in 1975. Multiple causes of the
conflict have been recognised such as socio-economic inequality, ideological differences and personal rivalries. The war was described as a prime example of a proxy war due to the vast superpower assistance to the warring parties. The easing of bipolarity coincided with peace-making initiatives in 1991 and 1994, which failed to materialise. The death in combat of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi in February 2002 led, however, to the military victory of the government and a peace agreement was signed shortly thereafter. The continuation of the Angolan war after the end of the Cold War has been explained primarily with reference to the economic interests of the warring parties (cf. Le Billon, 1999; Cilliers & Dietrich, 2000). In particular, the UNITA involvement in the diamond trade was analysed as a prime example of the global economic interactions that contemporary warring parties are engaged in. The main argument here is that the form of authority that UNITA institutionalised was a crucial prerequisite for the establishment of the insurgent economy. The expansion of the diamond trade in the late 1980s could be facilitated by drawing upon the centralised form of organisation that UNITA had established in southeastern Angola since the mid-1970s. In the territories under its control, UNITA established a widely functioning monopoly on the use of force, a viable administrative apparatus and welfare services. This is the basis upon which the UNITA system is here described as a quasi-state form of social order.

The legitimacy of UNITA rule was based primarily on traditions relevant to Ovimbundu communities. Despite the differences between the various pre-colonial Ovimbundu kingdoms in the central Highlands, they had common political traditions and cultural practices. A fundamental characteristic was the belief in the supernatural powers of the king. The king’s authority was secured by his knowledge of tradition (cf. Heywood, 2000:1-4). Two models of legitimate authority co-existed: the ‘democratic’ Blacksmith King and the ‘autocratic’ Hunter King (cf. Heywood, 1998). The autocratic authority of the Hunter King was acceptable as long as it served the common good. Although the influence of these authorities declined during colonialism, Ovimbundu traditions were preserved through the integration of Ovimbundu representatives in colonial institutions. Protestant missionaries in the Highlands employed locals in their churches as well as in schools and hospitals. As a consequence, the Ovimbundu emerged as an influential social group in the colonial administration. In their new positions, the Ovimbundu continued to practice their traditions and these merged with the practices of the protestant and colonial institutions. The Ovimbundu thus managed to preserve pre-colonial traditional practices during the colonial era (Ibid. pp. 104-112), and these traditions came to play an integral part in the UNITA insurgent order. Established by Jonas Savimbi in 1966, UNITA presented an eclectic political programme comprising Maoism, nationalism and regionalism, including in particular Ovimbundu culture (Ibid. pp.173, 168). In the late 1960s, UNITA activities were concentrated in the central and eastern areas of the country. Drawing upon the experiences of their core constituency of Ovimbundu in the protestant institutions, UNITA assisted locals in the administration of villages in the eastern province Moxico. In return, the villagers gave the combatants food. This form of division of labour later served as a prototype for the establishment of UNITA military and civilian authority in the south from 1976, with its centre in the insurgent capital Jamba. This regime was upheld until 1992 as UNITA transferred its administration to the central Highlands, the original core Ovimundu area. From the mid-1990s, the insurgent authority disintegrated, and in 1998, their administrative structure was nearly dissolved. At this time, UNITA concentrated almost solely on the control of the diamond trade in the northern and central areas. During the 1970s approximately 250,000 people lived...
under UNITA authority, and in 1991 this number was assessed to 600,000 to 1 million (Minter, 1994:189). The establishment of the centralised territorial control was accompanied by the inauguration of a president, a government and service institutions for the local population. Thus, the UNITA order of violence depicted central characteristics of a state.

A core aspect of the UNITA form of authority was the inclusion of Ovimbundu traditions and culture. Local communities were integrated into the UNITA system under the leadership of traditional authorities. This was beneficial both to UNITA as well as to the local authorities. The traditional authorities exercised local administrative tasks, and had both their economic reproduction and their positions of authority secured by their relations to the insurgents. UNITA functioned primarily as a sovereign administration and control organ, and assisted in the establishment of health clinics and schools. The influence of Ovimbundu tradition was also visible in the use of the traditional language Umbundu within the insurgent organisation (Ibid. p. 157; Heywood, 1989:48-53). The respect for local tradition and language, the establishment of social services and provision of material goods organised by the insurgents, established the loyalty of civilians to UNITA. This village system was a core element of UNITA administration on the local level. In its central organisation UNITA established modern bureaucratic institutions comprising a president, ministries and a constitution. The vast training and educational courses for military and civilian members underlined a concern with professionalising the insurgent group. However, the formal, quasi-rational political institutions within the UNITA system contributed only in a limited way to the legitimacy of the insurgent authority. The primary form of legitimacy in the UNITA system was based within the village administration and the system of social services. Savimbi’s charisma, a factor that has frequently been noted as crucial to the functioning of UNITA authority (cf. Hodges, 2001:18-19; Russel, 2000:104), was indeed an integral part of the administrative apparatus, but was subordinate to the rational and traditional elements, in particular the disciplinary effect of traditional authorities, the enhancement of traditional culture, the vast control system and the functioning of the centralised administration for the stability of the UNITA system.

The UNITA authority system was institutionalised in a patrimonial functional logic, according to which economic resources and power positions were distributed along patron-client relations. This system was stabilised through the use of force, applied according to certain rules pertaining in particular to the purpose of eliminating challengers to Savimbi’s authority. The use of violence for the purpose of internal cohesion was in disharmony with the social organisation in the UNITA quasi-state, making a tension between violence and legitimacy evident. The use of violence did not, however, necessarily undermine the legitimacy of Savimbi. According to the traditional concept of the ‘Hunter King’, the use of violence for the purpose of stabilising the social order was justified at times of crisis, thus the autocratic elements in Savimbi’s reign were acceptable in context of the traditional symbolism.

On top of the generous external support during the 1970s, UNITA became involved in the export of ivory, deer skin, gold, timber and diamonds (Bridgland, 1986:358; Dietrich, 2000a:276). The establishment of international trading contacts during these years provided initial steps for the expansion of the commercial activities during the 1980s. In the 1990s, diamonds were the primary economic resource of the insurgents (Le Billon, 1999:14; Dietrich, 2000a:276). The diamond economy was organised in mines either under direct UNITA control or controlled by foreign firms.
whose security was provided by UNITA against a fee. From the co-operation with foreign companies UNITA developed competence on diamonds. The breakdown of the 1992 peace agreement led to the withdrawal of many foreign companies, and subsequent to the intensification of military activity in 1997, the involvement of foreigners in the Angolan diamond business declined further (Fowler Report, 2000: paragraph 79). Due to their established competence in the diamond business, UNITA could easily take over the management of the abandoned mines. By 1994, UNITA had nearly total control of the Angolan diamond trade. The majority of the diamond workers were garimpeiros (Le Billon, 2001:68) - guest workers from Congo-Zaire. The taxation of garimpeiros, collected in cash or diamonds, was a primary source of income for UNITA. The diamond production was subordinated to strong UNITA control, including violent punishment of anyone attempting to withhold diamonds (De Boeck, 2001:555). However, the garimpeiros were crucial to the functioning of the UNITA diamond economy and it was therefore in the interest of the insurgents to minimise the use of violence (Dietrich, 2000b:183). The administration of the diamond areas was also embedded in cultural traditions and symbols. Local traditional authorities were, for example, mobilised in order to secure the authority of UNITA (cf. De Boeck, 1996:78).

The diamond administration was also quasi-formalised through the establishment of a ministry of natural resources (MIRNA) in charge of the organisation of the diamond export. The access to airports and landing strips was crucial in this regard, as both diamonds and foreign trading partners had to be flown in and out of the areas under UNITA control. UNITA controlled a landing strip close to Andulo in the central Highlands until 1999, but thereafter the insurgents lost territorial control and had to rely on ad hoc solutions (Monitoring Mechanism, 2000: paragraph 112). The diamonds were traded against weapons, ammunition, gas, food, uniforms etc. or sold for cash either on local markets or abroad; UNITA used middlemen to negotiate goods and prices on their behalf on the world market. A flourishing informal trade in consumer goods also developed in the diamond areas (cf. Dietrich, 2000b:183-184). This was incorporated into the UNITA system as a further source of income through the taxation of goods and the collection of fees for the use of roads and airports. Third-countries, in particular Congo-Zaire and Congo-Brazzaville, were also crucial in the organisation of the diamond sale. The personal relations between the UNITA leadership and government representatives in these countries, kept in place through the distribution of diamonds as patronage, guaranteed the free movement of UNITA representatives in these countries (cf. Fowler Report, 2000: paragraphs 99, 131). Foreign government representatives were thus incorporated into the UNITA patrimonial system.

The UNITA economy was kept under close observation by the leadership. The expansion of the UNITA diamond economy led however to increased internal competition for the access to resources, further enhanced in context of the government’s military offensive from 1997. UNITA had to abandon some mines, thereby providing opportunities for gang activities and for UNITA insurgents to make individual gains in the diamond areas. The political changes in the neighbouring countries at this time also made the operation of transit centres and markets for the diamond trade more difficult and, as a consequence, UNITA lost its monopoly position in the diamond trade.

The UNITA system of authority was stabilised both internally and externally through a patrimonial functional logic. During the Cold War, the interactions between UNITA and the external supporters were organised in patron-client
relations. UNITA received material support from external patrons and this benefited the establishment of a centralised system of authority and the provision of social services in the Jamba quasi-state. The form of authority was the basis upon which UNITA got involved in the diamond trade in the 1980s and expanded their involvement in the 1990s. When external assistance disappeared, the diamond economy provided the necessary economic resources for upholding the system of authority. Paradoxically, however, the expansion of the diamond economy also caused the erosion of the patrimonial functional logic of the UNITA system. In contrast to the distribution of economic resources in the patronage networks during the Cold War, the diamond economy was based upon the principle of profit maximisation, and this altered the form of interaction with external partners. This principle of rational economic competition was successively transferred to the internal form of UNITA organisation and the leadership soon began to compete for the access to economic benefits. The possibilities of individual enrichment in the diamond economy undermined the patrimonial logic in the UNITA system of authority. The erosion of the traditional legitimacy was compensated by increased use of repression within the UNITA administration as well as in the use of violence against civilians. The UNITA leadership began to disintegrate, and this was further enhanced by the establishment of the government sponsored UNITA-Renovada in 1998. The possibility of accessing the alternative patronage structures of the state made many UNITA members leave the organisation in favour of UNITA-R. By the late 1990s, the UNITA quasi-state system of violence had disintegrated as a result of the contradictions between the patrimonial logic and the demands for rational economic behaviour. The incorporation of two distinct functional logics failed. The military successes of the government were therefore less a result of their military competence and more a result of the instabilities within UNITA.

**Conclusion: Orders of Violence Between Warlord Systems & Quasi-states**

In the cases of Somalia and Angola, two distinct forms of insurgent social orders were analysed that can be represented as the opposite poles on a continuum of orders of violence beyond the state: a warlord system on the one extreme, and a quasi-state system of violence on the other. The ordering principle along this continuum is the level of institutionalisation of authority within the order of violence. Here we discuss the main characteristics according to which the level of institutionalisation of such orders can be clarified. Our suggestion is that the analytical engagement with other empirical orders of violence in terms of this theoretical perspective is viable for the purpose of establishing a comparative understanding of the contemporary dynamics of violence.

The warlord system represents a weakly institutionalised form of social order. Its main characteristic is the proliferation of violent groups, ranging between ‘larger-scale gangsterism at the lower end to quasi-insurgent movements at the upper end’ (Rich, 1999:XI-XVI, XII). Contemporary warlord systems emerge as a result of the erosion of state structures and its economic foundation. But warlord systems also contribute considerably to the erosion of the state. Certain warlord systems may strive to replace the state, but the control of the state is not necessary for the continuation of the social order of the warlord (Clapham, 1998). The warlord system must not necessarily lead to the complete collapse of the state as in Somalia, but may also emerge in areas in which the state has lost control or is unwilling to establish control, such as in Chad (Charlton and May, 1989). The eroding interest in the
control of state structures combined with the proliferation of armed groups explains the erroneous comparisons of warlord systems to political chaos and anarchy. A warlord system is in fact also a form of political order. Even if the tendency of disintegration indicates that the single warlords are unable to stabilise political authority through the institutionalisation of legitimacy, the whole system of warlordism is embedded in local society, e.g. in Somalia in the segmentary order of the clan system. Even as a temporary phenomenon, a partial support from certain individuals or social groups in the territory within which a warlord system operates, is necessary in order to stabilise the position of the warlord. And even if warlords are primarily interested in personal enrichment, they differ from gangsters, bandits and other criminals because of these ties to the local and regional social structure. In order to sustain, warlords must establish a minimum of social order within their organisation as well as in their relationship to civilians.31

In the process of mobilising support, warlords do not usually present complex political agendas or ideologies and, as such, they differ from insurgent movements in the ‘classic’ wars of de-colonisation. The local power position of the warlord draws upon personal loyalties and the legitimacy of the warlord is therefore a continuation of the hybrid forms of legitimacy in contemporary Third World states. In many post-colonial states, an abstract loyalty of the people to the state, i.e. national consciousness, did not develop. In absence of a clear distinction between the private and the public spheres, the loyalties remained tied to the social sub-formations in which people saw their needs for social and material security met. Due to the continuous deinstitutionalisation of the state, the local structures are not only the primary basis of social security but function in addition as the primary guarantor of physical security and material survival. These ‘survival units’ (Elias) become the main source of legitimacy for the warlords, who can appeal to the norms and symbols of these local units for the purpose of recruiting followers. In Somalia, for example, politics is highly localised and small survival units are created through subdivided clan-relations.32

Patron-client relations and the religiously founded prestige and charisma of the warlord can further contribute to legitimacy. In addition to the rural reservoirs of recruits, warlords may also appeal to young men in the large cities who are disillusioned by unemployment and social insecurity. The few opportunities of regular work imply that participation in a warlord system can give youth respect as armed fighters (Lock, 2000; Richards, 1996). Economic dependencies may further explain the local and social embeddedness of a warlord’s authority. By redistributing economic resources to dependants and their families, warlord systems fulfil the function of providing for the local population. This enables warlords to draw upon the traditional principle of reciprocity for establishing support from the local population. Thus, a warlord system ensures the support of the combatants and civilians due to a certain combination of traditional symbolism and violence. In context of an eroding or collapsed state, the warlord system is therefore not an expression of political chaos but represents an adjusted, but highly localised, form of social order beyond the state.

Certain similarities between the warlord system and traditional violent self-help systems33 as a form of order are evident, particularly in the traditional legitimacy of warlord systems, but also in the integration of military, economic and political qualities in the person of a warlord. Violence functions simultaneously as a means to securing personal authority, and as means to the appropriation of material resources. In contrast to the self-help system of traditional societies however, the
economic foundation of the warlord system is not organised primarily according to the principle of kinship and reciprocity.

In regard to the means of economic reproduction in warlord systems, the economic approach to war emphasises violent robbery and appropriation of resources. Such strategies might make certain actors rich, but they have a tendency to exhaust the resource base (Riekenberg, 1999:190), and can therefore function only as timely limited means to economic reproduction. Other means of economic reproduction are necessary in order to establish an economic foundation that is conducive to the stabilisation of the authority of the warlord. Such activities may be the ‘taxation’ of local firms, multinational companies, and international aid organisations. The control of economically viable regions and traffic junctions is a source of collection of taxes and toll money. With the control of local markets and access to international trading networks, the warlords can establish a trade economy in both legal and illegal goods. The mobilisation of support from the local population in the form of a duty to deliver a portion of the harvest or other goods to the warlord organisation, further contributes to the establishment of a warlord economy. In sum, the warlord systems combine various forms of material reproduction and are not exclusively dependent on the use of violence in their economy, on a family-economy or a modern exchange based economy.

The economic successes of a warlord system can, however, threaten its specific form of organisation. Initially, the warlord will support the expansion of trading networks, but in context of the warlord economy, civilian markets may emerge that undermine the local authority of the warlord. The expansion of taxation and the monopolisation of defence activities may further the transition of a warlord system into a parastate or ‘quasi-state’ form of organisation, or even to the adoption of formal state structures.

In contrast to the weakly institutionalised warlord system, the quasi-state system of violence represents a highly institutionalised form of social order. The quasi-state system describes an insurgent group that has institutionalised its authority within the borders of a formal state to such a degree that it permanently controls a specific territory and the economic resources within that territory. A necessary condition for the successful establishment of an informal, quasi-state system of violence is the mobilisation of support from civilians and combatants. The embeddedness of the quasi-state in society, ‘empirical statehood’, is a guarantor of such local support. A further necessary requirement for the quasi-state system to be considered legitimate is the implementation of certain rules and norms. Both formal rules as well as customs contribute to the legal framework of a quasi-state. The legitimacy of such an order is further underlined by the provision of security within the territory under control as well as through the supply of welfare-services, such as for example, health-services and education.

The usage of symbols in order to support a community feeling within a quasi-state system also contributes to its legitimisation. Similarly, nationalisation processes have historically contributed to the identification of its citizens with the state, with armed groups appealing to traditions and customs in order to make their followers as well as civilians under their control identify with the group and their territory. The processes through which quasi-state systems of violence are institutionalised vary considerably. These must, therefore, be examined in case studies in which specific attention is given to how the insurgent groups establish legitimacy. The three ideal typical forms of legitimacy introduced by Max Weber have proven useful.
for the conduct of such analysis (Stuvøy, 2002). In order to administer civilians and market the available economic resources on the territory under its control, the quasi-state system needs an organisational apparatus. Due to this requirement for expansive administration and the development of increasingly rationalised rules and procedures, a partial ‘bureaucratisation’ is to be expected in a quasi-state system of violence, as seen in the partial ‘bureaucratisation’ of the UNITA form of authority.39

A consequence of the expansion and specialisation of the organisational apparatus of a quasi-state system of violence is the increase in administrative costs. To be sustaining, the quasi-state must therefore expand its means of economic reproduction. For that purpose, the availability of economic resources and access to the world market is crucial. While the warlord system can rely on ad hoc solutions to secure economic reproduction, the quasi-state is dependent upon establishing longer-term solutions in order to meet the necessities of its administrative apparatus. Furthermore, the quasi-state system must be able to coordinate its economic activities. Consequently, the social forms of economic interaction within a quasi-state change considerably in comparison to the economic activities in the warlord system. Since its administration functions according to specified rules, both of a legal-rational and traditional character, the forms of economic activities in the quasi-state system of violence must be linked to sustainability concerns. It can, therefore, be expected that robbery and abductions do not represent prime economic activities in such an order of violence. Coercive appropriation may still be practiced, but is hardly the main form of economic reproduction. In fact, violence is minimised due to the emphasis on trade and production. The institutionalised organisational apparatus as well as the monopoly of use of force within the territory under control enables the quasi-state system to establish a production system and a trading economy in e.g. diamonds, rubber, weapons, and drugs.

The lack of formal recognition implies that on the world market, representatives of the quasi-state interact primarily with the informal and criminal spheres. The adoption of embargo measures or sanctions against quasi-state systems can further hamper their access to international partners. But such measures also accelerate the informal and criminal activity.40 This underlines that flexibility and adaptability in the economy of the quasi-state are crucial requirements for the sustainability of their practices and forms of interaction with the global market. The quasi-state system must, for example, be able to respond to sudden changes in the international environment in order to be sustained. The impact of external influences on the internal structure of the quasi-state must be addressed in case studies, in order to understand how the system responds to changes in the external environment.

The legitimacy of a social order of violence encompasses ideas, economic and power interests, as well as the use of force. In addition to examining the loyalties of the combatants to the elites, the discursive process of justifying and legitimising the use of force within a specific order must be studied. The specific legitimacy of a certain order is particularly important because it informs about the level of institutionalisation of the order of violence. This is the key to understanding the level of stability of a specific order.

The comprehension of the legitimacy of specific forms of authority in violent conflicts enhances the understanding of conflict dynamism because it provides insight excluded in the exclusively rational economic focus in concepts such as predation and patron-client relations. An interest in the form of social embeddedness
of violent actors and their strategies also raises new challenges for conflict resolution. Focusing on the legitimacy of social orders of violence might represent an avenue for the future stabilisation of such orders as social orders of peace, thus making alternative forms of political community conceivable.

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Endnotes

1. We here reflect upon classical social theory (Weber, Elias, Bourdieu) as well as political economy (Marx, Polanyi). Despite their differences, these authors have stressed economic activities as a form of social interaction, an argument recently emphasised within economic sociology; cf. e.g. Swedberg & Granovetter, 1992; Martinelli & Smelser, 1990:1-50.

2. The greed perspective is explored in a research project of the World Bank, addressing whether Greed or Grievance is the primary motivation for the outbreak of conflict, thereby reducing the complexity of the causes of war to a mechanical cause-and-effect relation tested on its support for greed or grievance as a cause of war; Collier, 1999; Collier & Hoeffler, 2000.


4. By re-writing and departing from Clausewitz’ idea, Keen argues that war may then become ‘a continuation of economics by other means’; Keen, 1997:69.

5. Reno and Duffield have both published detailed and well-researched empirical studies on societies at war and actors of violence, on cases such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria (Reno, 1995, 1998, 2002) and Sudan (Duffield, 2001). These studies have contributed considerably to the understanding of the complexity of orders of violence.

6. See e.g. Chingono, 1996 and Mwanasali, 2000. See also Mustapha’s fundamental critique of Bayart’s notion of the ruled, the people, in an African context as representing a passive mass of victims, whilst ignoring wider and more important popular processes that limit the options of the former; Mustapha, 2002.

7. Although a quasi-state system differs from a formal state in regard to the lack of international recognition, armed groups are able to establish diplomatic relations with official state representatives; Cf. Clapham, 1996:223.

8. This comprehension of the term warlord deviates from its traditional meaning in the context of Chinese militarism, according to which a warlord exercises effective control in a fairly demarcated territory by military means (cf. Adam, 1992:21).

9. Depending on how you count, Somalia is divided into 4 or 6 Clan families. The traditional nomadic Clans are the Dir (the Isaaq are originally a sub-clan of the Dir, but some scholars count them as an own Clan family), Darood, Hawiye, while the clans of Digil and Mirifle (summarised as Rahanweyn) are considered to be sedentary. However it is important to note here, that the distinction between nomadic and sedentary clans does not fully fit with the Somali reality since most of the ‘sedentary’ clans adopted an agro-pastoral system, i.e. a combination of mobile livestock-keeping and farming.

10. The social transformation of the Somali society was initiated and the direction of this transformation determined during colonialism. Due to limited space we focus on the late post-colonial system before the state collapsed. For a detailed analysis see Bakonyi, 2001:50-80.

11. As a result of the Somali war against Ethiopia (1977/78), Somalia lost its support from the Soviet Union, its main ally and donor. Although Western donors soon replaced the Soviet Union as main beneficiary, the support was henceforth linked to structural adjustment programmes. As a consequence, approximately 20% of the state employees were suspended (Brons, 2001:190, footnote 28).
12. With the extension of the patrimonial system as well as the nationalisation of the land, the state apparatus became the political as well as the economic centre of Somalia. The business contracts of wholesalers and landowners were allocated by the state. The position of these entrepreneurs became directly linked to the state.

13. Here and in the following the first name refers to the clan family, while the second is the sub-clan.

14. The SSDF was established by a handful of Daarod/Majerteen army members, who fled to Ethiopia after a failed coup in 1978. To begin with, the clan Hawiye was also integrated both in the SNM and the SSDF. Internal differences and competition for power led to disintegration, and in 1989 the Hawiye formed their own clan-based militia, the United Somali Congress (USC).

15. Many leading cadres of the SSDF, including the founder Abdullahi Yussuf, were detained in Ethiopia at the beginning of the 1980s. This led to the de facto collapse of the SSDF. The detainees were not released until the downfall of Mengistu in 1991, but they subsequently reorganised their militias. In October 2004, as a result of the ongoing peace negotiations amongst the Somali warlords in Nairobi, Abdullahi Yussuf was elected the new president of Somalia.

16. In the late 1980s, almost all male members of the Marehan in Mogdishu absolved military training and received a weapon (Bakonyi’s own interviews). Subsequent to the defeat in the Ogaden war against Ethiopia, members of the Ogaden-clan in Ethiopia fled to Somalia. The Ogaden resettled in southwestern Somalia, received weapons and were mobilised against the SNM.

17. According to recent estimates, Somali remittance companies transfer between US$750m and US$1bn annually (UNDP & European Commission, Somali Unit, 2004:9). The three biggest remittance companies, the Dahabshil, Al-Barakat or Hormuud and Amal, transfer approximately US$500m a year; this sector is a booming business in Somalia. The biggest remittance company today is Dahabshil, located in Hargeisa. After the bombing of Hargeisa and the mass migration in 1988, Dahabshil managed to organise the money transfer of the northern Somali refugees. During the war, its activities were extended to the southern regions (own interviews with Dahabshil management in Hargeisa, August 2003). Prior to 2001, the company Al-Barakat was more important than Dahabshil. But after the September 11th terrorist attacks, the USA accused Al-Barakat of funding terrorism, and froze the international assets of the bank. Meanwhile many branches of Al-Barakat have reopened under the disguise of a new name. Another important remittance company is Amal, but there are also many more companies engaged in this global Somali enterprise.

18. Ali Mahdi is a member of the Hawiye/Habr-Gedir/Abgal, while Aideed is a Hawiye/Habr-Gedir/Sa’ad.

19. For example, Osman Ato, a businessman and the former financer of General Aideed, shall have made a fortune through the organised export of looted goods from former state-run enterprises. Similarly, Compagnon (1998) describes how a businessman systematically exported looted office facilities to the Gulf states. In Kismayo, wholesalers bought and exported looted goods, including parts of the port and airport infrastructure, the fish factory and even whole ships (own interviews in Kismayo, July 2003).

20. During the Barre regime, the cultivation of Qat was forbidden thereby halting the profitable Qat production in Northern Somalia (today Somaliland). At the same time, the smuggling of Qat from Ethiopia to Somalia offered an alternative source of income, and this profitable trade has expanded during the war, albeit in an altered form.

21. The Juba Valley Alliance, for example, extracts their income almost exclusively from taxes collected at the harbour and airport in Kismayo. The export of charcoal has developed into a lucrative business. The warlord Qanyareh Afrah in Mogadishu finances his militia through the taxation of imported goods, as well as from fees paid by traders and international organisations using his landing strip, Danilieh, in Mogadishu. Mohamed Dhere, whose militias control parts of the Middle Shabelle region, cooperates closely with a businessman in Mogadishu, who controls the Eisleh landing strip in Mogadishu, frequently used by humanitarian flights, and the nearby sea port, where charcoal is the main traded good (own interviews, July and August 2003).

22. A detailed study of the reorganisation of the livestock trade, with particular emphasis on the border trade between Kenya and Somalia is Little, 2003.

23. A famous example is Osman Ato, the former financier of General Aideed who, since 1995, is in control of his own USC-faction.

25. The majority of the people in Angola were neither under the authority of UNITA nor the state, but were continuously exposed to attacks from both sides.

26. This presentation of the social order of UNITA is based primarily on the following sources: Minter, 1990/1994; Heywood, 1989/2000; Bridgland, 1986. The three special reports of the UN Monitoring Commission also provided important insights about the UNITA system; see Stuvøy, 2002.

27. The control system comprised three units: first, Brigada de Informação Geral (BIG) in charge of internal stability through observation of suspicious behaviour; second, the military policy Dragons, observing the behaviour of the soldiers; and third, a personal security guard for Savimbi (cf. Monitoring Mechanism, 2001: paragraphs 26-27; Bridgland, 1986:107, 110).

28. The richest diamond mines in Angola are located in the northeast, but there are mines also in the central Highlands and in the south. Diamonds are found both in mines and in rivers (cf. Dietrich, 2000c).

29. Garimpeiros worked as diamond diggers in Angola since the late 1970s. In the early 1990s, UNITA began to control the border crossing of garimpeiros, and their numbers increased from 10,000 to 100,000 between 1991-1996 (Dietrich, 2000b:174; Monitoring Mechanism, 2000: paragraph 157).

30. UNITA was, for example, able to buy oil from the state oil company Sonangol due to their informal, personal contacts with the company.

31. Although warlord systems differ from bandits and other criminals, warlords can develop from such criminal structures: ‘the transition from outlaw pure and proper to warlord suggests the development and maintenance of a social order, clearly understood, among the outlaws, as well as the explicit recognition of a purpose in rebellion’ (Chan, 1999:165).

32. A similar logic was observable in Afghanistan, where by 1992 the parallel collapse of the pro-communist regime of Nadschibullah and the opposition insurgent movement Mujaheddin lead to a power takeover by warlords who drew their legitimacy mainly from the local group Qaum. This era of warlord authority in Afghanistan ended in 1994 when the Taliban established control.

33. According to Trutz von Trotha (1994, 1995), a traditional system of violent self-help is contrasted by the monopolisation of violence in the modern state. The order of violent self-help is characteristic of less differentiated societies. Here, autonomous political groups and communities such as households, kinships, cities etc., claim their right to collective defence. In these societies, the use of force is an acknowledged means of conflict resolution, and in cases of murder or blood vendetta, it is even an obligation to use violence to settle conflicts. Under such conditions, a certain stability and security is established through a ‘balance of fear’ (Trotha, 1994:38).

34. If the supply of resources to a warlord system is problematic, the system will most likely transform into a criminal gang. An exception to this rule is the focus on robberies of aid deliveries. The continuation of international aid supply structures is a relatively secure resource base.

35. Such a ‘tax’ on the security of certain actors is not necessarily based upon use of physical force. These payments may represent a strategic relationship between the actors of violence and business representatives. In his study of the Italian mafia, Gambetta (1993) recognised that the provision of security through the mafia was linked both to monetary payment and to a promise of loyalty, but that the previous threat of use of force considerably contributed to the establishment of the security relationship. Nonetheless, relations between the mafia and its clients were not fully determined either by violence or coercion but depend also on the establishment of reciprocal advantages for both sides.

36. With the disappearance of the state, the terms legal and illegal are of no real worth in the local context.

37. Such a development was observed in Lebanon, where the various insurgent movements re-established localised state structures, and thus a number of different quasi-state structures of authority emerged on the basis of distinct warlord systems. The organisational basis of the militias was the structural foundation upon which the more or less tranquil transformation from a society at war to a post-war society was made possible. The various local and regional quasi-state structures were successfully integrated into and subordinated to the centralised state system.
38. Similar to UNITA, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) established a legal system and provided health services to the civilian population in Eritrea. The Maoist rebels in Nepal established a banking system and a court system (Humphreys, 2002:12). In Columbia, the rebel group, Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC), provided several state services, and contributed to the improvement of the provision of basic needs in rural areas (Labrousse, 1999:318).

39. Another example is Lebanon, where almost all functions of the formal state were taken over and performed by insurgent groups, such as police and intelligence services, but also the organisation of the transportation system (Naylor, 1993:16f.). The establishment of quasi-state systems of authority was particularly successful in the areas controlled by the drusian *fiqh at-taqaddumi al-ishtiraki* in the mountainous area of Schuf and the Christian al-quwat al-lubnaniya in Eastern Beirut, on the Coast between Beirut and El-Batroun.

40. Kopp (1999) has examined how economic embargos contribute to further informalisation, criminalisation and political conflict within states, and draws a link between embargos and the rapid expansion of illegal trading.

Bibliographic Note


Few cities in Africa can match Kinshasa for the swarm of stereotypes (mostly negative), urban (black) legends and fantastic tales that have built up around it, but also for the fascination and magnetism it has continually radiated, and which have surrounded it with a part-mythical, part-nightmarish aura, not only in Central Africa but worldwide. In terms of population, Kinshasa may be second to Lagos in sub-Saharan Africa (and, nominally at least, the world’s second largest ‘francophone’ city after Paris), but it ranks along with Rio, Mexico, Bombay or Shanghai when it comes to occupying a uniquely identifiable place in collective construction and imaginary representation. Its genesis from a neutral, sparsely populated, but strategically located ‘contact zone’ to a sprawling metropolis of 7 million, its role in the emergence of political consciousness, in the fashioning of Congolese national identity, or as the stage of the country’s most dramatic episodes, the schizophrenic way it has been viewed simultaneously as the ultimate seat of modernity and as the parasitical den of corruption or malfeasance have all contributed to make the city a symbol of the country’s tortured history, and a focus for its hopes or (more often) despair.

Even though Mobutu often insisted that ‘Kinshasa n’est pas le Zaïre’ (an opinion widely shared by the Congolese, even by those living in the city) he, more than anyone else, fully realised as have so many other leaders in crisis-ridden parts of the world the importance of keeping hold of the capital city as a way of achieving international recognition and, even more crucially, of controlling the machinery through which all rent-generating activities and the revenues of an extroverted economy are processed, even when large parts of the country are effectively outside the reach of state authority. From Lumumba (and Kasavubu) to Kabila père and fils, including all other successful or unsuccessful claimants, every power seeker has recognized the same evident truth.

The editor of this collection of essays may thus be forgiven for choosing the title ‘Reinventing Order in the Congo’ for what the subtitle more accurately describes as a study of the ways the people of Kinshasa have responded to state failure. While this is not the first time that such a study has been attempted, much of the recent literature in this field has focused on the ‘informal’ or ‘second economy’ aspects of African urban life, and while this has naturally led authors such as McGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) to study alternative social ‘networks’, this collection is far more decidedly centered on the broader socio-logical issues raised by the need to devise a set of new social norms from the grassroots up. The contributions are remarkable by the relevance and comprehensiveness of the issue areas they address: the vagaries of water supply or of health care access, the search for alternative food supplies, the instability of family relations, the subculture of street...
children, the proliferation of opportunisti-
cic ‘interest groups’, the survival strate-
gies based on solidarity or reciprocity, the
uncertain value of education, the
mushrooming cult movements, the
ambiguous fame enjoyed by popular musi-
cians are all very much part of what
makes Kinshasa ‘work’ against all odds
in a way that has been described as a
daily ‘miracle’.

This collective work has the additional
merit of giving a prominent voice to
Congolese scholars, which should make it immune to the (often justified) charges of Western-centricity raised against some of the literature dealing with ‘Africa’s problems’: seven of the sixteen contribu-
tors are DRC citizens, and the remainder (which includes six Belgians) are Euro-
pean or North American nationals with
long records of fieldwork in the Congo.

At its most basic level, what Anastase
Nzeza Bilakila (pp. 20-32) refers to as the
‘Kinshasa bargain’ may seem to be noth-
ing more than an African version of
Brecht’s famous maxim ‘Erst kommt das
Fressen, dann kommt die Moral’, but this
facile equation falls short on two counts:
first, because many of these ingenious
survival strategies end up in failure, but
also because it overlooks the deepening
existential Angst that weighs heavily
over the vast majority of Kinshasa dwell-
ers. The Kinois (as they style themselves)
are not just a collection of artful dodgers
(though many, perforce, undoubtedly
are), and their responses to the Congo’s
‘unending crisis’ do not invariably fit
Mr. Peachum’s jocular form of material-
istic rationality. The latter certainly ac-
counts for the extraordinary
inventiveness shown by the thousands of
entrepreneurial interlopers, dealers,
facilitators, procurers, backyard farmers,
fences, prostitutes, moneychangers,
smugglers, petrol retailers, promoters of
bogus NGOs, loan sharks – or the more
selfless managers of revolving savings
and credit unions (likelemba or muziki).

At the darker end of – yet not radically
distinct from – this brutally rational
spectrum stand the rumours, the
adventist or millennial expectations, the
rush to buy into pyramid schemes and,
most chillingly, the paranoid obsession
with child witchcraft as told (pp.155-
173) by Filip De Boeck.

Each of the eleven sections that compose
this volume contains an impressive
amount of information that includes a
surprisingly large sample of carefully
collected statistical data, transcripts of
personal interviews, excerpts from the
local media, analytical chronicles of key
events, and the occasional dash of theo-
retical flourish. No single work of com-
parable scope can boast of offering a
picture as detailed and complete of this,
or any other major African city and while
the approaches used by the different
contributors inevitably reflect some meth-
odological variations, the overall tone
shows a remarkable degree of consist-
ency – for which we probably have to
thank Trefon’s editing, translating and
coordinating skills.

Despite the comprehensiveness of the
range of issues covered, some might
argue that the ‘exceptionalism’ of Kin-
shasa limits the relevance or exemplary
value of the coping mechanisms devel-
oped by its long-suffering denizens. In
his excellent introduction, Trefon ad-
dresses this matter, and convincingly
argues that Kinshasa can legitimately be
viewed as paradigmatic for the under-
standing of the continent’s urban cen-
tres, all of whose problems it shares and
exemplifies. He makes it clear that the
case of Kinshasa (or the DRC) is not an
isolated one, but the contrary, an em-
blematic instance of the way that people
throughout Africa – most especially in
the continent’s fast-growing urban cen-
tres – have responded to the general
phenomenon of ‘state failure’ or ‘col-
lapse’ repeatedly diagnosed over the
past twenty years or so. Kinshasa may
not be the Congo, but paradoxically, it
stands as an appropriate, if paroxysmal
paradigm for much of urban Africa’s problems. For all its contradictory features, the new ‘order’ being ‘reinvented’ on a daily basis by the people of Kinshasa – and by others in Africa – may be understood within the broad parameters of the literature on ‘state-society relations’ or ‘popular agency’. It can also be read, however (perhaps more accurately), as a grassroots version of the ‘instrumentalization of disorder’ analysis offered by Chabal and Daloz. Yet, for all that seems to position them as diametrical opposites, both approaches share an implicit faith in the Africans’ survival skills and capacity to cope with disaster. While illustrating these features, the essays being reviewed here avoid, for the most part, falling into easy populist traps, whether naïvely optimistic or cynical. For all the talk of the ‘Kinshasa miracle’, the silver lining is tenuous, the gains few and precarious, the damage abysmal and pervasive. Yet, calamity sometimes has a way of bringing out not only the worst, but also the best in human nature, as argued long ago by émigré Russian sociologist Pitirim Sorokin. The cases covered in this collection offer sufficient evidence of this seeming paradox to offset unqualified despair. What, if any, order may emerge from catastrophe, remains to be seen.

To avoid closing on a somber note, however, I should also mention that, for those who are not familiar with the urban culture (and subcultures) of Kinshasa, this collective volume provides the additional bonus of offering a glance at the extraordinary luxuriance of lexical innovations which this repellent yet mesmerizing city generates on a daily basis: mwana quartier, shege, khadafis, sapeurs, ambianceurs, phaseurs, mamans manoeuvres, lupemba, likelemba, muziki, chayeurs, groupeurs, drogadeurs, creuseurs, tradipraticiens, maquis, hiboux, ficti-ficti, baguesta, mwana ya kilo, bana Luunda, radio trottoir – not to mention the ever-popular ndumba – are only a brief sample of the unbridled linguistic inventiveness that

the irrepressible Kinois display in the appropriation or creolization of French, Lingala, Kikongo or Swahili. Should readers need an additional incentive to study this pioneering work, discovering the meaning and context of these terms will surely reward their curiosity.

Endnotes


Most of the results of March’s Zimbabwean parliamentary elections were announced on April Fools’ Day. The early ones were released on the state-controlled radio and television broadcasts in batches of ten, separated by forty minutes or so of vacuum-packed analysis. As has always been the case since the Movement for Democratic Change gave the ruling ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe African People’s Union-Patriotic Front) the scare of its life in 2000, the first results – mostly
urban or in Matabeleland – favoured the MDC. Harare’s townships were cheering en masse as the 6 a.m. tally was revealed.

Everybody’s rational self knew, however, that ZANU-PF’s carefully calibrated machine would never allow a victory to those seen as Tony Blair’s (sic) puppets. But elections like these, as a seasoned South African observer put it, are just temporary suspensions of disbelief. (She was a critical, unofficial one, not to be confused with the invited guests whose president – Thabo Mbeki – had declared previously that he had ‘no reason to think that anybody in Zimbabwe will act in a way that will militate against elections being free and fair’). Within the day, the toll turned the other way. ZANU-PF ‘won’ once again, and everybody who had opposed the perpetually ruling party wondered ‘why did we bother?’

Even though an officer in Zimbabwe’s Central Intelligence Organisation told MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai that his party had actually won 91 seats, by the end of the day the ruling party’s ‘independent’ electoral commission had counted and/or created 78 seats for the rulers, 41 for the MDC (down from 57 in 2000), and 1 to the now Independent but once Minister of State for Information and Publicity in the Office of the President and Cabinet Professor Jonathon Moyo (whose previous title indicated not only hubris, but the fact that he was appointed by the President, not elected: Zimbabwe’s constitution allows its leader to choose 30 members in addition to the 120 ‘elected,’ thus making it easy for him to pack the deliberative hall with those inclined to speak his voice). Mugabe could choose the rest of the 150 parliamentarians, so he had the 66% needed to craft a constitution to facilitate a few more years in power. By then, he hopes, his fractious party will be patched up for another generation of rule. Sometime between the initial happiness and the inevitable disappointment (combined with the overt coercion in the past years, and the comparatively covert intimidation amidst a small window of glasnost in the few weeks preceding the election, the pre-planned counting tricks and gerrymandered constituencies made victory a sure thing) a gaggle of foreign journalists traipsed towards the MDC’s second press conference since the election, up the well-trodden stairs in the party’s Harvest House headquarters. They were undoubtedly more frazzled than usual by the fear of working while unaccredited, and having heard news of their imprisoned Sunday Telegraph mates as well as the deportation of a young Swedish TV reporter. They muttered unkindly about poverty stricken parties with non-working elevators in their buildings, and hurriedly erected their tripods in front of colleagues seated in the wall-side chairs.

A young camera man’s response to the complaints of the woman behind him about his making a better door than a window was indicative of their mood. He turned to tell her that he’d rather not be there. When asked where he would rather be, by someone naïvely surprised to learn that anybody could possibly prefer to be elsewhere than this particular site of democracy’s awakening, he glared: ‘Montana.’ To do what? ‘Play tennis.’ Aside from the chilly prospects of tennis in a Montana spring, that encounter made one think that these types of organic intellectuals were clearly not missionaries for peace and democratic good governance (at best: or enthusiastic liberal imperialists at worst). Nor were they excited by Zimbabwe any longer. There weren’t as many frenzied land invaders as five years ago, and it didn’t look like a working-class firebrand was going to rally his troops. Mugabe was getting boring, but at least his anti-British tirades could be parodied. But Tsvangirai was wearing the journalists thin, too. His unvarnished nature could be cynically satirised as well. And so they went for the kill.
The room, already hot, was crowded, and people had not had much sleep the night before. Morgan Tsvangirai was flanked by Lucy Matibenga, MDC’s national chair for women and a key actor in the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, still the MDC stalwart. She was citing statistics from constituencies with huge discrepancies between the announcements of first and final polling counts. The night before, she had reeled off the vast numbers of ‘assisted ballots’ for illiterate people. But it was Tsvangirai’s carefully ambivalent words that set the journos off. It was already clear that the election was fraudulent, he said. In past years all the efforts to regain stolen seats through the courts had failed, so that would not be tried this time (a week or so later, this decision was reversed). He advised Zimbabwe’s people to ‘defend their right to the vote’ in a free and fair environment.

The journalists took up their chorus. ‘Are you telling your people to go out on the streets?’ ‘Will you be calling for demonstrations?’ ‘Are you demanding mass action?’ Tsvangirai repeated his words, a little testily, revealing only that the party structures would be discussing the next steps. William Bango, his spokesman – even testier – said that Tsvangirai had answered the query. The journalists were disappointed, still. Could there have been something more than the fact that their prey did not jump to the bait that led to their choreography of contempt? London and Washington pundits say that Tsvangirai has lost these capitals’ favour. They say he is considered a ‘buffoon’ in imperialism’s senior and junior centres. The USA’s ‘professionals’ had decided to co-operate with the Zimbabwean security forces in the wake of Al Qaeda’s New York adventures, to keep the fundamental fanatics out of ‘failed states.’ There are high hopes that ZANU-PF’s desires to re-enter the IMF-World Bank fold will result in successful monetary reform and titled land deeds for the 120,000 or so recipients of the bits and pieces of formerly commercial farms: to see the source of those dreams all one has to do is read the Reserve Bank governor’s newspaper, the Financial Gazette. Like Mbeki to the south, the leaders in the north now prefer to see change come from within ZANU-PF: if the MDC serves to push the process, so be it, and so be it dispensable. The powers that be in the ‘west’ do not really want a working class and social democratic party to win elections in southern Africa. Could ‘western journalists’ so easily fall into such a seamless disenchantment?

This could be carrying Chomsky-like conspiracy theory too far. But Tsvangirai might have bolstered the journalists’ faith in feisty politicians (they are, after all, a fickle lot) and shocked them out of their Eurocentrism by asking them if they expected him to order ‘his people’ into the streets as would the African dictators their experience in the continent had led them to expect, and who his party opposed. He might have given them a brief history of how Mugabe’s police, army and the new militia of ‘Green Bombers’ generally treat expressions of the general will on the street. (But he would then have been accused of spinelessness. In any case, Mugabe made the repressive upshot of that option clear in front of the journalists the next day in his State House conference, amidst the otherwise reconciliatory and soon forgotten platitudes he offers at similar moments. He also gave willing journalists a free trip to Victoria Falls – a fitting denouement for people ostensibly in Zimbabwe with tourist visas.) Or he might have remarked, ruefully, that he had once fallen into a trap laid by a journalist from Australia and a public relations consultant-cum-spy in Canada. He spent the next few years fighting trumped up treason charges, so he wasn’t going to get caught up in the interests of a good story. Tsvangirai could also have divulged the deep angst the party had gone through a couple of months previously.
around the decision about (re)entering the contest at all. In August 2004 the MDC had ‘suspended’ participation until ZANU-PF implemented the good elections guidelines drawn up by the southern African states at Mauritius earlier that month – hoping that at least some of the restrictions on public meetings (more than five in one place talking about politics is illegal) and the press (it’s not easy to get a one of Roy Thomson’s licences to print money in Zimbabwe, so aside from a couple of expensive weeklies there is no press independent of the ruling party-state, and from short-wave, DSTV, and websites no alternative broadcast media) would be lifted, and that the chimical ‘independent electoral commission’ and a host of other good electoral practices might be invented.

He might have revealed that he himself had been opposed to re-entering the farcical fray whilst these conditions remained still-born, but that parliamentarians with no other source of income (and with many high-minded reasons to maintain a presence in the law-making arena, too), grassroots members in areas where the MDC was already entrenched, significant organisations within Zimbabwe’s civil society, and pressure from the super-power to the south and its masters in the north (remember, George Bush told Thabo Mbeki in July 2003 that the latter was the USA’s ‘point man’ vis a vis Zimbabwe) had ruled that day’s decision. He might have queried: ‘should I – or could I – have imposed my wishes on all these forces? Would this tally with a commitment to liberal – or social – democracy? If I could tell ‘my troops’ to man the barricades, like so many SMS messages flashing around now are saying, how could I justify the inevitable deaths? Is liberal democracy worth it? How can I bridge the gap between democratic consultation, in which I believe, and the vacillation of which you and some of my civil society critics accuse me?’ He could have philosophised about the tensions inherent in managing a party and a resistance movement (which has many leaders: some backers might be trying to make a ‘third force’ party out of them). The latter was born of a combination of an ‘anti-Mugabeism’ and the ravages of the neo-liberal economic policies his régime had been imposing enthusiastically throughout the nineties. Its roots are in social justice politics and anti-authoritarianism dating to the late 1980s, when students, unionists and a few politicians – in addition to the disenchanted Matabelelanders who could never abide ZANU-PF’s swallowing of the opposition party and covering up the murderous gukurahundi (‘spring storms that wash away the rubbish’) of the mid-eighties, took too opposing ZANU-PF. The party’s origins, though also in the unions, came more immediately after the so-called ‘war veterans’ took over Mugabe’s mind to resurrect the land issue in 1997, simultaneously washing out the fiscus with their demands for huge pensions (granted, so it is said, by gun point when the vets marched unopposed into State House, and soon diminished by the inflation and devaluation they caused). Demonstrations and deaths in early 1998, when a surtax was imposed (but later withdrawn) to pay the pensions, created fertile ground for the National Constitutional Assembly to rise and combine social movement-style activism with liberal-democratic demands in mid-1998 (just after ZANU-PF’s decision to join Laurent Kabila’s efforts to maintain the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s tenuous sovereignty added more strain to the budget – amidst lucrative opportunities for those able to gain military contracts).

When the Working People’s Convention in February 1999 (a moment and a mandate Chan’s book revealingly but incidentally ignores) mandated the formation of a new party, the contradictions between thick and thin democratic forms began. They were exacerbated when
Zimbabwe’s commercial farmers (rather, the white ones: the black élite who had taken over some farms and would soon take over many more remained with their provider) joined the MDC bandwagon as ZANU-PF’s constitutional referendum promised uncompensated land reclamation along with more time for its aging patriarch. When ‘the west’ joined the march to freedom from one-partyism, much as it had in Zambia a decade before, Mugabe could say in 2001 that the MDC should be ‘never be judged’ by the ‘human superfices’ of its black trade union face; by its salaried black suburban junior professionals; never by its rough and violent high-density (this expression of technocratic linguistics is Zimbabwe’s euphemism for ‘townships’) lumpen elements ... for it is moored in the colonial yesteryear and embraces wittingly or unwittingly the repulsive ideology of return to white settler rule. MDC is as old and as strong as the forces that control it; that converge on it and control it; that drive and direct; indeed that support, sponsor and spot it. It is a counter-revolutionary Trojan horse contrived and nurtured by the very inimical forces that enslaved and oppressed our people yesterday.¹

Against such forces, who in ZANU-PF could deny a bit of patriotic head-bashing and careful vote counting? How could the MDC counter such a heady articulation of pan-African anti-imperialism with the pent-up the frustration of stale-mated class struggle?

Tsvangirai did not address these issues; thus the journalists’ doubts were unalloyed. They would be more than willing to agree with their governments’ disenchantment with Zimbabwe’s opposition.

Would Stephen Chan’s series of interviews with Morgan Tsvangirai have made any difference if they had been available to all these journalists a few weeks earlier? More importantly, would they have altered the collective consciousness of Zimbabweans set to vote? As it happens, the book was not available in time. Initiated in April and completed by the end of August, too many publishers’ reviewers thought the book too obscure, or too Chan-centric, or too complicit with the Westminster approach to democracy. Thus was denied the international solidarity Zimbabwean publishers needed to deflect visits from the presidents’ protectors. In the end someone found funds fallen off the back of a truck to facilitate its ISBN-less ‘Fingerprint’ printing just before the election, but not in time for widespread distribution.

But who could judge the effect in any case? Chan almost forecasts the book’s quiet appearance when he writes in the acknowledgements that he demurs at the Saidian presumption that books should ‘speak the truth to power.’ He says he only wants to ‘bear a modest witness and engender a modest debate:’ (p. ix) but in this context even that desire might be too bold. It is clear that given transparent elections, the MDC would win, book on Tsvangirai or not, just as it would have in the parliamentary elections of 2000 and the presidential one in 2002. (Don’t bother asking why there are so many elections in Zimbabwe: it’s another way of perpetuating power. If the MDC had won the parliamentary elections it would need two-thirds of the seats to alter the constitution so the president – who appoints the cabinet – could be removed before his six-year tenure expires in 2008: imagine the mess.) Where very, very few can afford basic commodities, could a 105 page book – with a flashier cover than this one’s basic black – encourage more people to vote, so it would have been harder for ZANU-PF to tinker with the peoples’ will? As it stands, the book did not alter the election. It probably won’t make a difference to challenges to Tsvangirai’s leadership. It remains – for now – a testament to a man who gained a con-
gress of trade unions as he wrestled it away from the dead hand of ZANU-PF, but who gave it up to lose three national elections as the leader of the MDC. Even if they elections are lost, however, it is clear that Tsvangirai has taken Zimbabwe a long way towards the winning of democracy.

As such, the book intrigues. Sometimes it’s hard to see where Tsvangirai might have gone if Chan – Dean of Law and Social Sciences at London’s School of Oriental and African Studies; Zimbabwe watcher since his days with the Commonwealth observation team in 1980 and, after that, working for awhile in the offices of guerrilla veteran Joyce Mujuru, then women’s affairs minister and now Zimbabwean vice-president; and author of a biography of Mugabe as well as many works in the genres of African studies and international relations – had not been so intent on involving Tsvangirai in his own imaginary spars with Zimbabwe’s intellectuals’ efforts to craft an ‘autonomous’ African philosophy along with their goes at historical materialism (on the former component of the task he seems sympathetic, but not hopeful; of the latter, he is scornful of anyone inside or outside of Africa) or making him look respectable to those who like British-style democracy.

However, as the book goes on Tsvangirai takes hold and emerges as a principled, patient, and even powerful politician who can spar on more than equal terms with visiting and local philosophers wanting to advise kings. Chan begins by criticising Tsvangirai’s earlier ‘pungent honesty … but also naïvety’ about international diplomacy regarding the Commonwealth (the professor has a soft spot for that venerable institution that others might call naïve) (pp. 4, 49-50). He cites stories from what he thought was the ‘independent’ Financial Gazette attesting to the MDC’s ‘intellectual vs. worker’ split. It is as if he is telling us that he is ‘objective’ about the MDC – but we wonder if he is doing so in order to sing its praises later. We are sidetracked, though, with his own (positive) musings on Ali Mazrui’s culturalist platitudes and a nice excursion into the ideas of Achille Mbembe, followed by febrile attacks on leftist African intellectuals such as Issa Shivji and Ibbo Mandaza (the latter, a contradictory supporter of the ruling party with a newspaper and academic think-tank of his own, may deserve it more than the former, but can the guy who coined the phrase ‘the schizophrenic state’ as a descriptor for Zimbabwe be dismissed completely as an ‘apologist?’). Eventually the worker turned opposition leader takes charge. In response to Chan’s efforts to situate ZANU-PF’s intellectual justifications for its current policies, Tsvangirai says that while a degree of pan-Africanism is necessary for ‘confidence building’ it ‘overshadows the acceptance of one’s own faults.’ Africans must get out of the ‘blame-game [and the] denial stage’, if they are to (and he insists they will) find an African solution to the African problem. … We are still grappling with others and trying to blame other people, instead of looking at ourselves and saying ‘what have we done wrong?’ And the ones who have performed the greatest disservice, by not asking that, are the intellectuals … It’s time to move on (pp. 38-41).

The MDC’s philosophy is based in its urban roots, so it is not surprising when in response to Chan’s comment that his vision sounds like he has ignored the rural, Tsvangirai repeated one of his favourite lines:

> you cannot create more peasants. There is no society which has developed by creating more peasants than more industrial workers. … It’s not that I ignore rural productivity … but that … it is not going to come about unless you create the conditions in the rural areas that will bring about something much more than just a subsistence economy (p. 43).
In criticising this with 1970s clichés about blending the urban and the rural, and contemporary ones about the benefits of relying on the informal sector, Chan laid himself out for Tsvangirai’s more modernist attacks. Then, as if eager for more punishment, Chan put it to Tsvangirai that Mugabe’s recent moves might have been ‘true to one of his original selves as a Maoist.’ Readers don’t hear Tsvangirai laugh, nor does Chan tell them that Tsvangirai was angry, but we do read:

I think Mugabe’s philosophy is more about how to retain power than about any ideological position. Because he has had variant ideological positions. You can look at the Marxist thrust, the socialist thrust, the ESAP [Economic Structural Adjustment Programme – the Zimbabwean version of the neo-liberal policies imposed all over Africa after the Keynesian moment ended after 1980 in most of the continent, but hit Zimbabwe a decade later], the post-ESAP period, and now a period where we are back to agrarian reform. You will find that he is experimenting ... with populist positions in order to retain power ... the whole thrust has never been about empowering people. It is about empowering himself – a takeover through mass political patronage (p. 45).

Although patient in many respects, this is not a man with a great deal of tolerance for those whose malleable ideology is naught but in service of their power.

Chan and Tsvangirai move through more economics, international politics, the problems of dealing with impatient and violence-prone youth, the HIV-AIDS crisis, the fears and anxieties impelled by close brushes with death at the hands of Mugabe’s henchmen and facing a fraudulent treason trial (he was acquitted soon after the interviews), and the fractions within the party emerging heatedly as the fate of the trial loomed and the question of finding a new leader arose.

(In the process of discussing the latter, Chan reveals his proximity to London’s Foreign Office.)

It is in the discussion about the osten-sible moves within the MDC to replace Tsvangirai if he had been found guilty, and dealing with the people who may be after his job, that one is reminded of the press conference journalists’ doubts. They wanted more ‘leadership’ from Tsvangirai. But here, he explains why too much of that quality, at least in the way these impetuous – almost infantile – representatives of the western media seemed to see it, may not be what Zimbabwe needs now. To Chan’s question on his ‘misgivings’ about keeping the MDC unified, Tsvangirai answered that he had to ‘discipline certain extreme emotions, frustrations’ and keep the ‘leadership focused on the agenda of the party.’ The MDC grew very quickly, and as such developed ‘unavoidable fault-lines ... It’s natural that they should be there and people should express their frustrations’ (p. 61).

Mugabe is famous for saying – as long ago as 1977, when in the middle of the liberation war he sent some ‘young turks’ to Mozambique’s jails when their exuberance for marxist analysis and unity with Zimbabwe’s other nationalist party threatened his then tenuous grasp on power – that ‘the axe will fall’ on those within ZANU-PF who do not maintain ‘harmony’. In this context, Tsvangirai’s recognition that ‘we are coming from a society which has dictatorial tendencies’ is wise. It is even wiser when one sees the way in which ZANU-PF is now tearing itself apart: expressing frustrations openly may have beneficial long-term effects. Tsvangirai’s efforts to ‘confront this dictatorship with a democratic alternative’ and to develop ‘a democratic ethos, a democratic culture’, should be lauded. With this, though, Tsvangirai notes that the difficulties therein should be recognised,
because internal democracy in a young, fragile organisation can also be a source of weakness … being too dictatorial may actually push us back again within the same tendencies we are fighting against (pp. 61-62).

Substitute ‘country’ for organisation and it can be seen why Tsvangirai did not order his troops out to the streets, or force his party members not to run in the 2005 election. Later chapters indicate more of his calm efforts to halt any dictatorial tendencies, as well as a clear capacity to recognise past mistakes and misinterpretations. But most of all, one sees a sense of patience emerge. On reading this book one begins to believe that Tsvangirai might not really care that he, personally, has ‘lost’ a few elections, as long as the process of democratic construction is unfolding. Although Chan does not ask him if he is driven by a desire to possess power, the impression is created that this is far from Tsvangirai’s ultimate motivation. Historically, too, he was thrust into leadership positions rather than single-mindedly seeking them.

To be sure, attributing altruism to any politician is risky, and such a quality on its own does not lead to good politics. (Jimmy Carter anyone? Michael Dukakis?). Indeed, one could argue that a rational calculus might see that a few hundred deaths in a short-term call to the streets would mean saving millions from suffering and death due to the malnutrition caused by ZANU-PF’s policies, and trickles into the torture queue as its slow-burning repression takes its toll. But these are never sure things. The culture of dictatorship would certainly not be diminished by such action. Even the consequences of taking power – peacefully or with a short sharp shock – are not certain; there is a strong possibility that if the MDC won a ‘free and fair’ election, a coup would have resulted. Tsvangirai and his advisors – and in Zimbabwe, as everywhere else, these advisors are likely to include members of the security services, so the decision making process must have a built-in ‘feedback’ loop from the moment a political thought is even uttered – are inevitably considering all of these eventualities. This leads to a process characterised by what the journalists and critics consider paralytic, but the consequences of precipitous action could be worse.

Perhaps the journalists would have refrained from their implicit criticisms if they had read the book: it would have introduced them to the thinking of someone who seems to be a very wise politician, and – even more important – the context that necessitates wisdom’s caution. If Tsvangirai sticks it out, the next election might make more exciting reporting. The journalists might go back, not wishing they were somewhere else.

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Endnote
The story of military coups in post-colonial Africa has been told and retold. The myth that the military is more efficient, able to further political stability, a great unifier and the best organisation to promote the complex process of development in Africa have been stoutly debunked by the reality on the ground. Having failed miserably, some of its leaders have become ‘born again’ democrats by using their amassed wealth to capture the presidencies of their various polities. It is against the background of the foregoing developments in the continent that this excellent book might be visualised.

_Coups from Below: Armed Subalterns and State Power in West Africa_ can be divided into two sections. The first section is made up of three chapters. They address issues that are theoretically and historically significant to understanding military coups in Africa in general and West Africa in particular. The second section deals with case studies on subaltern coups and dictatorships in Ghana, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and Gambia. The book also includes an introduction, conclusion and a detailed bibliography and index.

In the introduction, Kandeh lays out the framework on which the book rests. The author contends that due to a lack of ‘protective, extractive, allocative, and regulative capacities’ in West African states, subaltern coups became commonplace (p.4). Moreover, subaltern coups are particularly detrimental because they tend to lack any discernable or consistent political agenda. The armed regulars, or subaltern ranked soldiers, in African armies involved in these coups are generally indignant because they have suffered from ‘oppression’ and been marginalised at the hands of the upper class. The author states that ‘subalterns engage in wanton violence not because they have lost their heads or are driven by insatiable criminal appetites but because they are products of political systems that have failed them and the rest of society’ (p.5). Paradoxically, these same armed subalterns in West Africa have often terrorised society and felonise the state than rescue the polity from decomposition after capturing power.

Three factors are historically associated with subaltern coups: the scale to which the use of political power overlaps with wealth accumulation; corresponding class locations, interests and ethnic identity of senior military officers and political incumbents; and severe economic and political crisis (pp. 6-7). Additionally, three basic assumptions undergird the characteristics of a subaltern coup. These are: the planning and execution of the intervention must be conducted by armed regulars; senior military officers must be among the principal targets of the coup and last, the inaugural rhetoric of coup leaders must be populist (pp. 7-8). The case studies examined in this volume exhibit at least two of the three traits.

In chapter 1, which is about ‘Class Dimensions of Military Coups’, the author examines the repercussions of class formation in the military and the increased presence of violence within Africa. The author notes that there are relatively few studies that focus on the issue of class relations in the military and the relevance that class relations has on the political actions of the military. However, the conflicting role that the state has played (as an apparatus) in forming class distinctions within the military is essential to understanding subaltern coups in Africa. The key concepts related to class issues within the military are domination and predatory accumulation. For instance, Kandeh al-
ludes to how class relations in Africa are formed through relationships of power, i.e. domination, rather than through the production of goods (p. 15). A prevailing distinction is found between coups conducted by senior officers and those by subalterns. Coups conducted by senior officers tend to be based on ‘intra-class competition, personal rivalries, greed and ambition’ whereas those conducted by subalterns ‘mirror inter-class antagonisms’ (p.23). Class congruency does not necessarily bring about close relations between those in the military underclass and their civilian counterparts. The actions of subalterns clash and tend to threaten the interest of those in the same class location, i.e. the interests of peasants, workers and lumpens.

Chapter 3, entitled ‘Historicizing the Militariat’, sheds light on some of the influences that history has had on recruitment patterns and the propensity to privatise violence. The most important element in this chapter is the colonial construction of African militaries which has impacted the post-colonial states in Africa. Especially prevalent are issues associated with racial and ethnic undertones that still affect the military’s character today. Kandeh contends that although the ‘Africanisation’ process implemented by the colonial powers after World War Two helped Africans to move up in rank, it may have created more problems than it solved because of ethnic (and regional) selectivity and impact (p.52). In particular, the colonial powers (France, Britain, and Portugal) used these methods to exploit local rivalries that followed along the lines of the ‘divide and conquer’ policy. He insists that colonial impression on the modern African military should not be taken lightly and concludes the chapter by arguing that while the rhetorical populism of subaltern coups may have held out hope for restructuring civil-military relations, the results of these interventions turned out to be unmitigated disasters (p. 63).

In chapter 4, ‘Ghana: Mainstreaming “Junior Jesus”’, Kandeh introduces the five case studies presented in the book. This chapter discusses the pacesetting coup conducted by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, in 1979 and his acclaimed ‘resurrection’ in 1981. After briefly discussing the events that led up to the 1979 coup, he examines its implications and the coming to power of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The main agenda of the 1979 coup was retaliatory rather than transformative, and ostensibly focused on ‘eradicating corruption rather than restoring democracy (p. 71).’ Similar to the other case studies, Kandeh devotes a
section to analysing the levels of corruption, democracy, human rights abuses and economic performance of subaltern leadership. Further, the decision to replace the Cocoa Marketing Board with the Cocoa Council, along with the revocation of all cocoa buying licences was just one example of the bad economic decision of Rawlings’ administration.

Following the debacle of a democratic experiment, a second coup was carried out by Rawlings and the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) was installed. Central to the agenda of the PNDC was to wage another ‘holy war’ on corruption (p. 81). Despite the war on corruption, however, misappropriations of funds could be found at all levels of key public institutions. While the PNDC initially had no intention of holding elections, they were held as a result of internal and external pressures for political liberalisation, and Rawlings was ultimately elected president in 1992. In sum, Kandeh states that the mainstream policies of Rawlings produced not only a macro-economic turnaround, but also ushered in a period in which human rights abuses were curtailed and the promotion of democratic change and consolidation was in vogue (p. 96).

Chapter 5, ‘Liberia: No Doe, No Liberia’, brought to light the epitome of gross atrocities that can be associated with subaltern coups. It also brought to the fore the complex politics between the so-called Ameri-also Liberians and the ‘natives’. Following the long presidencies of William Tubman and William Tolbert, a violent coup broke out in 1980 that was instigated by Master Sergeant Samuel Doe and sixteen of his followers. Shortly after the coup, Doe installed the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) that subsequently began to ‘milk the Cold War for everything that it was worth by posing as an anticommunist zealot’ (p. 103). Moreover, comparable to the case of Ghana, the rhetoric of the regime was to liquidate those who were allegedly against the state (p.105). Among all the case studies in the book, the human rights abuses under the leadership of Doe were the most appalling – a practice that continued after his demise (p. 109). In addition, no attempts at democracy were made during Doe’s rule and Liberia was thus farther away from democracy than ever before. The United States role in providing aid to Doe was the only reason why the regime was able to stay in power for as long as he did. With the end of the Cold War, however, the United States withdrew support for the Doe administration and Liberian economy collapsed as did Doe himself, metaphorically (p. 118).

Chapter 6, ‘Burkina Faso: Robin Hood of the Sahel’, examines Thomas Sankara’s leadership of the Conseil National de la Revolution (CNR). Kandeh affirms that this regime was highly ideologically provoked. Burkina Faso had experienced numerous coup attempts in 1966, 1980 and 1982; however, Sankara’s coup in 1983 was the most radical transformative project attempted by a military regime in the sub-region, contends Kandeh (p. 119). The government of the CNR became a complex admixture of nationalism, Marxism-Leninism, Pan-Africanism and anti-imperialism (p. 125). Among the many policies formulated by the CNR, personal sacrifice was among its top priorities, especially for civil servants and urban workers. For example, many were told that it was their patriotic duty to provide a day’s work or make voluntary financial contributions to the state. Moreover, the model of social justice followed by the exuberant ‘coupist’, Sankara, was meant to help those that were most marginalised in society such as women and peasants. While the main purpose of the regime was to democratise politics in the polity, his performance failed to come close to the good intentions and lofty expectations (p. 134); it is one thing to profess an ideology and quite another to implement its tenets.
While the GNP and average life expectancy of Burkina Faso was the lowest in the world before Sankara came to power, Sankara changed very little during his leadership.  

The government preached self-reliance, but remained heavily reliant on external development assistance. In sum, Kandeh found that the regime became the victim of schisms and factionalism, with the assassination of Sankara in 1987 marking the end of the regime’s professed commitment to improve the lives of the marginalised in society.

In chapter 7, ‘Sierra Leone: ‘Sobels’ and ‘Foot of State’, the author explores the National Provision Ruling Council (NPRC) chaired by Captain Valentine Strasser and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by ‘semi-illiterate army corporal’ Paul Koroma. Sierra Leone has experienced more subaltern coups than any other state in sub-Saharan Africa. Like Ghana and Liberia, the coup was instigated by increasing amounts of civil unrest and weakening socio-economic conditions. One of the many policies of the NPRC was to seize power in order to end the rebel war taking place in the country. However, the armed insurgency called the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) became stronger adversaries during the reign of the NPRC and the state became less secure. In fact, Kandeh notes that ‘reminiscent of Doe’s PRC … the NPRC leaders rejected calls to declare their assets but wasted no time confiscating the possessions of some of the predecessors’ (p.153). Pressured by external actors, the NPRC conducted democratic elections in which Ahmad Tejan Kabba won the seat of the presidency.

Unlike the NPRC that seized power from a one-party dictatorship, the unpopular AFRC coup overthrew a democratically elected government. Rejected by the international community, the AFRC began to pillage the state under the slogan ‘if you don’t want us, you’ll die’ (p. 167). While the NPRC managed to improve the economic conditions from the previous regimes, the AFRC reversed any advances made by the NPRC and the people of Sierra Leone became the victims of horrific internal aggression.

Chapter 8, ‘The Gambia: Despot from Kannillai’, discusses the bloodless coup of 1994 carried out by the Armed Forces People’s Revolutionary Council (AFPRC). A vital factor that distinguished this coup from the failed coup attempts that Gambia had experienced in the past, was the ‘resentment felt by junior Gambian officers towards their Nigerian commanding officers’ (p. 182). Led by Lt. Yayah Jammeh, the AFPRC established that their mission was to rid the country of those that had plundered its resources. The reasons given for the coup were corruption and nepotism of the Jawara government, discontent over low salaries and deplorable living conditions, and so on (p. 183). The poor performance of this regime turned out to be similar to that of the other cases discussed in the book. While human rights abuses pale in comparison to Liberia, for instance, many citizens, especially ex-ministers and army personnel were the victims of harassment and even executions. The regime’s atrocities aside, the AFPRC managed to sustain the country’s economy. Also, Gambia held democratic elections in 1996, in which, like Rawlings in Ghana, Jammeh was elected president. In general, Kandeh finds that Jammeh could be ‘slotted somewhere in the middle’ of subaltern leaders; however, the performance of the AFPRC regime worsened the longer Jammeh stayed in power (p. 198).

In his conclusion, the author presents, among other factors, the common characteristics of subaltern coups in West Africa. First, is the relative youth and lumpen social background of many of its leaders. Second, the regimes that the subalterns toppled were relatively the same, i.e. elitist and exclusionary, with
the main targets of the subalterns being the privileged class. Third, populist rhetoric was a main tool utilised by the military regimes, all of which are for the most part deceptive (pp. 201-202).

In sum, Kandeh provides three broad conclusions in this study. First, subaltern coups are by their very nature more violent and destabilising than coups led by senior army officers. Second, subaltern coups give way to more intense combinations of violence and accumulation. Third, the reason for the seizure of power by the militariat has been the failure of the non-hegemonic political elites (and state) to legitimise political power, curb corruption and promote socio-economic development (pp. 207-208). He, then, contends that in order to deter coups, of any sort in West Africa, civilian governments must work to establish institutions that will be so efficacious as to make military intervention passé.

This book, splendidly, paints a vivid picture behind some of the most shocking subaltern coups conducted in West Africa. One wonders, though, why the author ‘cautiously’ left out the coup-prone Nigeria in this book. In spite of this omission, however, the author has written an enjoyable and informative book that adds to the literature on military coups in Africa and elsewhere. This volume is very useful to students of military politics and highly recommended for libraries and courses in African political development.

Endnotes

**African Films**

**Human Rights Watch International Film Festival,**

16 - 25 March, Covent Garden, London

**Sometimes in April**

Raoul Peck: France/Rwanda/US; 2005, 140 m - drama

Shot on location in Rwanda, Sometimes in April is a compelling retelling of the tragedy of the some 100 days of the 1994 Rwandan genocide by acclaimed director Raoul Peck. In April 1994, Hutu army officer Augustin defies the Hutu army leadership’s plans to perpetrate genocide against the Tutsi and opposition Hutus. He tries to get his wife (who is Tutsi) and family to safety. When he is separated from them, Augustin is caught in a desperate struggle to survive and is haunted by questions about what happened to his loved ones. Filmmaker present.

**Baadassss!**

Mario Van Peebles; US; 2003; 108 m - drama

One of the most entertaining movies about the making of a movie, Mario Van Peebles’s Baadassss! is a brilliant retelling of the making of his father Melvin’s Sweet Sweetback’s Baadassss Song, the legendary 1971 hit which sparked the birth of independent black cinema. Set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, Woodstock, hipsters, hucksters, free love, afros and funk music, Baadassss! is a hilarious yet considered portrayal of a seismic period in history following the
assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. Filmmaker present; Associated Ritzy Café Event, Friday 18 March, 8 - 11pm, Baadassss!

Funk reception, free

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Liberia: An Uncivil War

James Brabazon and Jonathan Stack; US, 2004 - 102 m - doc

In Liberia, the summer of 2003 was pure insanity: two armies are in the final battle of a decade-long civil war, holding the capital under siege while thousands die from mortar shells launched from afar. As the soldiers, mostly teenagers, fight a bloody urban battle, the nation prays that American forces show up to put an end to the violence. The film journeys to the heart of the conflict by covering both sides - Jonathan Stack covers the defence of the capital from the inside, his partner James Brabazon travels with the LURD rebels as they fight their way to the capital. Filmmaker present.

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Living Rights: Yoshi, Toti and Lena

Duco Tellegen; Japan/Kenya/Belarus; 2004 - 83 m - doc

A powerful, striking film exploring dilemmas facing three young people on three different continents, including TOTI, a Masai girl of fourteen. When she was 11, she was going to be married off in return for cattle that the family needed to survive. Instead, she ran away and her twin sister was married in her place. Three years later, Toti tries to reconnect with her family. Filmmakers present.

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The Refugee All Stars

Zach Niles and Banker White; Guinea/Sierra Leone/US - 2004 - 86 m - doc.

The Refugee All Stars tells the remarkable and ultimately life-affirming story of a group of six Sierra Leonian musicians who come together to form a band while living as refugees in the Republic of Guinea. Following the group over three years, we begin to understand the brutal realities of civil war and are witness to the ability of individuals to sustain hope in a landscape dominated by rage and loss. Filmmaker present.

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